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## BJP readies OBC attack on Rahul

Party to reach out to 1 cr OBC households; Cong to avoid attack on Savarkar on Pawar's advice

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Firing a broadside at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his alleged "OBC insult" for calling "all thieves have Modi as the common surname", the BJP has intensified its campaign to reach out to one crore OBC households across one lakh villages in the country. The BJP's "OBC Morcha" will start a campaign between April 6 — the foundation day for the BJP — and April 14 — the birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar — to expose the Congress' anti-OBC stand and also to highlight the "historic" decisions of the Modi Government for the community's welfare, said Morcha president K Laxman.

He said from giving the constitutional status to the OBC Commission, which was "toothless" in the long rule of the Congress, to giving reservation to the community in educational institutions and filling up thousands of backlog vacancies in universities, the Modi Government has taken many historic decisions to uplift the community.

BJP MPs, mostly from OBC, on Tuesday took out a march from Parliament complex to Vijay Chowk here protesting against Rahul's remarks and demanded his apology.

The OBCs will help Modi become Prime Minister for a third term after the 2024 Lok

Sabha polls, Laxman asserted, adding that such an atmosphere in the BJP's favour has rattled the Congress, causing Rahul to heap caste "insults" on the Prime Minister.

Giving a boost to the OBC community, the Centre on Tuesday also said the issue of implementation of OBC reservation in all-India quota seats of State agricultural universities is under examination. Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, "The issue of implementation of OBC reservation in All India Quota (AIQ) Seats of State Agricultural Universities is under examination."

Meanwhile, amid strains in the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi alliance over Rahul's strident criticism of VD Savarkar, NCP chief Sharad Pawar has stepped in to play the peacemaker by conveying Shiv Sena's concerns on the issue to the Congress leadership.

Opposition leaders said the Congress has agreed to tone down its criticism of Savarkar, which has led to an unease in the NCP and the Shiv Sena (UBT), its alliance partners in Maharashtra.

Former Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday said it was unfortunate that Savarkar's name was being "blackened needlessly" by those who seem to be ignorant of his "matchless sacrifice" during the freedom struggle.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with BJP national president JP Nadda, arrives to inaugurate the newly-constructed BJP Central Office (Ext), in New Delhi on Tuesday  
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

## Modi links Cong attack to BJP's emphatic success in elections

DEEPAK KR UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Attacking the Opposition, particularly the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday linked the Opposition's attack on his Government to the BJP's emphatic electoral performance and asserted that the more wins the ruling party achieves, the more it will be targeted, sources said.

Modi took the swipe at

Opposition parties, who are up in arms against the Government over a host of issues, at the BJP Parliamentary Party meeting in which he asked MPs to dedicate the period between the party's foundation day on April 6 and BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary on April 14 to the cause of social justice.

Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal told reporters that Modi also asked the party MPs

to promote and publicise various Government schemes for a month from May 15 in their respective constituencies to mark its ninth anniversary.

Modi said Opposition parties coming together against the BJP to his Government's campaign against corruption, and asserted that the clampdown on graft will continue without being hindered by "false allegations".

Continued on Page 2

## Congress mulls no-confidence motion against Speaker Birla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress is in talks with other Opposition parties to consider moving a no-confidence motion against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla over his alleged bias, sources said on Tuesday. They said the proposal to bring a motion was mooted at the meeting of party MPs this morning and Congress leaders are now talking to other party leaders over it.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday replied to the Lok Sabha Secretariat's notice to vacate his official bungalow and said he will abide by the eviction notice, even as his party leaders slammed the Government, accusing it of humiliating him.

Rahul was on Monday served a notice to vacate the government bungalow by April 22 following his disqualification as a member of Lok Sabha after his conviction in a criminal defamation case last week.

Continued on Page 2

## SC allows repatriated students 2 chances to clear MBBS exams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed Indian medical students who have returned from Ukraine, China and Philippines due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the war to clear the MBBS final examination in two attempts in accordance with existing National Medical Commission (NMC) syllabus and guidelines without being enrolled in any medical college in India.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Vikram Nath modified the Centre's suggestion of allowing them only one attempt as a one-time measure and disposed of all the petitions of the medical students.

The Centre has submitted a report of an expert committee which said that as a one-time extraordinary measure, penultimate year students should be allowed to take the MBBS final examination.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, said that in view of the direction of the court, a committee was formed by the Government over the issue.

The court largely accepted the recommendation made by the committee, but said that only recommendation of concern was that the students were to be given only one attempt to clear the MBBS examination and hence modi-

fied it. The bench said that it is passing the order considering the special circumstances.

The SC was hearing a batch of pleas filed by medical students who completed seven semesters in their respective foreign universities, and had to return to India on account of the pandemic and completed their undergraduate medical course through online mode.

The batch of petitions primarily sought accommodation of such undergraduate students of first to fourth year from various medical college/universities to medical colleges in India and other reliefs.

On December 30, 2022, the Centre set up a committee, under the chairmanship of DGHS, for finding some possible solution for problems being faced by foreign medical graduates from Ukraine/China, who have completed online classes of undergraduate medical course from the penultimate year onwards.

The panel had recommended the students may be offered a "single chance" to clear the MBBS final, both part-I and part-II (both theory and practical) as per existing NMC syllabus and guidelines without being enrolled in any Indian Medical College. This recommendation had been modified by the top court to mean two chances.

Continued on Page 2

## Won't tolerate Khalistani vandalism at Indian diplomatic facilities: US

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Given the ongoing protests by alleged Khalistan supporters in the US, the Government there has condemned recent violent incidents that have taken place during protests at Indian diplomatic facilities in the US. It also termed that violence, or the threat of violence is never an acceptable form of protest and is of "grave concern".

"The US Government condemns recent violent incidents that have taken place during protests at Indian diplomatic facilities in the US," said State Department spokesperson.

"The Department supports the First Amendment rights of protesters in the US to engage in free speech. However, violence, or the threat of violence is never an acceptable form of protest," the spokesperson further said. This response late Monday came after the protesters threatened the Indian embassy and Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu.

Continued on Page 2



## Amritpal seen sans turban in Delhi; about to nab him, says Punjab Police

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

A new video of Amritpal Singh with his key aide Papalpreet Singh surfaced on social media on Tuesday, showing the pro-Khalistani fugitive without a turban. The undated CCTV footage, said to be from a market in Delhi, showed him walking down a street wearing dark glasses. Behind him Papalpreet could be seen walking with a bag.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Govt told the High Court here on Tuesday that they were coordinating with several agencies and close to catching Amritpal, who has been on the run since the police crackdown on him and his outfit - Waris Punjab De - began on March 18.

Continued on Page 2

## 3 KTF Sikh extremists arrested in Philippines

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/SINGAPORE

The Philippines has arrested three suspected members of a Sikh extremist group on Interpol's Red Notice watchlist. The suspects were identified as Manpreet Singh, 23, Amritpal Singh, 24, and Arshdeep Singh, 26. The trio belonged to Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF). Officers from the

Philippine Bureau of Immigration, the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center and the Military Intelligence Group arrested suspected members of the Sikh extremist group — all Indian nationals in their 20s — in the central Philippine city of Iloilo during a joint operation, CICC Executive Director Alexander Ramos said late Monday.

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

### PAN-AADHAAR LINKING DEADLINE NOW JUNE 30

New Delhi: The Government on Tuesday extended the deadline for linking PAN with Aadhaar by three months to June 30 to enable people comply with the mandatory income tax provisions. The deadline for linking PAN with Aadhaar was to end on March 31. P10

### 39 MIGRANTS DEAD IN FIRE AT MEXICAN CENTRE

Mexico: At least 39 migrants from Central and South America died after a fire broke out late on Monday at a migrant holding centre in the Mexican northern border city of Ciudad Juarez, apparently caused by a protest over deportations. P9

### 18 FIRMS LOSE LICENCE FOR SPURIOUS DRUGS

New Delhi: Licences of 18 pharma companies have been cancelled for manufacturing spurious medicines after an inspection by the Drugs Controller General of India. P2

## Atiq convicted for 1st time, gets life for Umesh's abduction

PNS/PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

An MP-MLA court here on Tuesday held gangster-politician Atiq Ahmad and two others guilty in the 2006 Umesh Pal kidnapping case, and sentenced them to rigorous life imprisonment.

Ahmad's brother Khalid Azim, alias Ashraf, and six others have been acquitted in the case. This is Ahmad's first conviction in over 100 cases filed against him over the years.

Government counsel Gulab Chandra Agrahari said special MP-MLA court judge Dinesh Chandra Shukla held Ahmad, Saulat Hanif, a lawyer, and Dinesh Pasi guilty under Indian Penal Code Section 364-A (kidnapping or abduction in order to murder).

Continued on Page 2

## Govt sets up teams against online fraud



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has constituted seven Joint Cyber Crime Coordination Teams for cyber crime hotspot hubs like Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jamtara, Mewat and Visakhapatnam. These teams will comprise officials from the Central as well as State agencies.

Over three dozen towns and villages of nine States — from Delhi to Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat to Assam — have become cyber crime hotspots which are being closely monitored by law enforcement agencies, sources said.

Continued on Page 2

# Beware of FRAUDSTERS

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Har Pal Aapke Saath



# 'Modi Govt never took populist decisions for vote bank politics' Gave political stability, says Shah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said the Modi government never took populist decisions for vote bank politics and instead worked for the betterment of people through its "all-inclusive" schemes and by providing political stability in the country.

Addressing the annual session of industry-body Assocham here, he said development is possible in a vast country like India only through the "whole of government approach" and Prime Minister Narendra Modi implemented this vision of "Team India" on the ground.

"This is why good results have come from every field in the last nine years. When we take decisions, we have before us the betterment of the country or a sector. We have before us efforts to put a system in place in the country. We don't



take decisions considering vote banks. Otherwise, GST would have never come in this country. We know there is a long army of people ridiculing the GST (Goods and Services Tax) as 'Gabbar Singh Tax' in the country. But we never cared for this," he said.

Shah said the government never took decisions that were populist but took decisions that were good for the people.

If a child gets malaria and a doctor prescribes him quinine (an anti-malaria drug), then he/she will definitely cry after taking it due to its bitterness but will smile soon after

getting healed, he said.

Shah said precise policies made after deliberations by the government have taken India on the path of progress.

He said the government's "all-embracing" and "all-inclusive" schemes have led to the multi-faceted development of India.

"Our ideology has made India safe, our sensitive schemes have made India's development all-inclusive and we have surprised the world with our achievements," he added.

Shah said that Prime Minister Modi has also brought political stability in the country and after 30 years in 2014, a government with full majority was formed and the people of the country have made significant contributions in it.

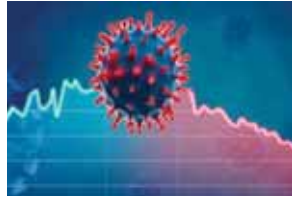
This period under the leadership of Modi will be known as the 'period of political stability' in the history of Indian democracy, he said.

# H3N2 influenza cases on rise amid Covid spike in country

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Besides Covid-19 and its variant XBB.1.16, H3N2 influenza is also fast spreading in the country. The Government on Tuesday told Rajya Sabha that 1,317 cases of H3N2 have been reported from January 1 to March 21. In the meantime, India has logged 1,573 fresh coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, while the active cases have increased to 10,981, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday. The death toll has increased to 5,30,841 with four deaths reconciled by Kerala, the data updated at 8 am stated.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), of the 510 H3N2 cases reported through ILI/SARI surveillance in the last two months, 19 patients required ICU admission, Pawar said in a written reply.



As reported by the ICMR, the influenza working group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization is reviewing the data for seasonal influenza vaccination, she added.

Pawar added that the Union Health Ministry is monitoring the situation and has taken several steps to support the states for management of influenza cases, including H3N2. These include issuing an advisory requesting all the states and Union Territories to take necessary steps such as closely following the trend of ILI/SARI (influenza-like illness/severe acute respiratory illness) in their respective areas.

# HC annuls court's order to discharge Sharjeel among 11 in Jamia violence case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday set aside a trial court's order discharging 11 people, including JNU student Sharjeel Imam and activists Asif Iqbal Tanha and Safoora Zargar, in a 2019 Jamia Nagar violence case and ordered framing of charges against them.

While quashing the trial court order, the High Court said in a democracy there can be no question of suppressing dissent by peaceful means but there is also no place of violent action to register anguish against ideological differences to a government policy.

The High Court, which passed the judgement on police's plea challenging the discharge order, said prima facie charge of unlawful assembly is made out against all the 11 accused but framed rioting charge against eight of them, including Imam and Zargar.

# J&K revenue falls short of Budget estimates: CAG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Presenting the Union Territories Finances Audit Report for the year ending March 31, 2022 in Parliament, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) said the revenue receipts of Jammu and Kashmir in 2021-22 increased by 13 per cent as compared to the previous year but it still fell short of the budget estimates by 39 per cent.

Besides, there are outstanding borrowings amounting to ₹2,122.77 crore of Jammu and Kashmir Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (JKIDFC) and ₹10,321.83 crore of J&K Power Corporation Limited.

"During 2021-22, revenue receipts increased by 13 per cent with respect to last year, but it fell short of budget estimates by 39 per cent. The UT's own tax revenue increased by 32 per cent and non-tax revenue increased by 19 per cent with respect to previous year," the CAG stated.

It said there was an increase in revenue receipts by ₹6,742 crore and increase in revenue expenditure by ₹6,635 crore with respect to previous year which resulted in reduction of revenue deficit to ₹31 crore from ₹138 crore the year before. "The increase in capital expenditure by ₹589 crore was major contributor in increase of fiscal deficit."

# ED attaches ₹114.19 cr assets of SGRSB's defaulters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached properties worth ₹114.19 crore pertaining to various defaulter borrowers of Bengaluru-based Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank Niyamitha under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in a case of mis-appropriation of public deposits to the tune of more than ₹800 crore.

# ED carries out raids at Fintech Company in illegal betting case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has carried out searches under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act at a Fintech Company involving 150 bank accounts relating to investigations in an illegal betting case.

The case relates to offences against Rakesh R Rajdev and others. Subsequent to searches, an amount of ₹3.05 crore lying in these bank accounts has been frozen under PMLA, the ED said.

# Amritpal seen sans turban in Delhi; close to nab him, says Punjab...

From Page 1

Images and videos that emerged on social media since then have showed him changing his vehicles and appearance multiple times in a bid to dodge police.

There is no official word from Punjab Police on the fresh footage.

A senior Delhi Police official said they are probing whether the persons seen in the video are Amritpal and his aide. "So far we don't have any such information, nor the location where the video was shot has been confirmed to be of Delhi. However, we are verifying it," the official said.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Tuesday was hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by advocate Imaan Singh Khara, which claimed that Amritpal was in the "illegal custody" of police.

Punjab Advocate General Vinod Ghai told the court that Amritpal has not been arrested yet and they were coordinating with agencies to nab the radical preacher.

Later, the petitioner told reporters that the AG said in the court that they were close to catching Amritpal.

Justice N S Shekhawat asked the petitioner to file an affidavit to produce evidence that Amritpal was in police custody and pointed out that the State's stand was that the preacher had not been arrested.

The court told the petitioner it would appoint a warrant officer if evidence was placed before it to show that Amritpal was in illegal detention.

# Won't tolerate...

From Page 1

The protesters threatened the Indian embassy and Indian Ambassador to the United States Sandhu during their protest. While rallying outside the mission, a protestor in his speech made a direct threat to the Ambassador that the "hypocrisy" will come to an end and that the Ambassador could face a similar fate to what former president of India Zail Singh faced back in 1994.

"Violence or the threat of violence against diplomatic facilities and personnel in the United States is a grave concern and will not be tolerated," US Department of State spokesperson told ANI.

Multiple incidents of protests by supporters of Khalistan have been staged outside the Indian embassy and the San Francisco Consulate. Earlier this week, the Indian Consulate in San Francisco was also attacked on March 20.

Recently a video surfaced on social media in which pro-Khalistani protesters gathered at the consulate in San Francisco, shouting slogans in support of Amritpal and heckling staff as they abandoned the diplomatic mission.

# SC allows repatriated...

From Page 1

"They can give and clear the examination within a period of one year. Part-I, will be followed by Part-II after one year. Part II will be allowed only after Part-I is cleared," the Committee recommended, adding that the theory paper examination could be conducted centrally and physically, on the pattern of Indian MBBS examination and practical could be conducted by some designated government medical colleges, assigned the responsibility.

The panel has said that after clearing these two examinations, they would have to complete two year of compulsory rotatory internship, first

year of which will be free and the second year paid as has been decided by NMC for previous cases.

"However, the committee has emphasized that this option be strictly a one-time option and not become a basis for similar decisions in future and shall be applicable for present matter only in view of directions of court in the matter," it had said in its recommendation.

On December 9 last year, the top court had asked the Centre to find out a solution in consultation with the National Medical Commission to address this "humane problem".

"We are sure that the Union of India will give due importance to our suggestion and find out a solution for these students, who are undisputedly an asset to the nation and, particularly, when there is a dearth of Doctors in the country," it had said.

# Delhi ranked 35 in 'World's Best Public Transport' list

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi was ranked 35th among 60 global cities in the world in Best Public Transport Index, showed the Urban Mobility Readiness Index report by Oliver Wyman Forum. While Hong Kong topped the list in the Best Public Transport category, Mumbai was ranked 41 due to its promising public transit

system.

"Delhi has reached number 35 in the ranking of Best Public Transport Services. 2 crore people of Delhi are working hard. Soon we will be in the top ten," Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted citing the report.

The report revealed that Delhi's attractive and affordable public transit led the city to achieve a good ranking.

# In world's first, India develops model for TB cases in country

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has become the first country in the world to have developed a country-level mathematical model to estimate the prevalence of TB cases, official sources said on Tuesday.

Using this model, TB incidence and mortality estimate data for India will be available

by March every year, months before the annual WHO estimates are released in October, they said, adding that India can also prepare similar estimates at the state level in future.

The model was presented before the delegates from 40 countries taking part in the 36th Stop TB Partnership Board meeting in Varanasi last week. Most of them laud-

ed it saying they would want to implement it in their countries, the sources said.

According to WHO estimates, the TB incidence rate (per 10,000) in India in 2021 was 210. Using the Indian mathematical model, it was estimated to be 196 in 2022. The WHO estimated that the TB incidence absolute number to be 29.50 lakh in 2021.

# 3 KTF Sikh extremists arrested...

From Page 1

Ramos said in a statement the heavily armed troops stormed an apartment in an exclusive subdivision in the city at dawn on March 7 and caught the militants off guard, State-run Philippine News Agency reported.

"The well-coordinated lightning strike by operatives caught members of the militant group flatfooted and (they) did not attempt to resist the heavily armed troops," Ramos was quoted as saying by the news agency.

The suspects - who are also on the Interpol Red Notice watchlist - entered the country using fake passports.

They evaded detection until they were tracked down by experts from the CICC. They will face charges of murder, violation of the Explosive Substances Act 2001, and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act 1967 of India.

# Thak-Thak gang targets MEA staffer; laptop, passport looted

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A senior official serving in the Ministry of External Affairs was robbed of his official laptop, passport and other valuables after unidentified men broke his car's window pane when he tried to help a person lying unconscious on the Aurobindo Marg in south

Delhi. Police suspect the infamous 'Thak-Thak' gang to be behind the incident.

The incident took place Monday evening when the deputy secretary (Legal Officer) posted at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was returning home in Greater Kailash from office, police said.

# Cong mulls over no-confidence...

From Page 1

It is understood that the Congress moots bringing a no-confidence motion against the Speaker on Monday in the Lok Sabha but some parties are opposed to the move, saying it may hurt the momentum of Opposition unity. The no-confidence motion will highlight the pace at which Rahul was

disqualified as MP — within hours of his conviction by a Surat court in a defamation case over his remarks on the Prime Minister's surname.

The sources said the no-confidence motion can only be brought when the house is in order.

Sources in the Opposition camp said such a motion requires signatures and support of 50 MPs but they apprehended that the motion may not be allowed to be moved on the ground that the house is not in order.

# Atiq...

From Page 1

In a reply to queries by mediapersons, Ahmad said from inside the police van, "I have respect for the court... This is wrong punishment (saja galat hai)... I will move the High Court against it."

Ahmad's counsel Dayashankar Mishra said they have the right to appeal and they will approach the High court against the conviction. He said Ahmad will be kept in Sabarmati Jail (Ahmedabad) in accordance with the Supreme Court's decision.

In her reaction to the judgement, Umesh Pal's mother, Shanti Devi said she has full faith in the country's judiciary, but expressed apprehension Ahmad "could do anything from inside the jail".

# Govt sets up teams...

From Page 1

A number of hostile countries have also been trying for long to cripple India's financial system and national security grid where additional preventive measures have been put in place by the Government to offset threats, they said.

The States where the cyber crime hotspots have been located include Haryana, Delhi, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, they said.

The emerging cyber crime hotspot cities, towns and villages are: Mewat, Bhiwani, Nuh, Palwal, Manota, Hasanpur, Hathan Gaon (all in Haryana), Ashok Nagar, Uttam Nagar, Shakarpur, Harkesh Nagar, Okhla, Azadpur (all in

Delhi), Banka, Begusarai, Jamui, Nawada, Nalanda, Gaya (Bihar), Barpeta, Dhubri, Goalpara, Morigaon, Nagaon (Assam), Jamtara, Deoghar (Jharkhand), Asansol, Durgapur (West Bengal), Ahmedabad, Surat (Gujarat), Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh) and Chittoor (Andhra Pradesh).

The foreign cyber attackers mostly belong to countries like China, Pakistan and Türkiye, the sources said.

For promoting cyber hygiene, the Central and State administrations are also working on an annual action plan.

The Union Home Ministry has also decided to celebrate the first Wednesday of every month as Cyber Awareness Day. The Centre has also allocated a grant-in-aid of ₹100 crore for training law enforcement agencies, judicial officers, public prosecutors and recruitment of junior forensic consultants.

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2	Approx. cost of work : (₹) Rs. 39,48,733.90
3	Earnest money : (₹) Rs. 79,000.00
4	Date and Time of submission of tender and opening of tender: Bidding Start date for work no. Up to 15:00 hrs. on 07.04.2023 opening of e-Tender at 15:00 hrs. on 21.04.2023
5	Website particulars, published e-tender, notice location etc. complete details of tender can be seen and website where the tender form can be downloaded: Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

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The Notice published on the above website can also be seen on website [www.bhopalmunicipal.com](http://www.bhopalmunicipal.com)

S. No.	Details of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money (EMD)	Cost of Tender Document	Completion Period	Tender ID
1	CONST OF PATHWAY, LEVELLING, GRASSING AND BEAUTIFICATION WORK AT DINDAYAL PARK BARRAI, W-85 Z-19	₹17191905/-	₹59600/-	₹125000/-	1 YEAR (WORK) 3 YEAR (O&M)	2023_UAD_262336_1

Estimated cost does not including GST. As per rule GST applicable will be paid serapately.  
Qualification Criteria :- The contractor must have :-  
1. The bidder will have to submit his valid Madhya Pradesh (MP) PWD centralized registration document.  
2. The bidder will have to submit Active GST document.  
3. Bidder have to submit Affidavit, duly signed and notarized as per enclosed Annexure-B and Organizational details, as per enclosed Annexure-H  
4. The bidder will have to submit Active EPF registration.

**Terms and Condition :-**  
1. Earnest money deposit online in favour of the commissioner Municipal Corporation Bhopal via payment gateway of E-tendering portal.  
2. The envelope "C" of the qualified tender will be opened according to the key dates. Price Bid/Financial offers will not be accepted physically in any case.  
3. Since the online bidders are required to sign their bids online using class III digitally certificate only contractors are advised to obtain the same at the earliest as if may take up to seven working days. To get digital certificate, further amendment in this tender if any will not be published in any newspapers. All the amendment will be available in this portal only.  
4. The department reserves the right to change the key dates of the tender process.  
5. The BMC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to cancel the Bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to the award contract. Without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders or any obligation to inform the affected Bidder or Bidders of the grounds for the Employer's action.  
6. Any omission, mistake should be brought into the notice of Municipal Corporation Bhopal. Tender will not use the mistake/omission for their benefits.  
7. Conditional tender shall liable to be rejected.  
8. Tender shall remain valid up to 180 days from the date of opening of financial offer.  
9. Submission of a bid by a bidder implies that he has read complete tender document and has made himself aware of the scope and specification of the work to be done.  
10. For this tender all transportation/arrangement will be done by Contractor.  
11. Defect liability period is ONE YEAR for works and 3 years for O&M.  
12. Successful bidder before signing the agreement will have to submit a bank guarantee/FDR of 3% percent of the approved amount as performance Security.  
13. 5% shall be deducted from the Bill amount as Security deposit.

Executive Engineer  
Municipal Corporation, Bhopal  
T.N.1886/022/023



# Govt moves to prevent attachment of metro rail assets

MoHUA proposes changes in Sec 89 of Metro Railways Act, 2002, in view of tussle between Delhi Metro, DAMEPL

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI



Taking a note of the ongoing tussle between Delhi Metro and Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Limited (DAMEPL), the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), has proposed to amend Section 89 of the Metro Railways (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2002, to eliminate any possibility of attachment of metro railway assets (including financial assets) pursuant to any execution processes carried out by courts. These amendments will remove any clauses in the present Act that allow takeover of metro properties by unfavourable court ver-

dicts. According to the proposed amendment, no rolling stock, tracks, machinery, plant, tools, fittings, materials or effects used or provided by a metro railway administration for the purpose of traffic

ing by law the power to attach property or otherwise to cause the property to be taken in execution. "Sanction of attachment of properties of Delhi Metro was denied by the Central Government as that would entail closure of Delhi Metro and bringing the entire city to a halt. A situation of this kind would not only cause inconvenience to lakhs of common people of Delhi-NCR but also a lead to an alarming situation where law and order in the city could be at stake. The Central Government being a custodian of the public good cannot allow such a lethal situation to arise. In view of the above background, the Ministry is of

the opinion to amend the Section 89 to make it absolute so that no attachment of properties or bank accounts or any asset of any metro railways properties can ever be carried out," as per the amendment in the Section 89 of the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002 (60 of 2002) proposed by the Ministry. Delhi Metro and DAMEPL are engaged in a long-drawn battle over an arbitral award which attained finality in 2021 when Supreme Court ruled in favour of the latter. It was in September, 2021 that the DAMEPL approached the Delhi High Court for enforcement of the 2017 award. The DMRC was required to pay Rs

7,045.41 crore up to September 10, 2021, as per DAMEPL. Around Rs 1,000 crore was deposited by DMRC in an ESCROW account in September 2021. At present, 845 km of metro lines are operational in 20 different cities and about 991 km of metro rail projects (including Delhi Meerut RRTS) are under construction in various cities of the country. The operation and maintenance of metro rail in the country is governed by the Metro Railways (Operation & Maintenance) Act, 2002 (60 of 2002). Section 89 of the Metro Rail (Operation & Maintenance) Act, 2002 deals with restriction on execution against metro railway proper-

ty. Sources said that the Ministry admits that such a step is expedient in view of the order of Delhi High Court in the case of DAMEPL vs Delhi Metro, whereby the Delhi High Court had sought the view of the Centre whether it was willing to sanction attachment of Delhi Metro assets as required by Section 89(1) of the said Act, towards satisfaction of the arbitral award in favour of the DAMEPL. The Ministry had conveyed to the Court in the said case that it was not inclined to grant such sanction. It bears consideration that the existing provisions in Section 89 provide sufficient safeguard against any forced

suspension of operations as all operational assets of metro railways are in any case beyond the scope of attachment without prior consent of the ministry. "The existing Section 89(2) conveys that the earnings of the metro railway could be attached by a court in execution. It is now proposed that Section 89(2) be deleted altogether, thereby implying that any metro railway organisation would be beyond the purview of courts as regards execution proceedings, unless such organisations voluntarily give consent to suffer such execution proceedings, which is naturally unlikely," sources said.

# Despite Hindenburg report, Modi is saving Adani, says Kejriwal in Delhi Assembly

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched a no-holds-barred attack on the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, levelling allegations of corruption against him in reference to the raging Adani issue. Kejriwal accused Modi of being the main investor helping industrialist Gautam Adani for his own benefits. Speaking in the Delhi Assembly, Arvind Kejriwal said, "Despite the Hindenburg report and criticism from every corner, the Prime Minister is saving Adani. In politics perception is important, but Narendra Modi is not worried. The SBI, PF offices are being told to help him. If JPC meet is ordered, PM Modi will suffer not Adani," Kejriwal said.

on the resolution. "The matter which could not be taken up by the Assembly was discussed against the rules. We will lodge a complaint against this at an appropriate forum," he said. Kejriwal claimed to have a detailed conversation with a senior BJP minister, who informed him about the alleged deal between PM Modi and Gautam Adani. "I was told Adani is being backed by Narendra Modi, and he is the main investor in the Adani Group. Adani is only the front managing Prime Minister Modi's money, Adani is only a manager," alleged Kejriwal. He said if a joint parliamentary committee (JPC), Enforcement Directorate or CBI investigates the Hindenburg report on

ject is not being owned by Adani, it is being owned by Narendra Modi himself. The Prime Minister is taking all projects from various countries only for himself in the name of Adani, said Kejriwal. "Two years ago when six airports were auctioned, government at the last moment changed the conditions to benefit Adani. 30 percent of the airport business in the country is with Modi ji," said Kejriwal.

# AAP launches nationwide 'Modi hatao, desh bachao' campaign ahead of 2024 polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



With the release of "Modi hatao, desh bachao" (remove Modi, save the country) posters in 11 languages, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has launched a nationwide campaign ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The posters have been released in Hindi, English, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Kannada, Odia, Bangla, Gujarati, Urdu and Punjabi. As a part of the campaign, these posters will be put up across the country on March 30. "The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will display posters in

States across the country on March 30. All State units of the party have been asked to paste posters in their respective states. The posters have been printed in 11 languages, Rai, the Delhi AAP chief and environment minister said. Last week, posters reading "Modi Hatao, Desh Bachao" (remove Modi, save India) appeared on walls and electricity poles across the national Capital following which the police arrested six people and registered 49 FIRs. The BJP had retaliated by pasting "Kejriwal Hatao, Delhi Bachao" (remove Kejriwal, save Delhi) posters across the national capital.

# Kejriwal Govt working in dictatorial, unconstitutional manner, says Bidhuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



The Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, on Tuesday accused the Kejriwal Government of working in a dictatorial and unconstitutional manner in the Delhi Assembly. "Keeping aside all the rules and traditions, such topics are being discussed, which do not come under the purview of Delhi itself. Even the AAP MLAs of Delhi used indecent and derogatory language towards respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Bidhuri said while addressing a Press conference along with all BJP MLAs. Bidhuri alleged that AAP MLAs in Delhi Assembly made objectionable and baseless allegations against the Central Government like promoting drugs and global terrorism. On the contrary, the notices given by the Opposition to discuss the problems of Delhi were

ignored. When the BJP MLAs protested this unconstitutional act, they were thrown out of the Assembly. The BJP leaders said that a short-duration discussion on the central government was held in the Delhi Assembly on Tuesday, which is a clear violation of the rules. "A similar attempt was also made in the beginning of this session, but when the BJP legislators opposed it and told the Speaker that according to Rule No. 61.9 of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly, only those topics can be discussed in the Legislative Assembly on priority basis which are concerned with the Delhi government. Then Speaker did not allow discussion on this subject," they said.

# Men scaled wall during festival, harassed us: IP College students

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Students at Delhi University's Indraprastha College for Women alleged that some men scaled the institute's boundary walls during a fest on Tuesday and "harassed several students". There was no response from the college authorities and police over the incident. An All India Students' Association (AISA) activist alleged that the men were heard chanting "Miranda, IP dono hamara (Miranda House and Indraprastha College both are ours)" and "Miranda nahi chhoda toh IP bhi nahi chhodega (We didn't leave Miranda, we won't leave IP either)".

climbed the walls, forcefully entered the campus and harassed gender minorities. Men were chanting "Miranda IP dono hamara, 'Miranda nahi chhoda toh IP bhi nahi chhodega,'" Anjali tweeted. Another student alleged, "Miscreants entered the IPCW fest today and harassed several women students, injuring one. Delhi Police has simply escorted the goons out. We demand their immediate arrest."

In October, some students of Delhi University's all-women Miranda House College alleged that several men scaled the boundary walls and the gates during an open Diwali fest on campus and indulged in "cat-calling and

sexist sloganeering". The AISAs Delhi University unit secretary and former Indraprastha College for Women (IPCW) student Anjali shared purported photos and videos of the incident. In the photo, four men are seen standing near the IPCW boundary wall while another is scaling the wall. The video clip shows the police asking the college students to vacate the premises. "Today, IPCW's fest was going when drunk men

# Man live streams suicide bid on FB, saved by swift police intervention

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



A 25-year-old man who live-streamed his suicide attempt on Facebook was saved by the swift intervention of the police in northeast Delhi's Nand Nagri area. According to police, they received the information regarding the incident on Monday at 9.06 PM and a team reached the house of the victim at 9.09 PM.

staff, swung into action and rushed to the spot. On the way, he also mobilised an emergency response vehicle, beat staff and PCR to the given address so that the person could be rescued, police said. After reaching the house, the 25-year-old man was found lying on a bed in a drowsy state. His parents revealed that he was depressed since March 8 and was getting treatment for it, they said. IFSO, Dwarka had also provided a photo and video where the man was seen holding tablets and "Bye. Forever bass. Aaj ke bad. Kabhi. Ye. Akh. Na. Khule. (Goodbye forever. After today, these eyes will not open)" was also written, they said.

The Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operation (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police informed Nand Nagri police station SHO that the social networking platform had given information regarding the incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast) Joy Tirkey said. They also provide two contact numbers associated with the Facebook ID, Tirkey said. The SHO, along with the

# 56% of city's buildings built in unplanned manner, says LG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (LG) VK Saxena on Tuesday said that more than half of the buildings in Delhi have been built in an unplanned manner exposing the city to the threat of disasters like earthquakes.

Speaking at the launch of the 'Aapda Mitra' training programme by the IP University, he said the role these volunteers will play during a potential disaster is very important as they would be the first responders. Their role is not confined to disasters as they are expected to respond to incidents like road accidents, snatching, eve-teasing etc, the LG said. "Fifty-sixty per cent of the buildings of Delhi have been constructed in an unplanned manner due to flux of urbanization. As a result of it, we are running the risk of the big fire, earthquake-like disasters. Seeing these disaster percep-

tions, the role of Aapda Mitra volunteers is significant," Saxena added. The LG also inaugurated the newly built 'Atal Incubation Centre' and 'auditorium-cum-placement centre and open air theatre' of the Dwarka campus of the university. Delhi Principal Secretary (Home) Ashwani Kumar said a total of 1,800 Aapda Mitras are being trained as a part of this drive. As many as 600 volunteers selected by Delhi Disaster Management Authority are being trained by IP University and the rest



Senior party leader and AICC in-charge for Madhya Pradesh JP Agarwal and party workers were detained by Delhi Police from Jain Mandir-Gauri Shankar Mandir near Red Fort after they gathered for the 'Loktantra Bachao Mashaal Shanti March' to Town Hall in Chandani Chowk on Tuesday.

# Delhi Haat-INA, Chandni Chowk, CP most sought after locations for web series, film shootings

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Dilli Haat-INA, Chandni Chowk and Connaught Place are among the most sought-after locations for film and web series shoots in Delhi, which has witnessed over a dozen productions since the implementation of the city government's film policy last May. The Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation acts as a facilitator for film productions in the capital.

that grant the various approvals related to film production. The government has facilitated 13 film and web series shoots since the policy's implementation. These include two Hollywood films, the official said. "Chandni Chowk, Connaught Place, Dilli Haat-INA and Pritampura are the most sought-after locations. Producers are also interested in filming at the Red Fort. Birla Mandir is also popular," he added. The official said, "We have facilitated the production of 13 films and web series, including a few international movies. We have received applications (to film) at 52 locations as a movie requires multiple locations. At present, seven applications are in process."

The Tourism department has received 52 applications for film and web series shoots since the Delhi Film Policy-2022 was introduced last May, the official said. Under the policy, a single-window e-Film Clearance portal has been created to bring over 20 agencies

# Fake Territorial Army site created by scamsters to dupe job aspirants: Officer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered a case based on a complaint by a senior Territorial Army officer that a fake website of the organisation has been created by "scamsters" who are carrying out a fake recruitment drive using the online platform. Territorial Army is described as "a citizens army which assess regular armed force in times of need."

domain and also maligning the image of Territorial Army and leading to financial losses to the young aspirants. The fake website has also uploaded fake forms and QR codes for payment to dupe job aspirants, he alleged. The complaint addressed to Delhi Police Commissioner as well as to Delhi Police's Special Cell unit also mentioned the official website of Territorial Army which is www.jointerritorialarmy.gov.in. "It is very important to take necessary action against the domain concerned as this has various repercussions which includes maligning the image of Territorial Army and Indian Army."



# Licences of 18 firms nixed over fake drugs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Close on the heels of India-made eye drops and cough-syrup-associated deaths in the US and the Gambia and Uzbekistan respectively, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) and States drug controller authorities has recently cracked the whip against the manufacture of substandard drugs conducted through inspections at 76 pharma companies and cancelled the licences of 18 of them for producing spurious and adulterated drugs, officials said on Tuesday.

As part of the special drive by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation and state drug regulators, 203 firms had been identified and action has been taken against 76 of them which includes issuance of show cause notices to 26 companies. The inspections were carried out across 20 states and Union territories in the past 15 days, they said.

They further said that the



action has been taken against 76 companies in the first phase of a special drive against the manufacture of substandard drugs.

"Licences of 18 pharma companies have been cancelled for manufacturing spurious and adulterated drugs and for violating GMP (good manufacturing practice)... Besides, 26 firms have been given show-cause notices," an official source said.

The sources said that as part of the special drive, the regulators have identified 203 firms. A majority of the companies are from Himachal Pradesh (70), followed by

Uttarakhand (45) and Madhya Pradesh (23).

As per the details shared by the Union Health Ministry, the maximum-70-number of drug manufacturing units identified for inspection are in Himachal Pradesh, the drug manufacturing hub of India. Himachal Pradesh is followed by Uttarakhand (45), Madhya Pradesh (23) and Uttar Pradesh (20).

The other states where defaulting drug manufacturers are located include West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Sikkim among others.

# Cong's month-long stir to press for JPC, protest against Rahul's disqualification

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Tuesday announced over a month-long agitational programmes from block to national level, including a 'Jai Bharat Maha Satyagraha' in the second week of April, to protest Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha and to press their demand for a JPC probe into the Adani issue.

The agitational programmes include the 'Loktantra Bachao Mashaal Shanti March' starting from Red Fort on Tuesday and a series of press conferences in 35 major cities across the country on Wednesday.

As part of 'Loktantra Bachao Mashaal Shanti March' Congress leaders assembled near the Red Fort on Tuesday with burning torches in their hands but soon were dispersed and many detained by police forces. Congress leaders, including former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat, former Delhi Congress chief and MP JP Agarwal were detained by the Delhi Police. BRS MP Keshav Rao too



was spotted at the protest site. Senior leader P Chidambaram was also stopped from reach-

ing the Red Fort, from where the party had planned a protest march to Town Hall in old

Delhi's Chandni Chowk.

Addressing a press conference along general secretary in-charge Jairam Ramesh, AICC general secretary in-charge organisation K C Venugopal said in solidarity with Rahul Gandhi and in support of his uncompromising fight against the 'loot of public and national wealth by the Modi-Adani nexus', the party organised a one-day 'Sankalp Satyagraha' at Raj Ghat in and in front of Gandhi statues, in all state and district headquarters early this week.

# Cong to convene meet of top Opp leaders next month to forge unity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha coming as a blessing in disguise for the fragmented Opposition, Congress is set to convene a meeting of top Opposition leaders next month after some of them urged the grand old party to take the lead in strengthening

unity among anti-BJP forces. Party sources said the meeting would take forward the bonhomie displayed by several Opposition parties during the Budget Session of Parliament and it would be expanded outside too.

Congress sources said the proposal for this meeting was made at the meeting of opposition leaders convened by Congress president

Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence on Monday evening.

Leaders, including NCP chief Sharad Pawar, DMK leader T R Baalu, JDU's Lallan Singh and a CPI-M leader, called upon the Congress leadership to convene a meeting of party's national presidents and top leaders to chalk out a blueprint for the 2024 general elections.

# Watching Rahul's court case, says Washington

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

In the backdrop of legal proceedings involving Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in India, the US has said it is watching the court case while observing Washington continues to engage with India on the shared commitment towards democratic principles and the protection of human rights, including freedom of expression.

"Respect for the rule of law and judicial independence is a cornerstone of any democracy. We are watching Mr Gandhi's case in Indian courts and we engage with the Government of India on our shared commitment to democratic values, including, freedom of expression," the State Department's Deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters in Washington at a news conference late Monday.

"In our engagements with our Indian partners, we continue to highlight the importance of democratic principles and the protection of human rights, including freedom of expression, as a key to strengthening both our democracies," he said.

# Nepal puts Amritpal on its surveillance list to prevent escape

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI / KATHMANDU

Taking note of India's request to prevent fugitive Amritpal Singh from fleeing from their country to a third nation, Nepal has put him on its surveillance list. He is believed to be hiding there and New Delhi requested Kathmandu to arrest Amritpal if he attempts to escape on an Indian passport or any other fake passport.

Reports from Kathmandu said the Nepal-India border area has been kept on 'high alert' for two days. Police in plain clothes have stepped up vigilance in the border area as Singh could enter the country from Kapilvastu in Western Nepal.

The Department of Immigration has put Singh on its surveillance list following a request from the Indian Embassy here, officials said in Kathmandu.

"We have received a written note along with a copy of his passport from the (Indian)



embassy suspecting that Amritpal Singh might have entered Nepal," said Kamal Prasad Pandey, the Information Officer at the Department late Monday.

"The Indian Embassy has sent the note asking the Department to put Singh, a member of a separatist group, on the surveillance list," Pandey said. It was suspected that he had entered Nepal and was hiding somewhere around. There was no immediate confirmation about the letter from the Indian mission in Kathmandu.

Earlier, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported that in a letter sent to the

Department of Consular Services on Saturday, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu has requested the government agencies to arrest Singh if he tries to flee from Nepal.

"Singh is currently hiding in Nepal," the paper said, citing a copy of the letter obtained by it. "The esteemed ministry is requested to inform the Department of Immigration not to permit Amritpal Singh to travel through Nepal for any third country and arrest him if he attempts to escape from Nepal using Indian Passport or any other fake passport under intimation to this mission," it said. The letter and Singh's per-

sonal details have been circulated to all the concerned agencies from hotels to airlines, the paper said, citing multiple sources.

Singh, who is said to be possessing multiple passports with different identities, has been on the run since March 18 when the police launched a crackdown against him.

The elusive preacher gave the police the slip and escaped their dragnet when his cavalcade was intercepted in Punjab's Jalandhar district.

Meanwhile, the Home Ministry has directed all security agencies to be on high alert in the Nepal-India border area.

Citing ministry sources, My Republica newspaper said the instruction was given at the request of Indian security officials and the Nepal-India border area has been kept on 'high alert' for two days.

Quoting sources, the report said that police in plain clothes have stepped up vigilance in the border area as Singh could enter the country from Kapilvastu in Western Nepal.

# BBC News' Punjabi Twitter account blocked in operation to nab Amritpal



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As the operation to nab Amritpal Singh entered the 10th day on Tuesday, British broadcaster BBC News' Punjabi language Twitter account was blocked.

Visitors to @bbc-news-punjabi were met with a gray screen and the message:

"...account has been withheld in India in response to a legal demand".

Reports indicate that over 100 Twitter handles and multiple YouTube channels have been blocked as Punjab and the centre hunt down Amritpal Singh. The operation to capture the 'Waris Punjab De' chief was launched March 18.

# 97% wards have doorstep waste collection: Puri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) Minister Hardeep Singh Puri informed that 97% of wards today have door-to-door collection and approximately 75% of the total waste is being processed and 90% of wards are practicing source segregation. He was addressing the Members of the Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, Kaushal Kishore, Manoj Joshi, Secretary, MoHUA, Naresh Kumar, Chief Secretary, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Commissioner, DDA, Commissioner, MCD and senior officers from the SBM attended the meeting on behalf of MoHUA. Ramesh Bidhuri, Dr.Kalpna Saini, Thiru A.K.P.Chinraj & Parvesh Sahib Singh were the

Members of Parliament who attended the meeting.

Informing the members, the minister further stated that at the time of launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission, 95 lakh tonnes per annum (i.e. 26,027 tonnes per day) of waste was treatment capacity across processes such as composting, bio-methanation, RDF and waste to energy plants. This has been enhanced substantially in the last 8 years, and presently, designed input capacity of functional waste to energy and waste to compost plants is approx.1 lakh TPD (incl. C&D waste processing plants).

Puri said that there are 2,285 functional waste to compost plants with capacity to process 71,682 tonnes of waste per day (TPD), and another 73 plants are under construction, with approx. input capacity of 1,084 tonnes per day.

## SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Rajesh Nandal/ Sarita/ LBDEL00001761453/ LBDEL00004848361	Flat No-7-D, 3rd Floor, With Scooter Garage, Pkt-2, Sec-6, Dwarka, Delhi 110075/ 23 March, 2023	August 01, 2022 Rs.19,00,354/-	Delhi

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : March 29, 2023 Place : Delhi/ NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

## PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

[See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets

This E-auction Sale notice for sale of Immovable asset is being issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. (an underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the following borrower(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Mukesh Kumar Singh (Borrower) Ms. Kanchan Devi (Co-Borrower) OZJNK00005025598	Flat No. D-2/ 209, 2nd Floor LHS Portion, Khasra No. 773, Hoovers Apartment, Extended Lal Dora Abadi, Village Burari, Delhi. Area: 50.73 Sq Mtrs	Rs. 24,71,926/- as on (March 24, 2023)	Rs. 18,10,000/- to Rs. 1,81,000/-	15, 2023 from 02:30 PM to 04:30 PM	May 10, 2023 11:00 AM onwards

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. (URL Link-https://disposalhub.com). The Mortgagors/noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till May 09, 2023 before 5:00 PM failing which, this secured asset will be sold as per schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) to ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005 on or before May 09, 2023 before 5:00 PM and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before May 09, 2023 before 5:00 PM along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005 on or before May 09, 2023 before 5:00 PM, Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the E-auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Bank Limited on 9599281817/8584874809

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augoe Asset Management Pvt Ltd. 3. Hecta Proptech Private Limited have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date : March 29, 2023 Place : Delhi/ NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

# Multi-alignment, hedging needed, says IDSA chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Multi-alignment and hedging are the order of the day as the present era is an era of poly crises and all aspects of globalization are under stress including trade, technology, finance, movement of human resources, energy and food.

Making this point here on Tuesday, chief of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) Sujan R. Chinoy also expressed apprehensions that many developed nations might face recession at a time when the impact of Covid 19 and Russia Ukraine war has exacerbated regional economic challenges.

In such a context, hedging and multi-alignment are the order of the day. He expressed his optimism about India becoming a developed country by the centenary year of its independence riding



on its resilient economy and fast growth rate. Talking about the Indo Pacific, he said that it was emerging as a more transparent and inclusive construct and India would favour an inclusive and rule-based order in the region.

In his introductory address, Chinoy said in Asia's multi-polarity lies the hope for multi-polarity at the global level. He said India's G20 presidency has many firsts. For the first time, it is being taken to the masses and four developing countries are hosting it back to back—last year it was Indonesia and this year it is India. Over the next two years Brazil and South Africa are going to host it.

# India to continue to work with African nations, says Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/PUNE

India will continue to work with African nations to promote regional security, foster stability and enhance the defence capabilities together, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday.

He reiterated India's commitment to provide support to African partner-countries in all defence related matters, including capability enhancement of their Armed Forces, to ensure their economic growth and social development. He emphasised that the full potential of a nation's progress can be realised only when its security is ensured.

Rajnath made these observations in Pune during his address at the first edition of India-Africa Army Chiefs' Conclave organised on the sidelines of 2nd Africa-India Joint Exercise 'AFINDEX'. The con-



clave was attended by Army chief General Manoj Pande and Chiefs and representatives of 31 African nations, along with other civil and defence dignitaries.

"We believe that preservation of individual human rights such as the right to life and personal liberty, right to employment and right to livelihood are dependent on a strong and effective state apparatus which can ensure the Rule of Law as well as promote economic

growth and social development. Development can only take place in a safe and secure environment," the defence minister said. "Though many of us have come a long way since our independence, there are many African countries where the capacity building of state systems is still a work in progress," he said while emphasising the need to build robust state structures which can cater to the needs and aspirations of the people.

# Cheetah death: SC wants to check task force experts' qualification

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A day after a Namibian cheetah died at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, the Supreme Court on Tuesday sought details of experts in the Cheetah Task Force such as their qualification and experience. The four-and-a-half-year-old female cheetah, named Sasha, died due to a kidney ailment more than six months after she was translocated to the Kuno National Park (KNP) from Namibia, along with seven other big cats.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Vikram Nath asked the Centre to furnish details of the experts in the task force who specialise in cheetah management, their experience and



qualification within two weeks.

The top court's direction came while hearing an application filed by the Centre seeking direction from the court that it is no longer necessary and mandatory for the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to continue taking the guidance and advice of the expert committee appointed by this court through an order dated January 28, 2020.

The three-member committee comprising former director of wildlife protection M K Ranjit Singh, chief conservator of forests, wildlife administration in Uttarakhand Dhananjai Mohan and the DIG (Wildlife) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) will guide the NTCA in the introduction of African cheetahs in India.

Senior Advocate Prashanto Chandra Sen, appearing for NGO Centre for Environment Law WWF, said that the Cheetah Task Force does not have any cheetah expert in the panel. He said that since cheetahs have been brought, the NTCA should continue to work with the expert committee constituted by the apex court, at

least for the initial level. "Cheetahs have come and we have lost one of them. There is a need to have experts, who have wide knowledge and experience in cheetah management," he said.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, said that the government has prepared a scientific action plan for introduction of cheetah in India. "The action plan is a comprehensive scientific document prepared in consultation with scientists, veterinarians, forest officers and cheetah experts from India as well as other countries like Namibia, South Africa, United States of America, etc.," she said.

Bhati said that it cannot be a case that only their experts

know everything and other experts do not know anything about cheetah management. Justice Nath observed that nowadays the government is taking a lot of interest in wildlife protection.

The bench posted the matter after two weeks and asked Bhati to submit details of cheetah experts in the task force. The Centre, in its application said that as per the action plan for cheetah introduction in India, annually 8-14 cheetahs are required to be brought in from African countries for the next five-years at least and an MoU has been signed between Government of India and Republic of Namibia and South Africa for cooperation in the field of cheetah conservation.



# EAC defers green nod to K'taka airport project

Seeks more information

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI



no such activity was being executed.

With this development, the construction of the proposed airport is likely to be delayed much to the chagrin of the Karnataka Government which is keen to flag off the project by March so that it can be inaugurated before the Election Commission Model Code of Conduct is imposed on the State.

The project is to come up at the 727 acres (294.20 ha) area for which land has already been acquired. Initially three other sites namely Bijapur (at Arakeri village near Bhutanal tank), Mulwada and Madhubhavi were considered but not found feasible for the project.

However, the EAC chaired by Promode Kant, while examining Google based imageries/maps of the proposed site, noticed "some construction work at the proposed site. On enquiry, the proponent informed that only some preparatory work has been carried out on the site. The EAC requested the proponent to submit an undertaking wherein it is clearly stated that no construction work had been initiated on the proposed site. However, the proponent could not submit the undertaking at the EAC meeting held on February 24.

"In view of non-submission of the undertaking regarding existing construction work, the proposal has been deferred," said the panel. If media reports are to be believed, work on the internal road, parking facilities, and the apron has been completed, work is still under way on the runway, taxiway and other facilities.

# Mamata slams Centre for blocking State's funds

Made mistake of supporting GST, says CM

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA



Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday mounted fresh attacks on the Centre for blocking State's funds and admitted her Government's folly in supporting the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime that had reduced the States' say and control over the taxes.

Banerjee who flagged off from Singur the much touted Pathashree project for constructing 12,000 km of roads in rural Bengal said she had supported the GST Bill because she thought that it benefited the State but in real terms it turned out to be the opposite.

"I thought that GST would finally become beneficial for us but now we realise that we had done a mistake by supporting

it ... "This is because the Centre is misusing its provisions by collecting all the taxes from our State but not giving us a farthing," Banerjee said at the meeting organised at Singur once the hotbed of her land movement which finally saw the Tata Motors abandon its nearly-completed Nano car project.

Alleging that the Centre had stopped funds meant for MNREGA, OBC scholarship, Prime Minister's Awas Yojna etc Banerjee said she would continue to fight against the deprivation.

**CBI to probe attack on Pramanik's convoy**

PNS ■ KOLKATA

A Division Bench of the Calcutta HC on Tuesday ordered a CBI investigation into the alleged attack on the convoy of Union Home Minister of State for Home Affairs Nishit Pramanik.

Pramanik's convoy was attacked allegedly by TMC supporters at Dinhat in Coochbehar district when he went there on February 25 to attend a political programme.

# Bombay HC admits plea seeking ED probe in graft in Covid relief grant

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



The Bombay High Court on Tuesday admitted an application seeking an investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into the alleged irregularities and corruption in the grant of rebate towards the Covid-19 relief and also for denied buses by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)-controlled BEST Undertaking resulting in huge loss to the civic body exchequer.

Allowing a praecipe filed by RTI activist and lawyer Pravin Wategaonkar seeking urgency of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by him earlier this month, a HC bench of Revati Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Sharmila U Deshmukh agreed to hear the matter at an early date.

In his petition, Wategaonkar said that the BEST Undertaking had on January 23, 2019 issued a letter of successful bidder M/s Sign Post India Pvt. Ltd. approving its offer of Rs. 95.50 crore for display of advertisement on panels of buses of the Undertaking for a period of three years i.e. from February 2019 to February 2022.

The letter of allotment required M/s Signpost to adjudicate the contract agreement as regards the stamp duty payable and execute the same within one month. The contractor acknowledged the letter and confirmed he would comply with the terms and conditions. However the agreement was neither adjudicated nor executed for the entire three-year period, thus evading stamp duty payable of about Rs. 48 lakh and also violating the Mumbai Municipal Corporations Act.

In addition, the public servants of the BEST Undertaking

— against Rs 95.50 crore receivable — had granted M/s Sign Post India Pvt. Ltd towards Covid relief and also for denied buses without existence of valid contract thereby causing wrongful loss to public exchequer and wrongful gain to the said contractor of about Rs. 42 crore.

Wategaonkar had earlier lodged a complaint with the Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of the Mumbai police. Without taking any action on the complaint, the EOW of Mumbai had forwarded the complaint to BMC Commissioner on January 5, 2023 and maintained existence of 'contractual arrangement' and asked the petitioner to withdraw his complaint.

In his PIL, the petitioner has urged the high court to direct the EOW to register offences against the officials of BEST including its General manager and others for cheating (section 420), forgery (section 463), conspiracy (section 120 B) under the Indian Penal Code, section 13 (criminal misconduct by a public servant) under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

The petitioner has also urged the high court to direct the ED to invoke the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 and conduct investigations under the supervision of the court without any further delay.

# Pawar pitches in to defuse Cong-MVA tension over Savarkar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI | MUMBAI

Disqualified Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has now found himself in another 'jibe' row over his comments on freedom fighter Veer Savarkar after already being convicted for two years imprisonment in the 'all Modi chor' snub.

While the grandson of late Hindutva ideologue Savarkar has sought action against the former Congress chief for his comments and also challenged Rahul to show documents that prove he had apologised to the British, former Union Minister Sharad Pawar pitched in to tone down the strain developed in

the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance of which NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena is part and also ran a Uddhav Thackeray led government.

Termining it unfortunate, former vice president M Venkaiah Naidu said that V D Savarkar's name was being "blackened needlessly" by those who seem to be ignorant of his "matchless sacrifice" during the freedom struggle. Without naming anyone, he said the country's heroes and nationalists deserve utmost respect.

Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule dared Uddhav Thackeray to walk out of MVA if he really cannot tolerate late Hindutva



ideologue V D Savarkar's "insult" by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Thackeray and Pawar have asked Rahul Gandhi not to tar-



get Savarkar, a revered figure in Maharashtra. The Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena had skipped the meeting convened by Kharge as a mark of protest

against Gandhi's remarks targeting Savarkar.

Sources from Opposition meeting said Congress has agreed to tone down its criticism of Savarkar. As part of the Opposition leaders meeting Pawar stepped in to play the peacemaker by conveying the Shiv Sena's concerns on the issue to the Congress leadership.

Pawar raised the issue and made it clear that targeting Savarkar, a revered figure in Maharashtra, would not help the opposition alliance in the state. Former Congress Presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi were present at the meeting along with leaders

of opposition parties.

Pawar also told Rahul Gandhi that Savarkar was never a member of the RSS and underscored that the real fight of the opposition parties was with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP.

As the BJP stepped up attack on Rahul Gandhi and sought his apology for "maligning" India on his recent tour to the UK, the former Lok Sabha member from Wayanad had said that he was not Savarkar and would not apologise.

Rahul's "My name is not Savarkar, my name is Gandhi and Gandhi does not offer an apology to anyone" remark has drawn fire from BJP.

# Delhi HC summons Uddhav, Aditya, Raut in civil defamation case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday issued summons to Uddhav Thackeray, Aadiya Thackeray and Sanjay Raut on a civil defamation suit filed by Eknath Shinde faction leader Rahul Shewale for their statements against Shinde faction. Justice Prateek Jalan, however, declined to pass any interim order restraining the leaders from making any statements saying no interim order can be passed without hearing the defendants. "I don't want to pass a gag order on day one, an injunction against free speech in a political fight," the judge said.

Shewale, who is the leader of Shiv Sena in the Lok Sabha, moved Court alleging that Raut had said that there was a deal of Rs. 2000 crore following which the Shiv Sena name and bow and arrow symbol was



allotted to the Eknath Shinde faction by the Election Commission by a recent order.

Senior Advocate Rajiv Nayar appeared for Shewale and asked the court to pass an order to injunct Thackerays and Raut from making any further defamatory allegations. The Court said that these are matters falling within political arena and it will pass orders only after hearing the defendants.

Nayar said that the defendants have made allegations against institutions like the Election Commission. Justice Jalan responded by saying that institutions will have to stand up for themselves.

# Shinde faction to spread Sena's wings in 19 States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After outwitting Uddhav Thackeray in the power game in Maharashtra, the Shinde-led Shiv Sena plans to expand nationally and to soon formalize the party structure across 19 States.

According to the Shinde-Shiv Sena, the party will "Prioritise Hindutva and Good Governance" while executing its plan to expand nationally ahead of the Lok Sabha polls which are barely 12 months away.

The party said on the occasion of Navratra, senior Shiv Sena leaders and former Union Minister Anand Rao Adzul visited Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir in the national Capital and said "the party would leverage youth leadership to expand in over 19

states". "Shiva Sena would honour and take forward the legacy of Bala Saheb Thakre with regards to Hindutva and alliance with its old ally BJP" said Adzul.

While unfolding its expansion plan the party asserted that it had proved its "good governance in eight months of its rule in Maharashtra".

"We want to honour and take forward the legacy of Bala Saheb Thakre with regards to propagation of Hindutva, good governance, and age-old alliances and accordingly we have chalked out its national plans and actions. The party aims to reach out and strengthen its hold in 19 states at the earliest. We are reaching out with people with our Hindutva and good governance agenda", informed the Shiv Sena MP.

# 'Mahayagya for world peace to take place in Delhi from April 6-10'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, stated that the Dharm Sansad and the World Guru-Bharat Mahayagya for world peace will be held from April 6 to 10 in Delhi. The event will take place at the Chhatrapur temple area, with saints from various States of the country attending the Sanatan Sanskriti Samagam.

The information was shared by Central Minister Choubey during a press conference held at his government residence in Delhi.

He stated that on the first day of the five-day Sanatan culture confluence, the Dharm Sansad will be held. Additionally, for the next four days, yajnas and pujas will be conducted.

# Cruelty to stray dogs is against Constitutional ethos: Bombay HC

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Batting for feeding of stray dogs on the premises of a housing society, the Bombay High Court observed here on Tuesday that hating and treating dogs with cruelty "can never be an acceptable approach from the people of a civil society" as such an act of cruelty to such animals "would be against the Constitutional ethos and statutory provisions".

Hearing a petition filed by a dog-lover of a cooperative housing society in Mumbai seeking designated feeding areas in housing society for stray dogs, a HC division bench of Justices GS Kulkarni and RN Laddha refused to restrain the petitioner Paromita Purthan from feeding the stray dogs on the premises of a housing society. It asked the housing society's Managing Committee to discuss the matter with the petitioner and find a suitable place for feeding stray dogs in



the society.

In her petition, Purthan had — among other things — alleged to the High Court that the managing committee of the society was resorting to 18 stray dogs by taking a stand that it would not provide a designated feeding spot for feeding the stray dogs and threatened to hire bouncers to restrain her from feeding the dogs.

Purthan is a resident of RNA Royale Park, a co-operative housing society located at Kandivali (west) in north

Mumbai.

Taking a serious cognisance of the petitioner's complaint against the managing Committee of the housing society, the HC bench noted that treating stray dogs with cruelty was an "unacceptable approach" from persons living in a civilised society.

"To hate stray dogs and/or treat them with cruelty can never be an acceptable approach, from persons of civil society, as an act of cruelty to such animals would be against the Constitutional ethos and the statutory provisions," the HC bench stated in its nine-page order.

Underscoring the need for taking care of stray animals, Justice Kulkarni noted: "These are all living beings, we have to care for them. The petitioner has been nurturing dogs in a particular area, and they will continue coming there. You have to take care and survive with them".

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Reforms needed

Atiq's conviction will restore people's faith in the law but the fight against crime should be systemic and systematic

**G**angster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad's conviction and life imprisonment on Tuesday will surely bolster the image of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as a leader who is committed to checking crime in the country's largest state. The fact that Ahmad's career as a criminal ends in accordance with the process of law is very important. In a state which has gained some notoriety because of its cops' proclivity for encounters, this is indeed a welcome change. Atiq had expressed fear on Sunday that he might be killed in an encounter like another gangster, Vikas Dubey, was in July 2020. Ahmad was being taken by road to Prayagraj from Gujarat's Sabarmati jail. That didn't happen.



Ahmad and two other accused Dinesh Pasi and Khan Saulat Haneef were found guilty in the 2006 kidnaping case of lawyer Umesh Pal. Pal was a key witness to a 2005 murder of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA murder. Last month, Pal was allegedly killed by some gunmen, including Atiq's son Asad. UP Government and Bharatiya Janata Party supporters may gloat over Atiq Ahmad's conviction, but they must realise that a great deal more needs to be done. For them, it is not the time to rest on their laurels but to ensure that the fight against crime is not episodic but systemic and systematic.

The response of Pal's family to Ahmad's conviction speaks volumes about people's expectations from government. While welcoming the conviction, Pal's widow and mother made it clear that they wanted nothing less than a death sentence for the gangster-turned-politician. They almost alluded to the desirability of an encounter. This is understandable from the family members of a person who was gunned down by the henchmen of a mafia don; but the problem is that there are a large number of people who are so exasperated with the glacial pace of the process of law that they support extrajudicial killings. In the instant case too, the law took its course, but that involved a lot of time, 17 long years. Sometimes, it takes even longer. There was a recent verdict, resulting in the acquittal of the accused after 34 years. This was not from a remote part of the country involving ordinary people; it was about an alleged attempt on the life of tycoon Nusli Wadia in Mumbai. The acquittal was on account of want of evidence. At the heart of the problem is the lack of administrative, police, and judicial reforms. Now that the BJP is in power both at the Centre and in UP, it can very well expedite these reforms. Senior Congress leader M Veerappa Moily headed the Second Administrative Reforms Commission prepared 15 reports, the last of which came out in April 2009. It is time to dust those reports and implement the parts which are relevant. And if there are major lacunae, the ruling dispensation can have another panel to recommend administrative reforms. Ditto with police and judicial reforms.

### PICTALK



Idols of the Pandavas, erected as part of preparations for 'Painkuni' festival, Thiruvananthapuram

## Theatre's immersive experience



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Theatre can provide a nuanced and personal perspective on issues relevant to society. Its appeal is unmatched and transcends time

*Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you - trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say, the whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.*

**H**amlet, Act 3, Scene 2: William Shakespeare's Hamlet instructs the actors in the play he wrote, advising them not to overact or use large gestures. He is telling the players to act realistically, a paradox because actors do not act out reality, and also dramatic irony because Claudius does not know the play is meant to expose his guilty conscience.

Theatre is more than just entertainment; it is a powerful tool for communication and expression. As we reflect on theatre's role in our lives, we must also consider how it can improve communication skills. Effective communication is crucial in today's world. It is necessary in every aspect of our lives, personal or professional.

Theatre can play a significant role in bridging this communication gap. It is a medium that transcends language and cultural barriers, making it a powerful tool for communication. Through theatre, people can connect and express themselves, regardless of their language or background.

Furthermore, theatre can help develop various communication skills, such as public speaking, active listening, and empathy. These skills are essential in every aspect of our lives, from job interviews to social interactions. By participating in the theatre, individuals can improve these skills and become better communicators. Theatre is an excellent way to foster creativity and imagination. It encourages people to think outside the box and explore various perspectives. This ability to think creatively can translate into better problem-solving skills, which is crucial in today's fast-paced world. While the digital age has changed the way we commu-



nicate, theatre's role in mass communication is still relevant today for:

■ Theatres can create immersive experiences that cannot be replicated digitally. With the rise of streaming platforms, people have access to a wide variety of content at their fingertips. Theatre offers an unforgettable experience that cannot be captured on screen. It allows the audience to engage with the performers and experience emotions in real-time. Even many actors performing in a variety of television series today have theatre backgrounds.

■ Theatre can serve as a platform for social commentary and discussion. In today's digital age, there is an abundance of information available to us. Theatre can provide a more nuanced and personal perspective on issues relevant to society. It can spark conversations and encourage people to think critically about the world around them.

■ Theatre can be used for education and awareness. In a world where misinformation is rampant, theatre can be utilized to educate people about relevant issues from dowry to

female foeticide, to corruption, to environmental issues and so on. It can be used to teach history, culture, and social issues in an engaging and interactive way.

■ Theatres can leverage technology to enhance audience experiences. While the core of theatre is live performance, technology can be used to enhance the audience experience. For example, projection mapping, sound effects, and lighting can be used to create a more immersive and engaging experience for the audience.

■ Theatre can be used to connect with audiences beyond physical borders. With the rise of digital platforms, theatre can be accessed by audiences from all over the world. This offers theatre practitioners a unique opportunity to connect with diverse audiences and share their stories globally.

Theatre's role in mass communication in this digital age is still relevant today. It offers an exceptional and immersive experience, which can only be felt as one watches actors performing various scenes. Today technology can

and indeed is providing access to theatre productions making them more engaging and interesting - even connecting with audiences beyond physical borders. Theatre practitioners can leverage these opportunities to reach a wider audience and make a meaningful impact on society.

World Theatre Day was first celebrated by the International Theatre Institute (ITI), the world's largest performing arts body, in 1961. From the ancient times to the present, theatre has immensely contributed to the growth of society. It inspires creative people to understand social realities as they exist. Authorities (read government) and opinion leaders must be aware of the impact theatre makes on a nation's life. It is appropriate to bring in Shakespeare again for he had rightly pointed out in his play "As You Like It" that: "All the world's a stage/And all the men and women are merely players;/They have their exits and their entrances/And one man in his time plays many parts."

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti)

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THEATRE CAN HELP DEVELOP VARIOUS COMMUNICATION SKILLS, SUCH AS PUBLIC SPEAKING, ACTIVE LISTENING, AND EMPATHY

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Progress in semi-conductor industry



It would not be wrong to say that the semiconductor industry has become a way of life as it governs nearly all aspects of our life from education, medical care, movies, research and technology, games etc. It is partly true that the credit for this breakneck pace of progress in this digital age in the realm of computer chips goes to Gordon Moore, who co founded Intel Corp in July 1968. With the demise of this American

visionary, another chapter in Silicon Valley history has ended. In fact, his prophecy and prediction that every two years the number of transistors on a microchip would double has come true. The miniaturisation of the semiconductor industry in the last four decades was due to his pioneering work on devising Moore's Law. In 1965, he was the only person who understood the role of semiconductors in the future of mankind, i.e. chips have become smaller and smaller. He received multiple awards and recognition by scientific and research societies across America and Europe. Also, known for his work on environmental conservation and helping the poor and downtrodden, his name will remain deeply embedded in the hearts of millions of people.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

to such accusations, the reaction by the PM and his colleagues is to attack those who make criticisms.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

#### ADIEU INNOCENT

Sir — The death of the veteran Malayalam actor, Innocent, is unfortunate, he will be remembered for his humour and enthralling audience members. In his career spanning five decades, Innocent became a household name in the Malayalam film industry mostly through his comedic roles. He predominantly worked in Malayalam films in addition to few Tamil, Kannada, Hindi films. He gave life to some of the most loved characters of Malayalam cinema and featured in over 500 films. He made his silver screen debut in 1972 with the film Nirithsala co-starring Prem Nazeer who was also widely regarded as one of the most influential actors in Indian cinema history.

Innocent was a multi talented persona, a talented and versatile actor, master of humour. He was also known for incredible dialogue delivery. He was also a producer, author, and politician Member of

Lok Sabha (2014-2019),

Beside films and politics, Thespian also had authored some books including an inspiration book titled Cancer Wardle chiri" (Laughter in the cancer ward), where he has written about cancer treatment in a most humorous way which will continue to give courage to hundreds of patients battling this chronic tis disease, even today this disease still carries a lot of taboo. Innocent leaves behind an illustrious legacy of over five decades as an incredible artist who entertained his numerous fans with trade mark mannerism

Innocent will truly be remembered by the generations of Malayalam cinema fans in Kerala and other parts of the country and by the large Malayalam diaspora spread across GCC countries. They unitedly mourned his death and paid homage to the immortal actor and legend of Malayalam cinema. He was a legend and inspiration for generations. Who will be greatly missed

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bangalore

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Nature's punishment for our crimes is just

No innocent should be punished and no one deserving should escape it. Nature is fair to all and gives ample chance to rectify our mistakes

**I**t is true that all our lives we seek punishment for those who insult, cheat, harm us, etc. We alone are generally unable to do so, because this creation was not made that way. As far as punishment is concerned, God has held it to himself. This is not like a principal disciplining a student, but more. It is also more than what the law can do, because many are never brought to justice in present life. We can agree that there is apparent injustice, and we cannot do anything about it. We get angry because wrongdoers escape punishment and good people suffer.

Let us analyse and find out what actually happens. The system must be based on justice. It is. And the system is foolproof. No one deserving punishment should escape. There are two parts in this. One is why it cannot be done the way we want, i.e., instant or quick punishment to the alleged offender. The other is how it is efficiently done.

Let me explain why it cannot be done. A chance to reform oneself is given. What would we like to happen if we were offenders? Let's be hon-



est. We, like everyone else, make mistakes willingly or unwillingly. We realise what we have done, and are sorry about it. We are prepared to apologise, compensate etc. Shouldn't we be given a chance to do that? If there was instant punishment, this opportunity would not be there. As a matter of fact, we are given plenty of chances to rectify our mistakes, because that is fair. Lord Krishna states, "Having limbs on all sides; having eyes, head and mouth on all sides; having ears on all sides. It is he (God) who pervades all of this world." (13.13) The system is foolproof.

There is another consideration. What would instant punishment do to other members of the offender's

family? Suppose he or she deserves capital punishment. What happened to the family, who were not guilty? The crime was done in anger or lust. Aren't many connected to us? Divine authorities must consider this important fact. They do because creation must go on fairly. The system cannot function if some stray crime causes unnecessary disturbance. There is another consideration also. It may be more painful for someone who has been wronged if immediate punishment is administered. For example, a husband beats his wife, and deserves harsh punishment. If the husband is punished immediately, it will inconvenience the wife further.

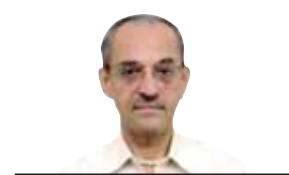
Now we come to some details about how justice is administered. Essentially, it is based on the 'Karmaphala Principle', which is: "What you sow you reap." Isn't that fair? In this administration of justice our past lives and the present life are taken into consideration. This is i.e. what we have been doing and what rewards and punishments are due to us.

As we can see, people from different backgrounds

have different natures. Some are kind, some are cruel. However, all have faults in their natures. Only liberated persons are almost fault-free and are preparing for liberation in the present life. God is very active in their lives. Divine authorities control all others. For example, a person is given a good soul as a reward. To punish, one is given a soul that is less good than that which is good. Since most of us have not yet achieved liberation, we live mixed lives; well-mannered people also get punished in life. And so-called bad people also have many successes in their lives.

This process is quite complicated. Lord Krishna has described it as: "The intricacies of action (Karma) are very difficult to understand." (The Gita 4.17) Therefore, let us not be drawn into judgement about others; why someone must be punished and now. It is all done in a systematic way that covers the present and future lives. No one is denied what is due to him or her and no one escapes the punishment.

(The writer is a spiritual writer)



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

#### NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW

Sir — This refers to the editorial, 'Dirty debate' (March 27). Following the conviction of the scion of the Gandhi family, Rahul Gandhi, by a Surat court over his unsavoury utterance 'why all the thieves have the Modi surname in common', the top echelons of the Congress have resorted to a dharna at Rajghat in Delhi in support of their would be Prime Minister as if some unprecedented faux pas might have been committed by the court. Before it, 32 MPs/MLAs/MLCs were sentenced & divested of their respective membership. Had the disqualified MP tendered an apology, as he had done in the Rafale case before the Supreme Court, he would have escaped with impunity. The Surat court has affirmed that, no matter how big you may be, you are not above law' & laws are applied equally on all, irrespective of the social or economical status. It is equally bizarre that all the divergent opposition parties have come together in support of Rahul Gandhi. I am of the opinion that unless a person is reminded of his mistake, how will he be able to know about his wrong doing?

Sagar Singh | Muzaffarnagar

#### DEFAMATION LAWS

Sir — Defamation laws in India is more severe than in most countries. It is exacerbated even a bit by the fact that the current legal system is sufficiently broken to allow people with money and power to use defamation to intimidate critics. In Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from the Parliament, the case itself is debatable. A legal scholar tweeted: "References to a generic class of persons are not actionable unless an individual can show a direct reference to themselves."

It is not that Rahul has made some contemptuous remarks against an entire community, but he has elicited the PM's association with disgraced business figures, with some of them sharing the same name. Cronyism has been a weak spot for Mr. Modi, amplified and exemplified by the Adani affair. Rather than taking head-on



## FIRST COLUMN

## BEWARE OF SOCIETY'S MORAL CRISIS

Our skewed planning causes inflation, pollution, consumerism and violence



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It has become customary nowadays among leaders of all political parties to discuss, in detail, annual budget or an economic plan, whether it promotes the public sector or the private sector and whether its proposals are labour-intensive or capital-intensive and so on. Nevertheless, few planners and economists have ever bothered about the moral climate plan. They have never considered whether that climate would be congenial to the plan's implementation. Nor, for that matter, have they ever seriously considered reforming the institutional mechanism which will execute the plan. In fact, our statesmen and economists have not fully realised how seriously the moral state of a society affects even secular matters like economic planning and how economic plans affect public morals.

This fact is not given proper cognizance by them that the feverish growth of unaccounted money, the collusion of bureaucrats with business executives or contractors to cheat the law and the exchequer, lack of devotion to work, and the loss of integrity in public life can make a nonsense of even the most meticulous economic plan. If the work of implementation of schemes proceeds at a slovenly pace, if political parties collect funds in all sorts of devious ways and if the moral authority of our leaders gets increasingly eroded, not the best of plans or budgets can improve the economic situation, and improve the lot of the poor. In such an atmosphere, it is only the most vocal, the most combative and the clever, and not the most deprived and the most needy, who benefit from planning.



It is, therefore, necessary to see what concerted effort can be made to cultivate and internalise the values and to reform the institutional mechanism so that the plan is properly executed and the benefits of the plan can reach the poor people and the plan does not generate a system that impels every individual, family or group to maximise its own gains, unmindful of what happens to the rest. As our planning system stands at present, it reproduces inflation, pollution, consumerism and social violence. This is in an environment of wide-spread poverty, dishonesty, income concealment, tax-evasion, etc. and it generates loss of moral values. It is, therefore, time that our economists pay attention to the moral aspect of planning. This is before the moral crisis overwhelms the whole economic system and society.

Today we witness the fall of many governments, empires, kingdoms, and democracies across the world. The reason behind their collapse is because the values and aims of both leaders and people are not clean. The seed of difficulties in our system is the lack of awareness and practice of values such as cooperation, honesty, serving, self-examination and self-discipline. This is mainly because since childhood we have been taught to compete fiercely in order to succeed rather than to develop individual talents to complement each other; to possess and accumulate more as a means of security rather than sharing our resources and realizing that security comes when there is unity, a sense of belonging among everyone in society. Because of this ignorance towards values, vices are created, resulting in further misery for humanity. Politics would thus be wrong to use religion, culture and economics for selfish ends or to satisfy power. For example, it should learn the ethics and economics of people's welfare, thus using the power it has gained to strive for purity, peace, and prosperity as a common goal.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & columnist)

## ONDC: A game changer in e-commerce

ONDC provides an outside-the-box solution to e-commerce problems to ensure that buyers and sellers are not exploited



ASHWANI MAHAJAN



For more than a decade, e-commerce has seen exponential growth in India and around the world. About 6.5 percent of India's retail business happens through e-commerce. E-commerce has made life easy, as people get commodities and services conveniently with the click of a button, sitting at home. In today's world, whether it's a rail, bus or plane ticket, a hotel reservation or taxi, or auto commuting, everything has become very convenient. Not only this, various domestic and business services can be easily accessed through e-commerce.

Today, numerous types of businesses are conducted using e-commerce—consumer goods, e-pharmacy, e-grocery, delivery, payment, travel, hotel booking, taxi, vehicle pooling, car rental, household, financial, employment, matrimonial match-making services, etc.

However, at the same time, the dominance of some big e-commerce companies has increased, causing huge losses to conventional businesses. Due to their monopoly over data, these e-commerce companies discriminate against different sellers and give preference to their favorite sellers, thereby creating a disadvantage for other sellers.

Though these companies claim to provide cheaper goods and services, apparently through technology, this isn't due to their efficiency, but to their cash-burning business models. Due to their financial muscle, these companies offer hefty discounts to consumers to destroy the businesses of small, traditional shopkeepers, travel agents, etc.

If we look at cab aggregators, we find that in the initial phase, they also made people travel for free with their own money. They also gave huge incentives to attract drivers. But now, after establishing their business, consumers are made to pay through the nose, and almost one-third of drivers' earnings are snatched by these aggregators.

E-commerce companies, acting as aggregators, eat into the incomes of small vendors and poor workers, leaving them with only two options, either get exploited or leave the business. Be it grocery shops or garment shops or electronics and home furnishings showrooms, or traditional travel

agents, the employment of people in different types of retail business has been affected by e-commerce companies. These companies can do so because they have more information about consumer preferences, purchasing power, location, etc.

Due to all this information, they can reach consumers more easily than conventional businesses, and with artificial intelligence (AI), they gain an undue advantage. Sometimes e-commerce is also exploitative, resulting in job losses. Apart from this, it is also seen that to maximise their profits, e-commerce giants procure from anywhere in the world, mostly from China. Indian products are flushed out by these e-commerce giants, with the result that our youths are reduced to becoming delivery boys.

We can't stop e-commerce and there is no need to do so; the issue is the protection of vendors' and consumers' interests. Can we put a limit on the greed of e-commerce giants? The answers to these questions are found in the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), started by the Government of India, as a not-for-profit company, registered under Section 8 of the Income Tax Act.

ONDC provides an outside-the-box solution to the problems of e-commerce. Buyers and sellers are provided with an interface that isn't exploitative in any way. In this system, e-commerce companies cannot discriminate between sellers through monopoly over data and AI. Overall, ONDC will be a channel where consumers can easily find sellers, service providers, etc. It is possible for sellers and buyers to be promoted based on competition instead of monopoly in the e-commerce market.

## WHAT IS ONDC

ONDC is not a platform like normal e-commerce companies. E-commerce companies work

through a platform. Vendors or service providers register themselves on respective platforms and must register on multiple platforms. As a result, these platforms try to attract consumers and sellers by luring them with discounts and incentives, riding on their deep pockets. However, once their business is established, consumers and sellers exploit both to maximise their profits.

Platforms and consumers connect through ONDC, which does not work for profit. Currently, in normal e-commerce, sellers and service providers must register on the platform, so they depend on those platforms. Consumers see only those sellers on the platform who are registered on that platform.

ONDC is a system which provides the facility of taking on different types of platforms. But ONDC's condition is that the goods and services offered by all the vendors or service providers who have registered themselves on any of these platforms are seen by all the customers visiting ONDC. That is, ONDC is a system which is not opaque.

This system works through GIS, and therefore, location plays a crucial role in the ONDC system. This can provide convenience to lakhs of vendors and crores of consumers. For example, if a consumer wants to order food from a restaurant sitting at home, then in the ONDC system, all the nearby eateries will be presented to him, who can provide what he wants. If he wants to buy groceries, he will see the vendors around him first.

All these vendors and service providers, despite being registered on different platforms, will be visible to prospective buyers on ONDC. E-commerce platforms on which vendors are registered can continue to charge fees as per their agreement with the vendor. However, competition among platforms to attract business may automati-

cally reduce commissions. If a platform charges a higher commission, then its goods and services will become more expensive and it will lose its business. In such a situation, every platform wants to keep its commissions low in order to attract maximum business. Once ONDC expands fully, all types of e-commerce can come under the same.

Thus, ONDC frees e-commerce from the monopoly of platforms and encourages healthy competition. It makes goods and services cheaper for consumers by reducing commissions, with transparency. ONDC can change the rules of the e-commerce market.

E-commerce companies, though, have shown interest in joining the ONDC regime and some platforms and payment companies are also registered with ONDC. Taxi services like Ola and Uber have not registered themselves on it yet, but some new e-commerce mobility companies are showing interest in ONDC.

As ONDC was introduced recently, only a small amount of business has been done, but it is expected that it will grow exponentially in the near future. This can help small e-commerce platforms reach consumers without heavy advertising expenses. All registered sellers will be equally visible to consumers in the ONDC system, as the ONDC protocol cannot differentiate between different sellers.

Significantly, so far all technology-supported efforts by the Government seem successful. Today online payments through UPI are convenient and free. More than 40 per cent of all online transactions happen in India. In the same way, ONDC is also being seen as a system that may not only prevent exploitation of consumers and sellers but also be able to increase GDP and employment enormously, by providing convenience to local businesses.



BUYERS AND SELLERS ARE PROVIDED WITH AN INTERFACE THAT ISN'T EXPLOITATIVE IN ANY WAY. IN THIS SYSTEM, E-COMMERCE COMPANIES CANNOT DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN SELLERS THROUGH MONOPOLY OVER DATA AND AI

(The author is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi)

ONDC is not a platform like normal e-commerce companies. E-commerce companies work

## The challenge of gender access to clean water

There is a need for community-based approaches for resolving the water crisis and liberating women from the task of fetching it

India accounts for 18 per cent of the world's population, but holds only 4 per cent of its water resources, making it one of the most water-deficient regions in the world

As the annual World Water Day was celebrated across the globe on March 22, highlighting the cross-cutting theme of clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for 2023, the significance of fresh water and, even more so, its rising shortage in most parts of the world has come home to us forcefully. This is also the time when the United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR), providing a detailed assessment of the world's freshwater resources and their sustainable management, is released. And the



ANUPMA MEHTA



SANJIB POHIT

(Anupma Mehta is Editor and Sanjib Pohit is Professor at NCAER. Views are personal)

report card for this year is in the red.

This compelled us to sit up and notice the criticality of poor access to water and its cascading adverse impact on gender equality, health, and education. WWDR 2023 finds that around 10 per cent of the world's population lives in countries experiencing extreme water scarcity. It also finds that 26 per cent and 46 per cent of people globally lack access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, respectively. What is of increasing concern to us is the revelation that 80 per cent of the people living under persistent water stress reside in Asia, particularly India, Pakistan, and north-east China.

The UN Report's analysis is corroborated by an erstwhile

Niti Aayog report. This pointed out that India accounts for 18 per cent of the world's population, but holds only 4 per cent of its water resources. This makes it one of the most water-deficient regions in the world. The Central Ground Water Board of the Ministry of Jal Shakti too claims that continuous unregulated ground water extraction has contaminated water resources. This poses a threat to communities depending on these sources.

A recent study on the livelihood and health challenges facing the riverine communities of the river Ganga, jointly conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and the Tata Centre for Development at the University of Chicago, also highlights

the mounting levels of pollution in the river and its deteriorating water quality. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, this study encompassed a variety of stakeholders in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, the two states where selected river stretches were examined. The study finds that, notwithstanding the flagship Government programmes to clean the Ganga including the Ganga Action Plan and the Namami Gange National Mission, little has been achieved in terms of tackling pollution.

It is also estimated that the Ganga river basin, which is the world's most populous river basin, receives 2,723.3 million litres of wastewater daily from industrial discharges and effluents, and serves as a site for anthropogenic activities like

laundry, washing of farm animals, open defecation, and urination, thereby pushing the pollution levels in the river beyond permissible limits.

Another NCAER project, the India Human Development Survey (IHDS), jointly undertaken with the University of Maryland, US, also documents the challenges in accessing clean water and sanitation across the country, particularly in its villages. The IHDS, a multi-topic panel survey of 41,554 households in 1503 villages and 971 urban neighbourhoods across India, finds that only 13 per cent of rural households receive piped water in their homes. Others have to depend on external sources.

The IHDS also flags the gender element in the water

conundrum, as households without access to indoor water have to spend substantial time, estimated at 109 minutes per day in rural areas and 76 minutes per day in urban areas, collecting water from distant sources, and this burden is mostly shouldered by the women in the households, which in turn affects both their productivity and quality of life. As many as 94.8 per cent of households without indoor water report women fetching water. This is compared to only 70 per cent reporting male involvement. In fact, girls in many of these homes drop out of school or neglect their studies to supplement the family's water collection efforts. This has an impact on both education and labour market participation for women.

How can India overcome these challenges and synchronise its water-related policies with WWDR 2023 to "accelerate the change to solve the water and sanitation crisis"? As pointed out in the WWDR itself, one of the solutions is the implementation of programmes like the Jal Jeevan Mission. This envisions safe and adequate drinking water through individual tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.

There is a need for other community-based approaches for not merely resolving the water crisis but also for liberating women from the burden of unpaid care work, and paving the way for better health and education outcomes across rural and urban populations in the country.



# Israel PM pauses judicial overhaul, tensions ease

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israel's political factions opposed to embattled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu began setting up negotiating teams Tuesday after he paused a controversial judicial overhaul plan that had set off unprecedented street protests and a spiralling domestic crisis. But compromise seemed elusive and Netanyahu's legacy was on the line, in a standoff over the fundamental issue of what kind of country Israel should be — and positions only appear to have hardened.

Three months of demonstrations against the overhaul plan intensified this week and Israel's main trade union declared a general strike, leading to chaos that shut down much of the country and threatened to paralyse the economy.

Netanyahu in a prime-time speech on Monday night acknowledged the divisions roiling the nation and announced a monthlong delay for the legislation. Within hours, analysts pointed out that firing his defence minister Sunday night heightened the outrage and sank Netanyahu's approval among



his own Likud party - which left Israel's longest-serving leader with few choices.

"He understood that he's in a dead end," said Yohanan Plesner, president of Israel Democracy Institute. "And Netanyahu, who is very experienced, understood that now is the time for correction." In his address, the premier said he wanted "to avoid civil war" and would seek a compromise with political opponents. Netanyahu spoke after tens of thousands of people demonstrated outside the parliament building in Jerusalem.

His announcement appeared to calm some of the tensions that have fuelled

months of unrest. But it failed to address the underlying issues that have polarised Israelis. Netanyahu leads the most right-wing government in Israeli history and his allies have vowed to enact the legislation.

"I feel relief but with doubt," Fega Gutman, Tel Aviv resident, said Tuesday. Netanyahu over the years "promised us a lot but didn't always fulfill, unfortunately."

The pause gave many Israelis time to consider the challenge ahead.

"I feel good today, everything calmed down from yesterday," said Maor Daniel, also from Tel Aviv.

# 'US reaches H-1B visa cap for 2024'

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The US has received the sufficient number of electronic registrations needed to reach the Congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B visa cap for the fiscal year 2024, according to the country's federal agency for immigration services.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on Monday said it has received enough electronic registrations during the initial period to reach the 2024 fiscal year H-1B numerical allocation, including the advanced degree exemption — the master's cap.

"We have randomly selected from the registrations properly submitted to reach the cap and have notified all prospective petitioners with selected registrations that they are eligible to file an H-1B cap-subject petition for the beneficiary named in the applicable selected registration," it said.



The US Congress has set the current annual regular cap for the H-1B category at 65,000. Of this, 6,800 visas are set aside under the terms of the legislation implementing the US-Chile and U.S.-Singapore free trade agreements.

Unused visas in this group become available for H-1B use for the next fiscal year's regular H-1B cap. H-1B cap-subject petitions for the financial year

2024, including those petitions eligible for the advanced degree exemption, may be filed with the USCIS from April 1, 2023, if based on a valid, selected registration.

Only petitioners with selected registrations may file H-1B cap-subject petitions for 2024 fiscal and only for the beneficiary named in the applicable selected registration notice, the USCIS said.

The high demand for H-1B visas has led to the clamour for reforms to the programme, with many advocating for an increase in the number of visas available and a simplification of the application process.

Analysts argue that the H-1B programme is crucial for United States maintaining its position as a global leader in technology and innovation, while also supporting the country's economy.

# 'Wrong to assume that sacked H-1B staffers have to leave US within 60 days'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

As scores of Indian nationals besides professionals from other countries seek jobs in the US, Washington has said it has received the sufficient number of electronic registrations needed to reach the Congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B visa cap for the fiscal year 2024.

Meanwhile, amid mass layoffs in the technology sector, the federal agency for immigration services (USCIS) has said it is wrong to assume that sacked workers holding the much-sought-after H-1B visas have to leave the country within 60 days, asserting they have multiple options to stay in the US.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) late Monday said it has received enough electronic registrations during the initial period to reach the 2024 fiscal year H-1B numerical allocations, including the advanced degree exemption -- the master's cap.

# Law banning caste discrimination comes into effect in Seattle



Washington (PTI): A landmark law banning caste-based discrimination came into effect in the US city of Seattle, making it the first city outside India to enforce such a legislation. The resolution was moved last month by Kshama Sawant, an Indian-American politician, economist and an upper-caste Hindu.

It was approved unanimously by the Seattle City Council by six to one vote. Seattle is not only the first American city to ban caste discrimination but is the first jurisdiction at any level globally outside South Asia to do so. "The world's first ban against caste discrimination outside South Asia goes into effect TODAY in our city of Seattle!" Sawant said on Monday. "Seattle's law now prohibits business-

es from discriminating based on caste with respect to hiring, tenure, promotion, workplace conditions, or wages," Sawant said. It will ban discrimination based on caste in places of public accommodation, such as hotels, public transportation, public restrooms, or retail establishments, she said, adding that the law also prohibits housing discrimination based on caste in rental housing leases, property sales, and mortgage loans.

Describing it as the biggest breakthrough for the global fight against caste oppression in many decades, Sawant said it has opened the floodgates for potentially winning such a ban on caste discrimination in other cities and states in the US as well.

# Greek PM calls general election for May 21

Athens (AP): Greece's centre-right prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, called a May 21 general election Tuesday as his party's long-standing lead in opinion polls has declined in the aftermath of the country's worst train disaster. A February 28 collision between a passenger train and a freight train in northern Greece left 57 people dead. The disaster stirred public anger, cutting the conservative New Democracy party's support by a half-point to 4 points over its left-wing main rival, Syriza, according to opinion polls.

"The country and its citizens need clear skies ... our work continues more boldly and with fewer compromises," Mitsotakis said during a televised Cabinet meeting. Mitsotakis, 55, the son of the late former prime minister Constantine Mitsotakis, has remained popular throughout his four-year term, which was due to end in July.

But more recently, his reputation has been dented by allegations of wiretapping by state security services, as well as the government's failure to protect rail network safety.

The election he called is not considered early because it is within six months of the end of his mandate. Greece is moving to a proportional representation system that is likely to result in six parties with seats in parliament.

The recent slide in the polls for the prime minister's party has made a coalition government more likely. But Mitsotakis insisted that New Democracy was seeking outright victory. "Greek men and women, in the elections of May 21, will finally have a choice on whether the country will continue to seek and win the challenge of modernisation," he said. "At Syriza, we will seek a government of cooperation, even if we have an outright victory. The country is facing huge challenges and needs the widest possible social consensus," Alexis Charitsis, a spokesman for the opposition party, told private Antenna television.

# Second Gandhi statue vandalised in Canada

Toronto (PTI): The statue of Mahatma Gandhi was vandalised at a university campus in Canada's British Columbia province, days after another statue of the global peace icon was targeted in this country by Khalistan supporters.

In the latest incident, the statue placed at Peace Square on the Burnaby campus at Simon Fraser University was vandalised, the Consulate General of India in Vancouver said on Tuesday. "We strongly condemn the heinous crime of vandalising the statue of the harbinger of peace Mahatma Gandhiji. @SFU Burnaby campus, the Consulate said in a tweet. "The Canadian authorities are urged to investigate the

matter urgently and bring the perpetrators to justice swiftly @MEAIndia," it added. The incident comes after Khalistani supporters defaced and spray-painted a Mahatma Gandhi statue near the City Hall in the town of Hamilton in Canada's Ontario province on March 23. In July last year, a Mahatma Gandhi statue at a Vishnu temple in Richmond Hill, Canada was vandalised, drawing sharp condemnation from the Consulate General of India in Toronto.

"We are distressed at the desecration of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Vishnu temple in Richmond Hill. This criminal, hateful act of vandalism has deeply hurt the sentiments of the

Indian community in Canada," it said in a tweet at that time.

Canada has witnessed a surge in anti-India activities recently by Khalistan supporters who have vandalised some Hindu temples. A Ram Mandir in Mississauga was defaced by "Khalistani extremists" with anti-India graffiti on February 13, drawing strong reaction from the Indian Consulate in Toronto. "We strongly condemn the defacing of Ram Mandir in Mississauga with anti-India graffiti. We have requested Canadian authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action on perpetrators," India's Consulate in Toronto had tweeted.

# 'Muslim centre stabbings probed as possible terror'

Lisbon (AP): A man wielding a large knife killed two women and injured several other people at an Ismaili Muslim centre in Lisbon, and Portuguese authorities said they were investigating Tuesday's stabbing attack as a possible terror act. The women were Portuguese staff members at the centre, Ismaili community leader Nazrim Ahmad told Portuguese TV channel SIC. Officers dispatched to the centre late Tuesday morning encountered a man armed with a knife, according to a police statement. The officers ordered him to surrender and he was shot when he advanced toward them, the statement said.

A suspect was in police custody at a Lisbon hospital. Investigators were looking into terrorism as a possible motive. Several other people were wounded, according to the statement, which provided no further details. Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa said police shot the suspect and told reporters the attack was "a criminal act." "Everything points to this being an isolated incident," Costa said, without elaborating.

Armed police from a special operations unit could be seen forming a perimeter outside the building.

# Pak PM urges parl to curtail powers of CJ

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that "history would not forgive us" if parliament did not enact laws to curtail the powers of the chief justice, a day after two Supreme Court judges questioned the suo motu powers of the country's top judge. Addressing the joint session of parliament, Sharif talked at length about the dissenting judgement by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail of the Supreme Court, who lashed out at the unlimited authority of the Chief Justice to take a suo motu (on its own) action on any issue and constitute benches of choice to hear different cases.

Their judgment was about the case of suo motu notice taken by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial on February 22 about elections



in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Speaking passionately about the need for new laws to limit the chief justice's power, Sharif said that if the legislation were not passed, "history would not forgive us."

The suo motu power is based on the original jurisdiction of the court under Article 184 of the Constitution. However, its usage over the years has created an impression of partiality on the Chief Justices' part.

It was openly challenged for the first time by the two judges who were part of a bench that, in its

3-2 majority decision of March 1, directed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to consult with President Arif Alvi for polls in Punjab and Governor Ghulam Ali for elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The five-member bench was reconstituted by Bandial, who took a suo motu action against the delay in elections and initially formed a nine-member bench to deal with the issue.

However, two of the nine judges differed with the decision to take suo motu notice, while two other judges recused themselves, prompting the Chief Justice to form a new bench.

Justice Shah and Justice Mandokhail, in their detailed 28-page dissenting note, also rejected the 3-2 judgment in the suo motu case by saying that it was a 4-3 judgment to reject the maintainability of the case

and lambasted the Chief Justice's power to form a bench for important cases.

The coalition government led by Prime Minister Sharif, which is supporting the ECP's decision to delay the election in the two provinces until October 8, is trying to use the parliament to curtail the powers of the Chief Justice.

The premier also said that the courts were treating Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan favourably and were not ready to hold Khan accountable.

Sharif said that "enough is enough" and the law would take its course while the government would not allow "the favourite" to play with Pakistan.

He added that the Constitution clearly defined the division of powers between the legislature, judiciary and administration and set a red line that no one should cross.

# Wary of China, Pak opts out of democracy summit in US

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan, the closest ally of China, has decided to skip the Democracy Summit that begins in Washington on Tuesday, opting instead to engage with the US bilaterally to strengthen democratic values, the Foreign Office here said.

The virtual summit is co-sponsored by the US Department of State and USAID on the theme of "Global Declaration of Mayors for Democracy".

China and Turkey have not been invited to the virtual summit. Pakistan's participation in the summit has been a subject of intense debate for some time now.

Islamabad chose to skip the event so that it does not potentially upset its "all-weather ally" China, officials said. "The Summit process is now at an advanced stage and therefore, Pakistan would engage bilaterally with the US and co-hosts of the Summit to promote and strengthen democratic principles and values and work towards advancing human rights and the fight against corruption," Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesperson told the media.

However, the Foreign Office thanked the US for inviting Pakistan to attend the Second

Summit for Democracy. "We value our friendship with the US. Under this Biden Administration, this relationship has widened and expanded substantially. We remain committed to further solidifying this relationship for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region," the Foreign Office said.

The three-day event will showcase the role of cities and sub-national governments in the affirmation of democratic values and the renewal of democracy worldwide.

On Tuesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will chair virtually a panel session on "A Just and Lasting Peace in Ukraine" featuring Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Cash-strapped Pakistan is awaiting a much-needed USD 1.1 billion tranche of funding from the Washington-based global money lender, which was originally due to be disbursed in November last year.

The funds are part of a USD 6.5 billion bailout package the IMF approved in 2019, which analysts say is critical if Pakistan is to avoid defaulting on external debt obligations.

Pakistan, which is currently scrambling to boost its dwindling forex reserves, received USD 500 million from China earlier this month.

# New York to pay \$5.5 mn to man man exonerated in rape case

Syracuse (US): A man who spent 16 years in prison after he was wrongfully convicted of raping writer Alice Sebold when she was a Syracuse University student has settled a lawsuit against New York state for USD 5.5 million, his lawyers said Monday. The settlement comes after Anthony Broadwater's conviction for raping Sebold in 1981 was overturned in 2021. It was signed last week by lawyers for Broadwater and New York Attorney General Letitia James, David Hammond, one of Broadwater's attorneys, said.

Broadwater, 62, said in a statement relayed by Hammond, "I appreciate what Attorney General James has done, and I hope and pray that others in my situation can achieve the same measure of justice. We all suffer from destroyed lives." AP

# Nashville shooter was former student with a detailed plan

Nashville (AP): The former student who shot through the doors of a Christian elementary school in Nashville and killed three children and three adults had drawn a detailed map of the school, including potential entry points, and conducted surveillance of the building before carrying out the massacre.

Metropolitan Nashville Police Chief John Drake did not say exactly what drove the shooter to open fire Monday morning at The Covenant School before being killed by police. But he provided chilling examples of the shooter's elaborate planning for the targeted attack, the latest in a series of mass shootings in a country that has grown increasingly unnerved by bloodshed in schools.

"We have a manifesto, we have some writings that we're going over that pertain to this date, the actual incident," he told reporters. "We have a map



drawn out of how this was all going to take place."

He said in an interview with NBC News that investigators believe the shooter had "some resentment for having to go to that school." The victims included three 9-year-old children, the school's top administrator, a substitute teacher and a custodian. Amid the chaos a

familiar ritual played out: Panicked parents rushed to the school to see if their children were safe and tearfully hugged their kids, and a stunned community held vigils for the victims.

Rachel Dibble, who was at a nearby church where children were taken to be reunited with their parents, described the scene as everyone being in "complete shock."

"People were involuntarily trembling," she said. "The children ... started their morning in their cute little uniforms, they probably had some Froot Loops and now their whole lives changed today."

Police gave unclear information on the gender of the shooter. For hours, police identified the shooter as a 28-year-old woman and eventually identified the person as Audrey Elizabeth Hale. Then at a late afternoon press conference, the police chief said that Hale was transgender.

# Prince Harry returns to court in tabloid phone hacking case

London (AP): Prince Harry returned to a London court Tuesday for a second day of hearings to see if the phone hacking lawsuit he brought with Elton John and other celebrities can withstand a challenge from the publisher of The Daily Mail.

The case is one of several brought by the Duke of Sussex in his battle with the press and alleges the publisher hired private investigators to illegally bug homes and cars and to record phone conversations. Associated

Newspapers Ltd. denies the allegations and is seeking to throw out the case, arguing that the claims are too old and rely on information they turned over in confidentiality for a 2012 probe into media law breaking.

# India, UK collaborate on early flood alert system

PTI ■ LONDON

Scientists from India and the UK have come together to create a real-time early warning system to help reduce the devastating impact of flooding on people and property, particularly in mountainous regions where extreme water events are a major problem.

An international team of researchers from the University of Birmingham, Imperial College London, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, and People's Science Institute, Dehradun, worked on integrating science, policy and local community-led approaches to create a so-called SMART approach that better fits the local context.

Publishing their findings in 'Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences' this week, the team hopes their new approach could better signal impending risk from flooding

around the world.

"A 'wicked' problem is a social or cultural challenge that's difficult or impossible to solve because of its complex, interconnected nature. We believe that integrating social science and meteorological data will help to identify unknown parts of the puzzle when designing an early warning system," said co-author Tahmina Yasmin, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham.

"Better engaging with communities and analysing social factors identified by the community at risk - for example, illegal settlement beside riverbanks or slums - will help those driving policy to better understand the risks posed by these hydrometeorological extremes and plan flood response and mitigation which provides communities with improved protection," she said.

# Alibaba to spit itself into 6 biz groups

New York (AP): Alibaba is splitting itself into into six business groups as the Chinese e-commerce company attempts to become more nimble in reacting to changes in the market and increase the value of those units.

Shares of Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. jumped 8 per cent at the opening bell. Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. said in a regulatory filing on Tuesday that the six new groups will be made up of the Cloud Intelligence Group, Taobao Tmall Business Group, Local Services Group, Global Digital Business Group, Cainiao Smart Logistics and Digital Media and Entertainment Group.

The company said that each group will be able to raise outside capital and potentially seek its own initial public offering, except for Taobao Tmall Business Group, which will stay wholly-owned by Alibaba Group. Each group will be independently managed by its own CEO and board of directors.



# Russia test-fires anti-ship missiles in Sea of Japan

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia's Defense Ministry says Moscow has test-fired anti-ship missiles in the Sea of Japan. The ministry said on Tuesday that two boats launched a simulated missile attack on a mock enemy warship about 100 kilometers (60 miles) away. The ministry said the target was successfully hit by two Moskkit cruise missiles.

The Moskkit, whose NATO reporting name is the SS-N-22 Sunburn, is a supersonic anti-ship cruise missile that has conventional and nuclear warhead capacity. It said the exercise took place in the Peter the Great Gulf in the Sea of Japan but did not give more precise coordinates. The gulf borders the Russian Pacific Fleet headquarters at Fokino and is about 700 kilometers (430 miles) from Japan's northern Hokkaido Island. The US Navy's 7th Fleet did not im-



mediately respond to requests for comment. Japan does not plan to lodge a protest to Russia over the missile exercise, said Tasuku Matsuki, Japanese Foreign Ministry official in charge of Russia, noting that its location — Peter the Great Bay — is considered Russian coast, though it is facing the water between the two countries.

"On the whole, Japan is concerned about Russia's increasing military activities around the Japanese coasts and watching them with great interest," Matsuki said.

He said Russia has conducted missile drills in that area in the past

and issued maritime advisories ahead of time. He said Japan is not in a position to comment on Russia's intention of the exercise.

Russian nuclear-capable Tu-95 bombers flew over the Sea of Japan for several hours last week. In September, Japan protested multinational military exercises on the Russian-held Kuril Islands — some of which are claimed by Japan — and expressed concern about Russian and Chinese warships conducting shooting drills in the Sea of Japan.

Russia also tested submarine-launched missiles in the Sea of Japan last year.

# Zelensky extends tour of war's front-line areas

AP ■ OKHTYRKA

Ukraine's president visited the Sumy region in northern Ukraine on Tuesday, continuing his tour over recent days of areas of the country that have felt the brunt of Russia's full-scale invasion and as the stage increasingly looks set for a Ukrainian counteroffensive. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with officials and local people in two cities in the region, which borders Russia. It was partially occupied by Russian forces after the war started more than a year ago. The Russians withdrew from the region by early April.

The Associated Press was granted exclusive access as Zelenskyy visited the Sumy region cities of Okhtyrka, which saw fierce battles last year but was never occupied, and Trostianets, which was held by the Russians for a month after the invasion but retaken by Ukrainian forces on March 26, 2022. Zelenskyy's trip



followed his visits over the past seven days to the Kherson and Kharkiv regions, parts of which were retaken last year from the Kremlin's forces, to the intensely contested area near Bakhmut in the eastern Donetsk region, and to Zaporizhzhia in the south. Also on Tuesday, at least three civilians were killed and 43 others were wounded by the latest Russian attacks involving drones, gliding bombs and heavy artillery, Ukraine's presidential office said. In the eastern Donetsk region,

Russian shelling hit 12 towns and villages, killing two people and wounding 34. The Russian shelling also targeted the southern city of Kherson, where five were wounded. In Bilopilnia in the Sumy region, a Russian strike damaged a school building and an apartment building.

Addressing a crowd on a square in Okhtyrka, Zelenskyy promised that the battle-scarred city would be rebuilt. "We won't let any wound remain on the body of our state," he said.

# IAEA head: Deal to protect Ukrainian nuclear plant 'close'

Dnipro (Ukraine): A deal to protect Europe's largest nuclear power plant from a catastrophic accident due to fighting in Ukraine could be "close," the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said on Tuesday, but warned that intensified combat in the area has increased risks to the facility.

In an interview with The Associated Press a day before he was to cross the front lines for a second time to visit the plant, IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said he felt it was his duty to ramp up talks aimed at safeguarding the facility.

He met Monday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and said he would "most probably" head to Russia in the coming days.

"There is an increased level of combat, active combat" in the area of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Grossi said. "My teams there report daily about the attacks, the sound of heavy weaponry. This is practically constant." Grossi has long called for a protection zone to be set up around the plant, which is very near the front line of the war. But so far, an agreement has been elusive. "It is a zone of extreme volatility. So the negotiations are, of course, affected by the ongoing military operations," Grossi said. AP

# Kim wants North Korea to make more nuclear material for bombs

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called for his nuclear scientists to increase production of weapons-grade material to make bombs to put on his increasing range of weapons. North Korean photos of the meeting also showed what appeared to be a small new tactical warhead that was possibly designed to fit on a variety of delivery systems developed in recent years to overwhelm South Korean defences. The report in state media Tuesday followed a series of missile launches — seven launch events in this month alone — and rising threats to use the weapons against his enemies. North Korea's weapons tests and US-South Korea military exercises have intensified in a tit-for-tat cycle, underscoring heightened tensions in the region.

Officials say North Korea could further up the ante in coming weeks or months with more provocative displays of its military nuclear programme, possibly including its first test detonation of a nuclear device since September 2017.



The Korean Central News Agency said Kim, during a meeting on Monday with officials and scientists at a state nuclear weapons institute, stressed the need to ramp up bomb fuel production to meet his goals to expand his nuclear arsenal "exponentially," and issued unspecified "important tasks" for his nuclear industry.

Kim also examined the country's counterattacks as scientists briefed him on the North's latest nuclear-capable weapons systems and progress in technologies for mounting nuclear warheads on missiles, the agency said. The agency's photos showed Kim talking with officials inside

a hall that displayed what appeared to be various types of warheads, including around 10 khaki-green capsules with red tips. Other weapons included devices that looked like a black-and-white cone with fins or a large torpedo.

A wall poster near one of the green devices described a warhead called "Hwasan-31," based on the Korean word for volcano. The poster's graphics implied that the weapon could fit on some of North Korea's short-range ballistic systems, cruise missiles and a purported nuclear-capable underwater drone the country first unveiled last week. State media didn't identify any of the devices in the photos.

# Nepal's ruling alliance meeting concludes inconclusively

Kathmandu: Top leaders of Nepal's ruling coalition met on Tuesday to discuss a power-sharing arrangement but failed to agree on a deal, according to a party official. During the meeting at the official residence of the Prime Minister at Baluwatar, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda," Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba, CPN-Unified Socialist chairperson Madhav Kumar Nepal and Nepal Samajwadi Party leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai discussed various issues. Matters relating to power sharing, cabinet expansion and common minimum programme of the ruling alliance mainly featured during the meeting, said Ganesh Shah, the secretary of CPN-Maoist Centre. Loktantrik Samajwadi Party Chair Mahanathi Thakur, Janamat Party chief Dr. CK Raut, Nagarik Unmukti Party chairperson Shrestha, Rashtriya Janamorchha chairperson were also present

during the meeting. "During the meeting, the leaders of the ruling parties agreed on the common programme presented by Prime Minister Prachanda," Shah told PTI. Though no agreement could be reached regarding the power sharing deal, they have agreed to expand the cabinet at the earliest, according to Shah. The ruling alliance leaders have decided to meet again on Wednesday morning to finalise the power sharing deal, he added. The 68-year-old 'Prachanda' has twice secured a vote of confidence in parliament, winning the second floor test within three months, an outcome he said would provide stability to his government.

Power sharing and the distribution of ministerial portfolios have become major bottlenecks among the members of the ruling alliance as the demand for cabinet posts is exceeding the number of ministries available, according to political observers. PTI

# China expects Saudi, Iran to improve ties: Xi Jinping

Beijing (PTI): Weeks after China brokered a landmark peace deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday said he expects both countries to improve their ties as arch-rivals in the Middle East face an array of challenges to implementing it.

Xi in his phone conversation with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman said it is hoped that Saudi Arabia and Iran will uphold the spirit of good neighbourliness and continue to improve their relations on the basis of the results of their talks in Beijing, official media here reported.

China is ready to continue to support the follow-up process of the Saudi-Iranian talks, Xi said, referring to the China-negotiated peace deal between the arch-rivals to end their hostilities.

The agreement signed on March 11 in Beijing was regarded as a major diplomatic coup for China's efforts to emerge as a major power



rivaling the US to enlarge its strategic influence especially in the Middle East.

"The Iran-Saudi rapprochement has been touted as a momentous development in the region. But how it ultimately impacts the Middle East remains a very open question, as the long adversarial powers are fighting a proxy war in Yemen and continue to support two opposing sides across the region," said a report by the US Institute of Peace.

"Amid perceived US retrenchment from the Middle East, the deal is a diplomatic win for China as it increasingly seeks to present an alternative vision to the US-led glob-

al order," it said. Following the Iran-Saudi deal, Xi during his March 20 visit to Russia made a strong pitch for Russia-Ukraine peace talks to end their current war.

In his phone call with the Saudi Crown Prince, Xi said with the joint efforts of China, Saudi Arabia and Iran successfully held and achieved significant results, helping the two countries to improve their relations. It is a significant demonstration effect on enhancing the unity and cooperation of regional countries and easing regional tensions, and thus having been widely praised by the international community, he said.

# UNSC won't probe Nord Stream blasts

United Nations: The UN Security Council on Monday declined a Russian request to investigate the blasts on the pipelines that move natural gas from Russia to Europe under the Baltic Sea. Russia, China and Brazil voted in favour of the Russian request, but other Security Council members abstained or said another investigation was unnecessary. For a resolution to be adopted by the UN Security Council, it needs a minimum of nine "yes" votes in the 15-member council, and no veto by one of the permanent members — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France.

The US deputy ambassador, Robert Wood, said there was no need for a UN probe when investigations by Sweden, Denmark and Germany "are proceeding in a comprehensive, transparent and impartial manner." "It was an attempt to discredit the work of ongoing national investigations and prejudice any conclusions they reached that do not comport to Russia's predetermined and political narrative. It was not an attempt to seek the truth," he said. AP

# France police brace for fresh protests

Paris (AP): Protests and strikes against unpopular pension reforms kicked off again Tuesday across France, with police security ramped up amid government warnings that radical demonstrators intended "to destroy, to injure and to kill." Concerns that violence could mar the demonstrations prompted what Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin described as an unprecedented deployment of 13,000 officers, nearly half of them concentrated in the French capital.

After months of upheaval, an exit from the firestorm of protest triggered by President Emmanuel Macron's changes to France's retirement system looked as far away as ever. Despite fresh union pleas that the government pause its hotly contested push to raise France's legal retirement age from 62 to 64, Macron seemingly remained wedded to it.

The French leader previously used a special constitutional power to ram the reform past legislators without allowing them a vote. His move this month further galvanised the protest movement. Violence has since flared and thousands of tons of stinking garbage have piled up on Paris' streets as sanitation workers strike. "Everybody is getting madder," said Clement Saïd, a train passenger at Paris' Gare de Lyon railway station, where tracks were temporarily invaded and blocked Tuesday by protesting workers.

He said he supports the strikes despite their impact on transportation and other services.

# 39 dead in Mexico migrant centre fire

Mexico City (AP): A fire in a dormitory at a Mexican immigration detention centre near the US border left more than three dozen migrants dead, a government agency said Tuesday, in one of the deadliest incidents ever at an immigration lockup in the country. Hours after the fire broke out late Monday, rows of bodies were laid out under shimmering silver sheets outside the facility in Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, Texas. Ambulances, firefighters and vans from the morgue swarmed the scene. Thirty-nine people died and 29 were injured and are in "delicate-serious" condition, according to the National Immigration Institute.

There were 68 men from Central and South America held in the facility at the time of the fire, the agency said. It was the deadliest incident inside a Mexican immigration facility in recent memory. Authorities are investigat-



ing the cause of the fire and the governmental National Human Rights Commission had been called in to help the migrants. The agency said that it "energetically rejects the actions that led to this tragedy" without any further explanation of what those actions might have been.

The country's immigration lockups have seen protests and riots from time to time. Mostly Venezuelan migrants rioted inside an immigration centre in Tijuana in October that had to be controlled by police and National Guard troops.

In November, dozens of migrants rioted in Mexico's largest detention centre in the

southern city of Tapachula near the border with Guatemala. No one died in either incident.

Ciudad Juarez is a major crossing point for migrants entering the United States.

Its shelters are full of people waiting for opportunities to cross or who have requested asylum in the US and are waiting out the process. In recent years, as Mexico has stepped up efforts to stem the flow migration to the US border under pressure from the American government, its National Immigration Institute has struggled with overcrowding in its facilities.

The high level of frustration among migrants stuck in Ciudad Juarez was on display earlier this month when hundreds of mostly Venezuelan migrants acting on false rumours that the United States would allow them to enter the country tried to force their way across one of the international bridges to El Paso.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mrs. Pinki Sharma W/o Mr. Yogender Sharma who is purchasing the Third Floor, with roof rights of Residential Property No.27/5/1A (Old) and New No.VII/527, Area Measuring 40 Sq. Ycs., Part of Khatera No.724, Situated in the Village Chandrawali @ Shandara in the abadi of Jawala Nagar, Shandara, Delhi; from Mr. Jagdish Kumar S/o Mr. Sant Lal, who is owner/attorney holder of the aforesaid property vide Regd. General Power of Attorney, Agreement to sell & WILL dated 27.12.2016 and intent to mortgage against the financial assistance from Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited. That the (1) Agreement to sell & (2) WILL both dated 27.12.2016 executed by Mr. Mangal San Kharbada and Mr. Romi Kharbada both sons of Mr. Gopal Dass Kharbada in favour of Mr. Jagdish Kumar S/o Mr. Sant Lal are Lost/Misplaced/Not available. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/right/interest/entitlement mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 15 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, liens etc.

**Lucern Legal LLP**  
136, Basement Floor, Uday Park, near Mother Dairy, New Delhi-110049  
Contact# 011-40046316

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
A notice is hereby given that (1) Mr. Anuj Gupta; (2) Mr. Naresh Chander Gupta; (3) Mr. Pankaj Gupta; (4) Mrs. Meena Gupta; (5) Mrs. Naresh Chander HUF represented through Mr. Naresh Chander, Karta; (6) Mrs. Anuj Gupta - HUF represented through Mr. Anuj Gupta, Karta; (7) Mrs. Pankaj Gupta - HUF represented through Mr. Pankaj Gupta, Karta have transferred 100% shareholding of Dimension India Networks Private Limited (renamed to Highfive Global Networks Private Limited) ("Company") to (1) Charterredman Consultants Private Limited (2) Anuradha Gupta and (3) PAN Portfolios Private Limited through a series of connected share transfers which were completed on 15.07.2021. Further, along with the transfer of 100% shareholding of the Company, (1) Mr. Anuj Gupta (w.e.f.15/09/2021); (2) Mr. Pankaj Gupta (w.e.f.15/09/2021); (3) Mr. Naresh Chander Gupta (w.e.f.15/09/2021); (4) Mrs. Meena Gupta (w.e.f.15/09/2021) and (5) Mrs. Neha Gupta (w.e.f.15/09/2021) have also resigned from the directorship of the Company. Since the completion date of the aforesaid share transfers of 100% shareholding (i.e. 15.07.2021) (a) DIN Engineering Services LLP, Mr. Anuj Gupta, Mr. Pankaj Gupta, Mr. Naresh Chander Gupta, Mrs. Meena Gupta, Mrs. Neha Gupta or any of their relatives or affiliates ("DIN Affiliates") have ceased to have any legal, economic or business relationship with the Company or its business activities and accordingly do not have any authority whatsoever to transact any business or to act in any way on behalf of the Company; and (b) the Company has no right, entitlement or authority to claim or to represent any association or affiliation including any business relationship with any of the DIN Affiliates or the businesses conducted by them whether presently or in the past.

Sd/-  
Anuj Gupta  
CEO,  
DIN Engineering Services LLP  
Place: Noida / Date: 29th March 2023

**HINDUSTAN AUTO FINANCE LIMITED**  
CIN: L65910DL1980PLC010617  
Regd. Office: Cabin No. DA-8, 02nd Floor, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, New Delhi-110092  
Email: hindaf1980@gmail.com, Website: www.hindaf.in

**NOTICE OF 41<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, REMOTE E-VOTING AND INTIMATION OF BOOK CLOSURE**

NOTICE is hereby given that the 41st Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of members of **Hindustan Auto Finance Limited** will be held on Friday, 21st April, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at the registered office of the Company to transact the businesses as set out in the Notice convening the AGM.

The Annual Report for the financial year 2020-21 including the Notice convening AGM along with Attendance Slip and Proxy Form has been sent to members whose emails are registered with their depository participants as at close of business hours on Friday, March 24, 2023. Physical copy of the Annual Report along with AGM Notice has been sent by permitted mode to members who have not registered their e-mail address. The emailing and dispatch of Annual Report along with Notice of AGM has been completed on Tuesday, March 28, 2023. The Annual Report along with the Notice convening the AGM is available on the website of the Company at [www.hindaf.in](http://www.hindaf.in), website of Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited, and on the website of Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) at [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com). The shareholders whose email ids are not registered with Company/RTA or with respective DPs may temporarily get their email id registered with the Company by sending e-mail at [hindaf1980@gmail.com](mailto:hindaf1980@gmail.com) and follow the temporary registration process as guided thereafter to receive the Annual Report for FY 2020-21 along with the Notice of AGM which inter-alia contains the instructions for attending the AGM. However, for permanent registration of email id, members are requested to approach their respective DPs and follow the process advised by DPs.

Pursuant to provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("Act") and the applicable rules framed thereunder and Reg.42 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, ("Listing Regulations"), the register of members and share transfer books of the Company will remain closed from Saturday, April 15, 2023 and will end on Friday, April 21, 2023 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of 41st AGM of the Company.

Pursuant to Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended and Regulation 44 of Listing Regulations, the Members are provided with the facility to cast their votes on the resolutions set forth in the Notice of AGM using electronic voting system from a place other than venue of the AGM (remote e-voting), provided by Central Depository Services India Limited (CDSL) and the business may be transacted through such voting. The voting rights of members shall be in proportion to the equity shares held by them in the paid-up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date, i.e. Friday, April 14, 2023. Any person who is a member of the Company as on the cut-off date is eligible to cast vote on all resolutions set forth in the Notice of AGM using remote e-voting or voting through ballot paper at the AGM.

The remote e-voting period commences on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 09:00 a.m. IST and ends on Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 05:00 p.m. IST. During this period, Members may cast their vote electronically. The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL thereafter and remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the said date and time. Once vote on a resolution is cast by the member, he/she will not be allowed to change it subsequently or cast the vote again. The detailed procedure for voting has been mentioned in the AGM Notice. The facility for voting through ballot paper shall also be made available at the AGM and members who have not cast their vote by remote e-voting shall be able to exercise their right at the AGM through ballot paper. The Members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM, but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.

A person who acquires shares and become a member of the Company after the dispatch of notice of the AGM and holding shares as of cut-off date, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request to [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com). However, if he/she is already registered with CDSL for remote e-voting, then he/she can use his/her existing User ID and password for casting the votes.

The Board of Director has appointed CS Anju Bansal, proprietor of M/s Anju Bansal & Associates, Company Secretary in Practice (COP No. 17594) as the Scrutinizer to scrutinize the 'remote e-voting' process and voting at the AGM, in a fair and transparent manner. The results of AGM will be announced by the Chairman or any other person authorised by him and will be submitted along with report of scrutinizer within two days from the conclusion of AGM to Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited and also be posted on the Company's website [www.hindaf.in](http://www.hindaf.in).

In case of any queries or grievances regarding e-voting, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") and e-voting manual which is available at [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com) under help section or contact at 022-23058542/43. In case of grievances relating to e-voting, please contact Mr. Rakesh Dahi, Sr. Manager at 25th Floor, A Wing, Marathon Futorex, Mafatal Mills Compound, NM Joshi Marg, Lower Parel (E), Mumbai-400013, Email: [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com) or aforesaid number.

For Hindustan Auto Finance Limited  
Sd/-  
Rishabh Aggarwal  
Place: New Delhi  
Date: March 28, 2023  
(Company Secretary & Compliance Officer)

**HINDUSTAN AUTO FINANCE LIMITED**  
CIN: L65910DL1980PLC010617  
Regd. Office: Cabin No. DA-8, 02nd Floor, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, New Delhi-110092  
Email: hindaf1980@gmail.com, Website: www.hindaf.in

**NOTICE OF 42<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, REMOTE E-VOTING AND INTIMATION OF BOOK CLOSURE**

NOTICE is hereby given that the 42nd Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of members of **Hindustan Auto Finance Limited** will be held on Friday, 21st April, 2023 at 02:00 p.m. at the registered office of the Company to transact the businesses as set out in the Notice convening the AGM.

The Annual Report for the financial year 2021-22 including the Notice convening AGM along with Attendance Slip and Proxy Form has been sent to members whose emails are registered with their depository participants as at close of business hours on Friday, March 24, 2023. Physical copy of the Annual Report along with AGM Notice has been sent by permitted mode to members who have not registered their e-mail address. The emailing and dispatch of Annual Report along with Notice of AGM has been completed on Tuesday, March 28, 2023. The Annual Report along with the Notice convening the AGM is available on the website of the Company at [www.hindaf.in](http://www.hindaf.in), website of Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited, and on the website of Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) at [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com). The shareholders whose email ids are not registered with Company/RTA or with respective DPs may temporarily get their email id registered with the Company by sending e-mail at [hindaf1980@gmail.com](mailto:hindaf1980@gmail.com) and follow the temporary registration process as guided thereafter to receive the Annual Report for FY 2021-22 along with the Notice of AGM which inter-alia contains the instructions for attending the AGM. However, for permanent registration of email id, members are requested to approach their respective DPs and follow the process advised by DPs.

Pursuant to provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("Act") and the applicable rules framed thereunder and Reg.42 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, ("Listing Regulations"), the register of members and share transfer books of the Company will remain closed from Saturday, April 15, 2023 and will end on Friday, April 21, 2023 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of 42nd AGM of the Company.

Pursuant to Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended and Regulation 44 of Listing Regulations, the Members are provided with the facility to cast their votes on the resolutions set forth in the Notice of AGM using electronic voting system from a place other than venue of the AGM (remote e-voting), provided by Central Depository Services India Limited (CDSL) and the business may be transacted through such voting. The voting rights of members shall be in proportion to the equity shares held by them in the paid-up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date, i.e. Friday, April 14, 2023. Any person who is a member of the Company as on the cut-off date is eligible to cast vote on all resolutions set forth in the Notice of AGM using remote e-voting or voting through ballot paper at the AGM.

The remote e-voting period commences on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 09:00 a.m. IST and ends on Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 05:00 p.m. IST. During this period, Members may cast their vote electronically. The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL thereafter and remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the said date and time. Once vote on a resolution is cast by the member, he/she will not be allowed to change it subsequently or cast the vote again. The detailed procedure for voting has been mentioned in the AGM Notice. The facility for voting through ballot paper shall also be made available at the AGM and members who have not cast their vote by remote e-voting shall be able to exercise their right at the AGM through ballot paper. The Members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM, but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.

A person who acquires shares and become a member of the Company after the dispatch of notice of the AGM and holding shares as of cut-off date, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request to [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com). However, if he/she is already registered with CDSL for remote e-voting, then he/she can use his/her existing User ID and password for casting the votes.

The Board of Director has appointed CS Anju Bansal, proprietor of M/s Anju Bansal & Associates, Company Secretary in Practice (COP No. 17594) as the Scrutinizer to scrutinize the 'remote e-voting' process and voting at the AGM, in a fair and transparent manner. The results of AGM will be announced by the Chairman or any other person authorised by him and will be submitted along with report of scrutinizer within two days from the conclusion of AGM to Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited and also be posted on the Company's website [www.hindaf.in](http://www.hindaf.in).

In case of any queries or grievances regarding e-voting, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") and e-voting manual which is available at [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com) under help section or contact at 022-23058542/43. In case of grievances relating to e-voting, please contact Mr. Rakesh Dahi, Sr. Manager at 25th Floor, A Wing, Marathon Futorex, Mafatal Mills Compound, NM Joshi Marg, Lower Parel (E), Mumbai-400013, Email: [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com) or aforesaid number.

For Hindustan Auto Finance Limited  
Sd/-  
Rishabh Aggarwal  
Place: New Delhi  
Date: March 28, 2023  
(Company Secretary & Compliance Officer)



# Govt extends deadline for linking PAN with Aadhaar by 3 months

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday extended the deadline for linking PAN with Aadhaar by three months to June 30 to enable people comply with the mandatory income tax provisions.

The deadline for linking PAN with Aadhaar was to end on March 31. As per the income tax department, failure to link the two unique identities will lead to the unlinked PAN becoming inoperative.

There have been demands, including from political parties, for giving more time to people to link PAN (Permanent Account Number) with their unique 12-digit identification number Aadhaar.

"In order to provide some more time to the taxpayers, the date for linking PAN and Aadhaar has been extended to June 30, 2023, whereby persons can intimate their Aadhaar to the prescribed authority for Aadhaar-PAN linking without facing repercussions," the finance ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

Earlier also, the government had extended the deadline several times.

The government had imposed a fee of Rs 500 on linking of PAN with Aadhaar



from April 1, 2022 and the amount was later increased to Rs 1,000 from July 1, 2022.

So far, more than 51 crore PANs have been linked with Aadhaar.

Under the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961, every person who has been allotted a PAN as on July 1, 2017 and eligible to obtain Aadhaar Number, was required to intimate his or her Aadhaar to the prescribed authority on or before March 31, 2023, on payment of a prescribed fee.

Failure to do so would have attracted certain actions under the Act from April 1, 2023.

"The date for intimating Aadhaar to the prescribed authority for the purpose of linking PAN and Aadhaar

and no relaxation has been given in this regard.

Vivek Jalan, Partner at Tax Connect Advisory, said Aadhaar and PAN linkage is mandatory to get the benefits of income tax refunds and credits of TDS/TCS, and also to avoid paying higher taxes in the form of penal TDS.

Lallit Tripathi, Chairman and Managing Director of financial services firm Vedant Asset, said if a taxpayer fails to do so by the end of June, PAN will become inoperative, which means that the person will not be able to file income tax returns, perform several banking services, or carry out stock market transactions.

According to the ministry, those persons who have been exempted from PAN-Aadhaar linking will not be liable to face action. This category includes those residing in specified states, a non-resident as per the Income Tax Act, an individual who is not a citizen of India or individuals of the age of eighty years or more at any time during the previous year.

Last week, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to extend the deadline by six months for linking PAN with Aadhaar and remove the Rs 1,000 fee.



# Rupee gains 15 paise against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 15 paise to settle at 82.16 against the US dollar on Tuesday supported by a weak American currency in the overseas market and fresh foreign fund inflows.

However, a muted trend in domestic equities dented investor sentiments and capped the sharp gains in the rupee, traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.20 against the American currency and finally closed at 82.16 against the greenback, registering a gain of 15 paise over its previous close of 82.31.

During the session, the rupee touched a high of 82.16 and a low of 82.28 against the dollar.

"Rupee traded positive as the dollar index weakness helped the rupee. The banking relief in the US on the back of SVB taken over by First Citizens

Bank kept dollar prices weak helping the rupee gain," said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities.

The volatile range will continue in the rupee as 82.00 remains a strong hurdle for the rupee in the near term and 82.55 is the near-term support, Trivedi said.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.26 per cent to 102.59.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures declined 0.42 per cent to USD 77.79 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 40.14 points or 0.07 per cent to end at 57,613.72, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 34.00 points or 0.2 per cent to 16,951.70.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned net buyers in the capital market on Tuesday as they bought shares worth Rs 1,531.13 crore, according to exchange data.

# Sensex, Nifty close lower in volatile trade ahead of F&O expiry



PTN ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended marginally lower in highly volatile trade on Tuesday as losses in IT and auto stocks were largely offset by gains in banking and financial shares amid mixed global trends.

Profit booking by cautious investors ahead of F&O expiry on Wednesday also dented the sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 40.14 points or 0.07 per cent lower at 57,613.72 as 19 of its stocks declined and 11 advanced. The index opened higher and further climbed 295.59 points or 0.51 per cent to touch a high of 57,949.45. It, however, failed to hold onto the gains and fell to a low of 57,494.91 later.

The broader NSE Nifty closed lower by 34 points or 0.20 per cent to finish at 16,951.70 after gyrating between 17,061.75 and 16,913.75.

As many as 32 Nifty stocks declined, 17 advanced and one closed unchanged. Adani Entertainment, Adani Ports, Tech Mahindra, HeroMotoCorp and Tata Motors were among major Nifty losers.

Among the Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors, Bharti Airtel, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Technologies, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra and UltraTech Cement were the biggest laggards.

IndusInd Bank, Power Grid, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, NTPC, Reliance Industries,

HDFC and Tata Steel were the prominent winners.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said, "Indian markets continued to stay in the grip of bears as investors remained cautious in expectation of further tightening from the RBI."

Nifty small and midcap stocks continued to underperform due to fall in investor risk appetite and FY23 tax harvesting, Nair added.

"Nifty witnessed yet another day of rangebound price action. It consolidated between 16,900-17,100 for the third consecutive day," Jatin Gedia, Technical Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.79 per cent and midcap index went lower by 0.42 per cent.

Among the indices, services dropped 2.77 per cent, telecommunication went lower by 1.60 per cent, retail fell by 1.17 per cent, utilities (1.06 per cent), teck (0.94 per cent), commodities (0.89 per cent) and IT (0.85 per cent). However, financial services, bankex and metal ended in the green.

"Amid volatile moves in intra-day trades, key indices ended marginally lower and under-performed most of its Asian peers. Barring gains in select banking and metal stocks, other sectors witnessed profit-taking as caution prevailed ahead of the F&O expiry on Wednesday," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

# CAG raises safety concerns over 3.3 L wagons being operated without NCO nod

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than 3.30 lakh repaired wagons were operated without NCO approval and this has compromised safety, according to a new report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Neutral Control Office in workshops/yards are meant for independent examination of repaired wagons or those that go undergo periodic overhauls before their actual handing over

to open line for operations.

An NCO approval is vital as wagons repaired in workshops are subjected for a check by the Neutral Train Examiner (NTXR). Only those certified fit can be inducted into service. Those found defective by NTXR are detained for further attention.

"More than 3.30 lakh wagons constituting 41 per cent of total were passed locally (without NCO approval) after being repaired at workshops/terminal yards, compromising safety," the



CAG report said.

It also said that an analysis of the FOIS (Freight Operations Information System) data for 2016-17 to 2020-21 revealed that the halt time was close to half of the total travel time and

hence the average speed was also close to half of the average speed without halt time.

The report also said that in violation of the codal provisions, Zonal Railways did not participate in the assessment of

wagon requirement or send proposals or justification for their acquisition to the Railway Board.

"In absence of any input from the zones, RB kept on changing requirement of wagons. Available wagon holding was more than the wagon requirement, as assessed in audit on the basis of wagon utilisation norm (NTKM), throughout the review period.

"Supply of wagons by wagon manufacturers was not commensurate with allotment of

wagons made by the Railway Board and there were huge delays in supply.

Rakes were cancelled by parties due to non-supply by the Railway administration resulting in loss of potential earnings," it said.

The report also highlighted that there were instances of detention of rakes in the selected loading and unloading points/terminal yards which resulted in loss of wagon days and their earning capacity.



# 'Export ban on wheat to continue, record output likely even after untimely rain'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday said the export ban on wheat will continue as long as the country does not feel comfortable with the domestic supplies to meet the food security needs.

Addressing a press conference, state-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) Chairman and Managing Director Ashok K Meena said wheat production has not been impacted due to unseasonal rains. Even after rains, the total wheat output will be at a record 112 million tonne this year.

He also mentioned that the government procurement of fresh wheat crop has kick-started, and about 10,727 tonne was purchased at minimum support price (MSP) in Madhya Pradesh on Monday. India, the world's second-largest wheat producer, banned wheat exports in May 2022, with immediate effect as part of measures to control rising domestic prices.

"As far as the government is concerned for ensuring the food security of the common man, no export of wheat will be allowed. So, the export ban on wheat will continue as long as the country does not feel comfortable with supplies," Meena told reporters.

Estimated higher wheat production this year will ensure sufficient supplies for both government procurement and general consumption in the Indian market, he said.

The government has projected a record wheat production of 112.18 million tonne in the 2023-24 crop year (July-June), as per the second estimate

of the agriculture ministry. Meena said the agriculture ministry has estimated a record wheat output, taking into account weather fluctuations.

"Rains are a cause of concern as it affects the quality of the grain. The accompanying factor of rain is that the temperature comes down. Low temperature is good for wheat crops for full maturity. Therefore, the estimated quantity of wheat production is likely to be achieved," he said.

As a result, the government's wheat procurement target of 34.15 million tonne will also be achieved, he added.

Stating that the FCI has started the wheat procurement operation, Meena said about 10,727 tonne of wheat was procured in Madhya Pradesh on March 27. "The first arrival has started in MP. About 10,727 tonne was procured, though there was huge arrival of 5.56 lakh tonne on Monday," he said.

Procurement on the same date in the year-ago period was nil. The arrivals were huge due to the harvesting of short-duration crops this year.

Procurement centres across the country will remain open. Procurement in Punjab and Haryana will begin from April 1 onwards. FCI aims to procure 13.2 million tonne of wheat from Punjab, 7.5 million tonne from Haryana and 8 million tonne from Madhya Pradesh in the 2023-24 marketing year (April-March), he added.

Asked if quality norms will be relaxed for the rain-hit wheat crop, Meena said, "A team will be sent to assess the condition if required."

# Sebi extends nomination deadline for existing demat account holders

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday extended the deadline till September-end for existing demat account holders and mutual fund investors to provide a choice of nomination or opt out of it.

Earlier, the regulator mandated holders of trading and demat accounts as mutual fund folios to update the details of their nominee by March 31, 2023.

In July 2021, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) asked all existing eligible trading and demat account holders to provide a choice of nomination on or before March 31, 2022, failing which the trading and demat accounts would have been frozen for debits. Later, this was extended by one more year till March 31, 2023, and now it has been extended again or six months.

"Based on the assessment of the trading as well as demat accounts in which choice of nomination details (furnishing of nomination or declaration for opting out of nomination) has not been updated and on the basis of representations received from the stakeholders, it has been decided that the



provisions... With regard to freezing of accounts shall come into force with effect from September 30, 2023, instead of March 31, 2023," Sebi said in a circular.

In a separate circular, the regulator has given more time till September 30 to existing mutual fund investors to nominate a beneficiary or opt out of it by submitting a declaration form.

If such investors fail to comply with the rules by September 30, their folios will be frozen, and they will not be able to redeem investment.

The regulator, in June 2022, made it mandatory for mutual fund subscribers to submit the nomination details or declaration to opt out of the nomination on or after August 1, 2022. Later, the deadline was

extended to October 1, 2022. The deadline for all the existing mutual fund folios, including jointly-held ones, was set as March 31, 2023.

Also, Sebi has asked stock brokers, depository participants and asset management companies to encourage their clients to update their 'choice of nomination' by sending a communication on fortnightly basis by way of emails and SMS to all such demat accounts holders or MF unit holders wherein the 'choice of nomination' is not captured.

The communication would provide guidance through which the client can provide his/her 'choice of nomination'.

Investors who are opening new trading and demat accounts from October 1, 2021, have the choice of providing a nomination or opting out of nomination through a declaration form. Explaining the rationale behind the Sebi's move, Anand Rathi Wealth Ltd COO Niranjan Babu Ramayanam said that many investment accounts in the past have been opened without nominating anyone to whom the assets should be transmitted in case something happens to the account holders.

# Github lays 142 staff in India, including entire engineering team

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Microsoft-owned GitHub has laid off 142 people in India, including the entire staff in its engineering division, people aware of the development said on Tuesday.

Those affected by the decision were deployed across the company's offices in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi.

When contacted, a GitHub spokesperson said the decision was part of the company's reorganisation plan.

# India's goods, services exports to cross \$ 760 billion in FY23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said the country's merchandise and services exports are estimated to cross USD 760 billion in the current fiscal ending March 31.

Exports grew to USD 676 billion in 2021-22 from USD 500 billion.

Speaking at the annual session of Assocham here, Goyal said that at a time when the whole world is facing recession, high inflation and elevated interest rates, India is performing well.

Goyal stressed that over the last 9 years, the focus of the Modi-government has been on



building the foundation blocks which are necessary for an economy to have many years of uninterrupted and sustainable growth.

Various steps being take by the government are making India more cost competitive, be it the huge investment in infrastructure coupled with logistics, technological advancement, or the PM GatiShakti, he said.

He also said the perfor-

mance of India's global trade has proved the naysayers wrong.

"I can say with great pride, happiness, and thanks to all your efforts that India has crossed in its 75th year of independence, as we speak today, USD 750 billion of exports," he said, adding the financial year is expected to end with a total exports (merchandise and services) of about USD 760 billion.

The minister also said the FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) with the UAE and Australia have been welcomed by the industry.

The speed of India's FTAs did not come at the cost of compromising the quality of agreements and it was done after extensive stakeholder consultation, he noted.

# Govt sanctions ₹800 cr for installing 7,432 EV fast charging stations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Heavy Industries on Tuesday said Rs 800 crore under FAME India Scheme Phase II has been sanctioned to three PSU oil marketing companies (OMC) for setting up 7,432 public fast charging EV stations across the country.

The amount has been sanctioned under FAME Scheme Phase II.

The ministry has released Rs 560 crore or 70 per cent of the total amount to three OMCs -- Indian Oil (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) -- as the first installment for the installation and commissioning of upstream infrastructure and charging equipment of EV public charging stations at respective retail outlets in the country.

The installation is expected to be completed by March 2024, the ministry said in a statement.

At present, there are 6,586 charging stations across the country.

"The addition of the new



7,432 public charging stations will be a significant push to EV charging ecosystem," the release said, and added the charging capacity would be used for charging electric 2-wheelers, 4-wheelers, light commercial vehicles, and mini-buses.

Mahendra Nath Pandey, Minister of Heavy Industries said the move will give a boost to the electric vehicle ecosystem in India and encourage more people to switch to cleaner modes of transportation.

He also added that the government is committed to promoting sustainable green mobility solutions and reducing the country's carbon emissions, working towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Net Zero mission.

# Toll road operators' revenue to rise 9-11 % next fiscal: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Toll road operators are likely to log in lower top line growth at 9-11 per cent in 2023-24 compared to a robust 16-18 per cent rise in revenue this fiscal, says a report.

In a report on Tuesday, rating agency Crisil said the jump of 16-18 per cent in revenue this fiscal will be on the back of significant hike in toll rates due to elevated inflation, and healthy traffic growth on national highways.

However, the revenue will moderate to 9-11 per cent in FY24 due to falling inflation and a likely moderation in traffic growth, it said.

## BRIEF

MOS MEA CALLS FOR MILLET DIPLOMACY AT THE BIMSTEC MEET

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Millet diplomacy, regional cooperation, proposal for BIMSTEC Games and University for better people to people connect and focusing on Kolkata as the nodal centre for India's Act East were some of the major points raised during the two day BIMSTEC conference held in Kolkata on the occasion its 25th anniversary.

On the opening day of the meet, Honorable Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. Rajkumar Ranajan Singh, after inaugurating the two-day BIMSTEC meet, stressed on India's Millet diplomacy to solve food crisis among the member nations and East and North East of the country to become leaders in diplomatic strategy for the region.

Speaking at the inaugural session of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Mr. Singh said "This is the Year of the Millet and our Prime Minister has given much importance to it. This is a climate resilient crop and its nutrition value is very high. Let us hope that food deficiency by way of cultivation and popularization of millet can be addressed. It grows in all geographic condition and needs less water. So let us promote it and see how far it goes to solve the problem of food security. Kolkata is strategically one of the most prominent cities of India and for promotion of East and Act East policy Kolkata should be the prime area and the regional head to lead the Act East policy," he said while talking about the importance given to East in taking forward the BIMSTEC agenda.

Director ISCS Arindam Mukherjee read out the Kolkata Declaration based on the deliberations of the two days and hoped the issues raised would help in mitigating problems and further advance regional cooperation.



# TSITSIPAS WINS AFTER LONG WAIT IN MIAMI



**AP ■ MIAMI**  
World number three Stefanos Tsitsipas finally got his Miami Open campaign under way on Monday with a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 win over Cristian Garin while Argentine Francisco Cerundolo upset fifth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime.

There were no shortage of upsets at Hard Rock Stadium with 12th seeded American Francis Tiafoe beaten by 59th ranked Italian Lorenzo Sonego in straight sets.

France's Adrian Mannarino beat seventh-seeded Pole Hubert Hurkacz and American qualifier Christopher Eubanks defeated Gregoire Barrere in straight sets.

Tsitsipas arrived in Miami a

week ago, had a first round bye and then had a walkover win in the second round when Richard Gasquet pulled out with injury.

"It has almost felt like a vacation this past week, staying in Miami. I glad I got started. It was a difficult match against an opponent who has played good tennis against good opponents in the past," said the Greek.

Tsitsipas has not been on court much in recent weeks. He withdrew from Acapulco due to a shoulder injury and was beaten in his opening match at Indian Wells this month.

The rest has, however, helped Tsitsipas to recover a little from his injury and although he was not at his sharpest, he did enough to book his place in the fourth round against Karen Khachanov.

Tsitsipas broke at 4-4 in the third set to make sure of his progress against the Chilean, who enjoyed plenty of support from the South Florida crowd.

Khachanov defeated Czech Jiri Lehecka 6-2, 6-4 to reach the Miami last 16 for the first time.

Cerundolo was knocked out of Indian Wells in straight sets by Canadian Auger-Aliassime two weeks ago, but it was a very different game on the faster courts in South Florida.

The 25th-seeded Argentine was on top from the outset, taking the first set 6-2 and he kept his nerve to triumph 7-5 in the second.

Miami is a happy hunting ground for Cerundolo, who made a surprise run to the semi-finals last year, and he relished the vocal support from

his fans in the crowd.

"That was another important win for me, I think I played really good from beginning to end," he said.

"It is super nice to play here, a lot of Argentinians, a lot of people, so I really enjoyed it. Last year was amazing, so I'm really excited to be in the round of 16 again and to try to keep winning," he added.

Exciting American Tiafoe was tipped by many observers to go deep in the tournament but he fell 6-3, 6-4 to Sonego in a game disrupted by a second set rain delay of over an hour.

Mannarino, playing inventive tennis, beat Hurkacz 7-6 (7/5) 7-6 (7/0) but will face a tricky test against the 26-year-old Eubanks who will break into the top 100 for the first time in

his career thanks to his victory over 65th ranked Barrere, who had beaten Britain's Cam Norrie in the previous round.

**CONFIDENT HALYS**  
Eubanks trailed 6-2 in a second-set tie-break before a rain delay of more than an hour and he won seven of the next eight points for an emotional 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) victory.

French qualifier Quentin Halys hit 15 aces as he beat American Mackenzie McDonald 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 to set up a fourth round clash with world number five Daniil Medvedev.

Halys had never won a match at ATP 1000 level prior to this tournament but has beaten Spain's Pedro Martinez and Australian Alex de Minaur before taking out McDonald.



# Rybakina, Sabalenka march on, Pegula also progresses

**AP ■ MIAMI**  
Jelena Rybakina extended her winning streak to 11 matches as she broke her place in the Miami Open quarter-finals with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Belgium's Elise Mertens on Monday while world number two Aryna Sabalenka powered past Barbora Krejčíková in straight sets.

But there was agony for Canadian former US Open winner Bianca Andreescu, who had to be wheelchair off court after suffering a left ankle injury and retiring against Ekaterina Alexandrova.

Rybakina is looking to complete the "Sunshine Double" after her triumph in Indian Wells, but she was far from euphoric after her victory.

"Physically I'm not the

fresh, but I'm happy that I'm managing and finding my way. To be in a quarter-final is great and hopefully I'm going to play better," she said.

The Kazakh allowed Mertens to break in the sixth game of the first set but then two double faults from the Belgian allowed Rybakina to swiftly break back and then she struck again to take the opening set.

The Wimbledon champion broke early in the second set and never looked back and she will now face Italian Martina Trevisan in the quarters.

Trevisan beat former French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 6-3. Sabalenka looked in ominous form as she blasted her way to victory over Krejčíková, the 2021 French Open winner, 6-3, 6-2.

Krejčíková had ended Sabalenka's 13-match win streak in February in Dubai but Sabalenka defeated the Czech two weeks ago at Indian Wells.

This time Sabalenka took just 65 minutes to take care of business, going unbroken in the match and facing just one break point. American Jessica Pegula looked comfortable and in command of her game as she beat Poland's Magda Linette 6-1, 7-5.

The American will face Anastasia Potapova after the Russian beat China's Zheng Qinwen 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) to continue her impressive run.

Romanian Cirstea followed up her quarter-final at Indian Wells by securing another last eight appearance thanks to a 7-6 (7-3), 6-4, win over Czech Marketa Vondrousova.

# Sindhu drops out of world top 10



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Having failed to defend her women's singles title at last week's Swiss Open, double Olympic medallist P V Sindhu dropped out of the world's top 10 in the latest BWF rankings issued on Tuesday.

The 27-year-old from Hyderabad, who has been struggling this season since returning to action following a long injury lay-off, slipped two places to the 11th spot with 60,448 points.

A former world champion, Sindhu, who has

a career-best ranking of world number 2, has been in the top 10 since November, 2016. She first cracked the elite top 10 in August, 2013.

In men's singles, HS Prannoy was static at world number 8, while Kidambi Srikanth dropped a rung to 21st place and Lakshya Sen was 25th.

Swiss Open champion Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty strengthened their world number six position, while women's doubles pairing of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand was static at the 18th position.

Meiraba Luwang Maisnam, however, couldn't cross the opening round of the qualifiers, going down 14-21, 18-21 to Lanier.

In mixed doubles qualification round, the Indian pairing of Rohan Kapoor and N Sikki Reddy lost 12-21, 22-20, 19-21 to Indonesia's Amri Syahnawi and Winny Oktavina Kandow.

B Sumeeth Reddy and Ashwini Ponnappa too missed out narrowly, going down 17-21, 21-19, 13-21 to China's He Ji Ting and Du Yue.

Women's pairing of Simran Singhi and Ritika Thaker too went down 11-21, 19-21 to Denmark's Natasya P Anthonisen and Clara Graversen in the qualification round.

# Priyanshu enters main draw, Dhruv-Arjun progress to last 16

**PTI ■ MADRID**  
India's Priyanshu Rajawat recorded two fine victories in the men's singles qualification round to progress to the main draw of the Spain Masters Super 300 badminton tournament here on Tuesday.

The World number 60 Indian beat El Salvador's Uriel Francisco Canjura Artiga 21-16, 21-12 first before prevailing 21-18, 18-21, 21-15 over France's Alex Lanier in a thrilling match.

Fast-rising Indian men's doubles pair of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila saw off brothers Christopher Grimley and Matthew Grimley 16-21, 21-17, 21-12 to enter the pre-quarter-finals.

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B Sumeeth Reddy and Ashwini Ponnappa too missed out narrowly, going down 17-21, 21-19, 13-21 to China's He Ji Ting and Du Yue.

Women's pairing of Simran Singhi and Ritika Thaker too went down 11-21, 19-21 to Denmark's Natasya P Anthonisen and Clara Graversen in the qualification round.



# Man Utd to play Hollywood duo's Wrexham in San Diego friendly

**AP ■ MANCHESTER**  
English football giants Manchester United will play a non-league Wrexham team owned by two Hollywood stars in a San Diego friendly on July 25, it was announced on Monday.

This is the first match of United's tour of the United States, designed to help the club prepare for the 2023/24 English season.

Welsh club Wrexham, who play in the National League — the fifth tier of English football's pyramid — have been owned since 2020 by Hollywood actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney.

This season Wrexham defied the odds to make it to the fourth round of the knock-

out FA Cup before losing to second-tier Sheffield United in a replay.

Monday's statement said a "youth-focused team drawn from United's travelling tour squad supplemented by Academy prospects will take on Wrexham AFC on 25th July, as part of a week-long training camp in San Diego."

Wrexham manager Phil Parkinson added: "We're looking forward to being able to play in the United States for the first time in the club's history.

The match against Manchester United is sure to be a memorable occasion at Snapdragon Stadium, San Diego."

The match against United is not the only game in the United States on Wrexham's horizon.

**कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, जमशेदपुर**

**अल्पकालीन ई०-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना**  
ई०-निविदा सूचना संख्या- RSDS/JAMSHEDPUR/15/2022-23

**1. कार्य की विस्तृत विवरणी :**

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि	अग्रघन की राशि	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के घालभूमगढ़ प्रखण्ड अंतर्गत जूनवनी पंचायत स्थित मौला जूनवनी टोला रोलाडीह में मोहराड़वा नाला पर उच्चस्तरीय पुल निर्माण।	₹ 4,17,77,900.00	₹ 8,40,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	18 माह
2	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के मानगो जाकिरनगर चारिस कॉलोनी क्रॉस रोड नं०-04 में नाला के उपर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 1,97,87,900.00	₹ 3,96,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	12 माह
3	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के मानगो जाकिरनगर अंदिस करनी नरिजद के पास कपाली नाला पर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 5,35,56,400.00	₹ 10,80,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	24 माह
4	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के मानगो हिमना आदर्स नगर से गोकुलनगर के बीच जगन्नाथ लोहा के घर के पास डिमना नाला पर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 2,90,83,400.00	₹ 5,82,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	18 माह
5	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के मानगो पारडीह सीटी इन से आगे माउन्ट विटेरा स्कूल जानवाले मार्ग में नाला पर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 2,25,38,900.00	₹ 4,51,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	15 माह
6	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के पोटेका प्रखण्ड अंतर्गत सोहदा पंचायत के ग्राम-सिकड़ा, बंसोला- तीरिलचुद्र के बीच दूध नदी पर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 3,32,86,400.00	₹ 6,70,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	18 माह
7	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के पोटेका प्रखण्ड अंतर्गत ग्वालकाटा पंचायत के ग्राम-मोहनाडीह में पुलिया निर्माण।	₹ 2,87,14,800.00	₹ 5,75,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	18 माह
8	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के पटनवा प्रखण्ड अंतर्गत नहरीबेड़ा के लोधिपुर जानेवाली जर्जर पुलिया पर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 2,98,26,200.00	₹ 6,00,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	18 माह
9	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के चाकुलिया प्रखण्ड अंतर्गत जुगीतापा पंचायत के पीडानाहली में गंधरुपी नदी पर उच्चस्तरीय पुल निर्माण।	₹ 3,57,73,000.00	₹ 7,20,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	18 माह
10	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के जमशेदपुर प्रखण्ड अंतर्गत हुईयाडीह, बाबुडीह, लालमट्टा में मुख्य सड़क पर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 2,00,33,900.00	₹ 4,01,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	15 माह
11	पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिला के गुडवाना प्रखण्ड के कोरैस्ट ब्लॉक पंचायत स्थित ग्राम बाडोनुदी में गुवा नाला पर पुल निर्माण।	₹ 2,85,82,000.00	₹ 5,72,000.00	₹ 10,000.00	18 माह

2. निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि - 12.04.2023  
3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय - 25.04.2023 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे तक।  
4. ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, जमशेदपुर / मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, एफ०एफ०पी० भवन, घुर्वा, राँची में निविदा शुल्क, अग्रघन की राशि Bank Credit Certificate एवं Affidavit जमा करने की तिथि एवं समय 28.04.2023 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे तक।  
5. निविदा खोलने का स्थान - मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, एफ०एफ०पी० भवन, घुर्वा, राँची।  
6. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय - 29.04.2023 अपराह्न 02:00 बजे।  
7. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता :- कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, जमशेदपुर।  
8. ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं० - 7903003903  
9. निविदा शुल्क राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक द्वारा निर्गत ड्राफ्ट या बैंकर्स चेक जो कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, जमशेदपुर के पदनाम से देय हो, देना होगा।  
10. निविदा शुल्क राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक द्वारा निर्गत ड्राफ्ट या बैंकर्स चेक जो कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, जमशेदपुर के पदनाम से देय हो, देना होगा।  
11. विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in) एवं कार्यालय की सूचना पट्ट पर देखा जा सकता है।  
12. परिमाण विपत्र की राशि घट-बढ़ सकती है तदनुसार अग्रघन की राशि देय होगी।  
13. निविदा प्रकाशन के लिए वेबसाइट [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in) एवं कार्यालय की सूचना पट्ट पर देखा जा सकता है।

**कार्यपालक अभियंता**  
ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, जमशेदपुर

PR 293811 Rural Development(22-23).D

**झारखण्ड सरकार**  
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, धनबाद।  
मोबाईल नं० : 8789242462 Email : [rsds.dhanbad@rediffmail.com](mailto:rsds.dhanbad@rediffmail.com)  
घनबाद / दिनांक-28.03.2023

**ई०-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना**  
ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या - RWD/SD/DHANBAD-33/2022-23

**1. कार्य की विस्तृत विवरणी:**

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (लाख में)	अग्रघन की राशि	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	धनबाद जिला के दुम्की प्रखण्ड में प्रखण्ड विकास पदाधिकारी-सह-अंचलाधिकारी/पर्यवेक्षक/तृतीय वर्ग कर्मचारी आवास निर्माण तथा प्रखण्ड परिसर का विकास एवं विविध कार्य।	597.55277	परिमाण विपत्र की राशि 2%	10000.00	12 महीना
2	धनबाद जिला के धनबाद सदर प्रखण्ड में प्रखण्ड विकास पदाधिकारी-सह-अंचलाधिकारी/पर्यवेक्षक/तृतीय वर्ग कर्मचारी आवास निर्माण तथा प्रखण्ड परिसर का विकास एवं विविध कार्य।	594.29222	परिमाण विपत्र की राशि 2%	10000.00	12 महीना
3	धनबाद जिला के तोपमौंकी प्रखण्ड में प्रखण्ड विकास पदाधिकारी-सह-अंचलाधिकारी/पर्यवेक्षक/तृतीय वर्ग कर्मचारी आवास निर्माण तथा प्रखण्ड परिसर का विकास एवं विविध कार्य।	587.09809	परिमाण विपत्र की राशि 2%	10000.00	12 महीना
4	धनबाद जिला के बलियापुर प्रखण्ड में प्रखण्ड विकास पदाधिकारी-सह-अंचलाधिकारी/पर्यवेक्षक/तृतीय वर्ग कर्मचारी आवास निर्माण तथा प्रखण्ड परिसर का विकास एवं विविध कार्य।	587.82537	परिमाण विपत्र की राशि 2%	10000.00	12 महीना
5	धनबाद जिला के मोहिनपुर प्रखण्ड में प्रखण्ड विकास पदाधिकारी-सह-अंचलाधिकारी/पर्यवेक्षक/तृतीय वर्ग कर्मचारी आवास निर्माण तथा प्रखण्ड परिसर का विकास एवं विविध कार्य।	583.99797	परिमाण विपत्र की राशि 2%	10000.00	12 महीना
6	धनबाद जिला के तिरसा प्रखण्ड में प्रखण्ड विकास पदाधिकारी-सह-अंचलाधिकारी/पर्यवेक्षक/तृतीय वर्ग कर्मचारी आवास निर्माण तथा प्रखण्ड परिसर का विकास एवं विविध कार्य।	580.48883	परिमाण विपत्र की राशि 2%	10000.00	12 महीना

2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि - 17.04.2023  
3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की तिथि एवं समय - दिनांक 26.04.2023 को अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।  
4. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय 28.04.2023 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे तक।  
5. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि जमा करने का स्थान-  
i) ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, धनबाद।  
ii) ग्रामीण विकास विशेष अंचल, हजारीबाग।  
iii) E-Procurement Cell, मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, एफ०एफ०पी० भवन, घुर्वा, राँची।  
6. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि जमा करने की तिथि को यदि राज्य में सरकारी अवकाश घोषित होता है, तो उक्त तिथि एवं समय अग्रले कार्यविस्तृत तक तब विस्तारित समझा जायेगी।  
7. निविदा खोलने का स्थान - E-Procurement Cell, मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, एफ०एफ०पी० भवन, घुर्वा, राँची।  
8. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय - 03.05.2023 अपराह्न 2:00 बजे तक।  
9. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता :- ई० नरेंद्र कुमार, कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, धनबाद।  
10. ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं० - 8789242462 (संबन्धित कार्यपालक अभियंता का दूरभाष नम्बर)  
11. निविदा शुल्क राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक द्वारा निर्गत ड्राफ्ट या बैंकर्स चेक जो कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, धनबाद के पदनाम से देय हो देना होगा।  
12. परिमाण विपत्र की राशि घट-बढ़ सकती है तदनुसार अग्रघन की राशि देय होगी।  
13. निविदा प्रकाशन के लिए वेबसाइट [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in) एवं कार्यालय की सूचना पट्ट पर देखा जा सकता है।  
14. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय - 20.04.2023 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।  
15. निविदा शुल्क, अग्रघन की राशि Bank Credit Certificate एवं Affidavit जमा करने की तिथि एवं समय 28.04.2023 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे तक।  
16. निविदा खोलने का स्थान - मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, एफ०एफ०पी० भवन, घुर्वा, राँची।  
17. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय - 29.04.2023 अपराह्न 02:00 बजे।  
18. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता :- कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, धनबाद।  
19. ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं० - 7903003903  
20. निविदा शुल्क राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक द्वारा निर्गत ड्राफ्ट या बैंकर्स चेक जो कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, धनबाद के पदनाम से देय हो, देना होगा।  
21. विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in) एवं कार्यालय की सूचना पट्ट पर देखा जा सकता है।

**कार्यपालक अभियंता**  
ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, धनबाद

PR 293822 Rural Development(22-23).D

**झारखण्ड सरकार**  
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग मुख्य अभियंता का कार्यालय  
102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी रोड, राँची

**ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना**  
ई-निविदा संख्या:- 312/2022-23/RWD/JAMTARA दिनांक :- 28.03.2023

मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, झारखण्ड, राँची द्वारा निम्न विवरण के अनुसार e-procurement पद्धति से पैकेज के रूप में निविदा आमंत्रित की जा रही है।

क्र० सं०	आई०ई०टी० फिकेशन संख्या / पैकेज संख्या	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (रुपये में)		कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
			अंक में	अक्षर में	
1.	RWD/JAMTARA/15/SRPKG-02/2022-23	(ii) केन्दुआर्टोड से आगे तक पथ का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य (लं- 2.800 कि०मी०) (i) अघारो से खेरवनी तक पथ का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य (लं- 4.600 कि०मी०) (iii) बाघासोला पी०डब्ल्यू०डी० मुख्य पथ से ताराबाद-कालीपथर होत हुए घोबना मोड़ तक पथ का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य (लं- 3.300 कि०मी०) (iv) बामनडीहा से करजोरी होत हुए तेसजोरिया पी०डब्ल्यू०डी० सड़क तक पथ का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य (लं- 6.720 कि०मी०) (v) नाला पेट्रोल पम्प से कास्ता (बंगाल सोना) तक पथ का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य (लं- 12.150 कि०मी०) (vi) आर०ई०ओ० सीमानदी मोड़ से मधुवा होत हुए सुन्चरपुर मध्य विद्यालय तक पथ का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य (लं- 5.400 कि०मी०) (vii) कांठोजोरिया सिकन्दरपुर से कांठोजोरिया होत हुए भेलाडीह तक पथ का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य (लं- 2.428 कि०मी०)	13,97,65,830.00	तेरह करोड़ सन्तानवे लाख पचास हजार आठ सौ तीस सौ मात्र	15 माह

2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि - 10.04.2023  
3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय - 20.04.2023 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।  
4. (क) मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी, राँची अथवा (ख) जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, जामताड़ा में से किसी भी कार्यालय में निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय - 21.04.2023 अपराह्न 3:30 बजे तक।  
5. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि स्वीड पोस्ट के माध्यम से भी मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, 102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी चौक, राँची, झारखण्ड, पिन- 834001 को भेजा जा सकता है। यह निविदाकार की जिम्मेवारी होगी कि स्वीड पोस्ट के माध्यम से भेजा जाने वाला निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि निर्धारित तिथि एवं समय (21.04.2023 अपराह्न 3:30 बजे तक) से पूर्व प्राप्त हो सके।  
6. अंतिम तिथि एवं समय से पूर्व प्राप्त निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि पर ही विचार किया जायेगा।  
7. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय - 24.04.2023 अपराह्न 3:30 बजे।  
8. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता:- मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, 102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी चौक, राँची, झारखण्ड, पिन- 834001।  
9. ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं० - 0651-2207818  
10. निविदा शुल्क झारखण्ड राज्य में अवस्थित भारतीय स्टेट बैंक / राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक / अनुसूचित बैंक द्वारा निर्गत बैंक ड्राफ्ट के रूप में जो कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमंडल, जामताड़ा के पक्ष में एवं जामताड़ा में भुगतान जमा करना होगा जो लौटया नहीं जायेगा।  
11. विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट [jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in) में देखा जा सकता है।  
12. निविदा प्रकाशन के लिए वेबसाइट [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in) में देखा जा सकता है।

**कार्यपालक अभियंता**  
ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, जमशेदपुर

PR 293789 (Rural Work Department) 22-23 (D)



# STOKES TO PLAY AS SPECIALIST BATTER AT START OF IPL 2023

PTI ■ MUMBAI

England Test captain Ben Stokes will be available only as a specialist batter for Chennai Super Kings in the early stages of the Indian Premier League 2023.

The star allrounder, who was picked by the four-time IPL champions for Rs. 16.25 crore during the auction held in December last year, arrived in India last week and has been training for the upcoming season starting March 31.

A report in ESPNcricinfo said, Stokes, who has played for Rajasthan Royals and Rising Pune Supergiant in the past, will likely play as a specialist batter initially to manage his knee injury, for which he has taken a cortisone injection — an anti-inflammation medicine.

The 31-year-old has been hampered by recurring injuries to his left knee, with the most recent flare-up happening during England's tour of New Zealand. Stokes bowled only nine overs across two Tests and batted with a lot of discomfort on the final day of the second Test in Wellington.

Terming the injury "very frustrating", Stokes said he hoped to "get into a position that I feel like I don't have to worry about my knee anymore" with England set to host Australia for the Ashes this year in June.

CSK batting coach Michael Hussey confirmed Stokes might not bowl at the start of the IPL.

"My understanding is he's ready to go as a batsman from the start. The bowling might be wait and see. I know he had his first very light bowl yesterday (Sunday) since he had his injections in his knee," said Hussey. "The physios from Chennai



(CSK) and ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) are working pretty closely together. My understanding is he won't be bowling much at all in the first few games of the tournament... It might be a few weeks. I'm not 100% sure, (but we will) hopefully get him bowling at some stage in the tournament," Hussey added. With the home-and-away format returning in IPL 2023, CSK are set to play in front

of their fans at the Chinnaswamy Stadium. Hussey hoped the setup brings the best out of Stokes.

"The ground is amazing; new stands up, full capacity. The first home game, the atmosphere is going to be out of this world. I can't wait -- and I'm sure Stokesy is going to absolutely love it. That's the thing with those big players, they generally like a big stage and perform

their best on it. Once he gets out there in Chepauk Stadium in front of an unbelievably loud crowd, I hope it's going to bring out the best in him," Hussey said.

Hussey added that Stokes had been "hitting the ball really well" since arriving in India, predicting that he would be "huge" to the franchise's bid to reach the playoffs, "particularly if we can get him bowling... Having those allrounders is really important."

## AUSTRALIANS LOVE TO HATE PUJARA: HAZLEWOOD

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood feels the price Cheteshwar Pujara puts on his wicket makes him one of the most difficult batters to bowl to, and added that there is a "thrill" one gets after dismissing him.

Pujara recently completed a century of Test matches during the Border-Gavaskar series, and though he couldn't score big in the four matches, he still had some vital contributions.

The 35-year-old has more than 7,000 Test runs from 102 games, including 19 centuries and 35 half-tens.

Hazlewood, who is nursing a tendon injury which sidelined him during the Test series against India, added that Pujara is someone Australians "love to hate".

"It's a bigger thrill for the bowlers (to dismiss Pujara). I think when you do end up getting his wicket, it means you have earned it," Hazlewood said on RCB podcast on Tuesday. "It means you've put in a lot



of hard work. Whether it is the fifth ball he (Pujara) faces... You've already bowled to him in the previous Test matches, you've earned that respect and you've earned that wicket," added Hazlewood, who was RCB's pace spearhead during IPL 2022, taking 20 wickets.

Hazlewood said that he had had some great tussles with the Indian stalwart, adding that he was a fantastic player.

"He's someone I've had some great tussles over the years, and, in particular, in Australia. He's someone Australians love to hate but he's a fantastic player and I guess that is part of Test cricket. When you do get him out, you've earned it," said Hazlewood, whose participation in IPL 2023 could be in doubt because of the tendon injury.



## Bayliss focussing on PBKS death overs batting, wickets in middle overs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Punjab Kings head coach Trevor Bayliss has listed out death overs batting and wickets in the middle overs as the two key areas of improvement for the team aiming to end its title drought in the IPL.

Punjab finished an underwhelming sixth in the previous four editions with their only final appearance coming way back in 2014.

Bayliss, a World Cup winning coach who also guided KKR to two IPL trophies, is expected to turn an inconsistent Punjab into a consistent outfit.

The 60-year-old from Australia talked about the preparations for the IPL and his expectations from the players.

"One of things that we thought was lacking last year was not able to finish off innings with the bat. That was one of the reasons why we decided to go after a young all-rounder like Sam. He gives us a strength in the middle-order and he is a world class bowler as well.

"From the batting point of view, we want some of the guys in the top-order to go on and make those 70s and 80s, that

makes it easier for the middle order," he said from Mohali where the team hosts KKR in its IPL opener.

Bayliss is working to create a pressure-free environment within the team as that is imperative for success.

"I want them to play the game for the reasons they started playing the game at the first place, which is the love for the game. I don't know what it was like in the past but I will run this team like I have always done.

"It doesn't guarantee success but we will enjoy ourselves and play with a smile on our face but when we need to we will do the hard yards in the practice field."

Having achieved success in international as well as franchise cricket, Bayliss believes the main players have to perform for any team to be consistent.

"I am not exactly sure if I can pin point one thing," he said when asked about the secret to success in an unforgiving format like the T20.

"From bowling point of view if you are taking wickets through the middle overs you are very tough to beat. Taking wickets in middle overs is very important.

## Pakistan deny Afghanistan clean sweep, wins 3rd T20

AP ■ SHARJAH

Afghanistan was foiled in its bid for a series sweep when Pakistan won their third and last T20I by 66 runs.

Pakistan finally came good without five rested frontline players to post a challenging 182-7 then bowled out Afghanistan for 116 with 8 balls remaining.

Pakistan interim captain Shadab Khan and young fast bowler Ihsanullah shared six wickets. Shadab, with 3-13, became the first Pakistan men's player to reach 100 wickets in T20s. Ihsanullah got 3-29 with his pacy short-pitched deliveries.

Shadab provided a late flourish with the bat by smashing a 17-ball 28 after Saim Ayub missed out on his maiden T20 half-century by one run.

Defeat in the dead rubber couldn't spoil Afghanistan's history-making effort in winning its first match and series 2-1 against Pakistan in any format.

"It's a special occasion to be part of this team," Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan said. "We won the series, but we have some areas to improve on. We responded well under pressure. We have struggled under pressure in the past but I'm happy



that we chased in a couple of games."

Najibullah Zadran retired hurt off the first ball he faced after he was struck on the grille by Ihsanullah. Concussion substitute Azmatullah Omarzai made 21 before he was the last man to be dismissed.

Pakistan made only 92-9 and 130-6 in the first two T20s but adapted well to the conditions.

Left-hander Saim batted fluently against the pace and spin of Rashid Khan, hitting two sixes and four boundaries, while Abdullah Shafique made 23 off 13 balls and finally broke his drought after failing to score in his previous four T20s.

Iftikhar Ahmed, playing his first match in the series, made 31 off 25 balls and together with Shadab accelerated well in the death overs to help Pakistan tally its best total of the series.

"We wanted to finish on a high note and we have done that," Shadab said.

"We needed to play for Pakistan's pride and we did it. The main motive of this series was to give the youngsters a chance. Hopefully, they will get confidence from these matches and it will help them in the long run."

Afghanistan struggled to get any momentum in the chase, and lost its last seven wickets for 45 runs.

## Nobody comes anywhere close to Dhoni, the finisher: Parag

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Riyan Parag believes Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has mastered the role of a finisher, and nobody comes anywhere close to the former India captain.

The 21-year-old from Guwahati, who will be playing his fifth IPL this year, added that while he is happy donning the role of a finisher, if given a choice, he would like to bat at No. 4 in the tournament.

"If they (Royals) were to ask me where I want to bat, I would say No. 4. But, then, like always, I am open to bat wherever the team needs me and wherever they think I fit the best. It is a team game; whichever way the combinations match up, I am happy to contribute," Parag told PTI.

"I have been doing the finishing role for the last three years now. There is just one name that comes to my mind which I also have said before, MS Dhoni. I do not think anyone else has mastered that art. Going into that role, I always look up to him, how he finishes games or how he takes the game deep," Parag added.

Parag is confident of a strong show in the IPL on the back of a successful domestic



season for Assam, having had a largely unfulfilled stint in the T20 competition in the last four editions. He had just one half-century in the IPL last season and scored 183 runs in 17 games at an average of 16.64.

Parag, a member of the U-19 World Cup-winning squad in

2018, was a prolific scorer in the in 2022-23 Vijay Hazare Trophy, scoring the fifth-highest number of runs -- 552 at an average of 69 in nine games with three centuries and a half-ton.

In the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy, the right-hander scored 253 runs at a strike rate

of 165.35 with two fifties.

"I had a very good domestic season and, in the buildup for the IPL, we have had a few camps in Jaipur. Everyone has looked in good touch with both the bat and the ball. I do not think the confidence part has changed; I have always been confident. The performances have come through, so that adds a different dimension to the mental state that any player has. When you are confident and have performances to back you, it gives an extra oomph of self confidence," he said.

Parag said he has also worked hard to improve his bowling. "I feel there has been a big improvement (in my leg-breaks) since I have bowled a lot of overs this season. I have bowled more than 350 overs. I put in a lot of work in my bowling so that I am able to chip in whenever my team needs me," he said.

Parag has had his share of social media trolling, but he says it does not affect him anymore.

"Earlier, it did affect me and it hampered my performance. But now I am pretty straight on what I want to do on social media. I have a lot of strong opinions; I just like to state them and I am not waiting for anyone else to reply or give their opinions," he said.

## Youth World Boxing C'ships to be held in Croatia next year

PTI ■ LAUSANNE

The Croatian city of Porec will host the IBA Youth World Boxing Championships next year, while the IBA Junior World Championships this year in Mexico will see the return of competition for 15-16 year age group.

Croatia has hosted some major continental-level boxing competitions, but the Youth World Championships will be the first in the country.

The International Boxing Association (IBA) said in a statement on Tuesday that the two events will provide opportunities to young boxers to showcase their skills and "motivate the younger generation to take up (the) sport".

The decisions were taken by the IBA on the sidelines of the Women's World Boxing Championships in New Delhi, which concluded recently. During the meeting, the IBA board of directors discussed topics ranging from the upcoming Men's World Championships in Tashkent to planning for future international events.

Boxing Federation of India president Ajay Singh was appointed IBA vice-president during the meeting.

## SA boost WC hopes with full-strength squad for Netherlands

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa on Monday named a full-strength squad for two must-win ODIs against the Netherlands on Friday and Sunday, meaning a delayed start for some of them in the Indian Premier League. The matches in Benoni and Johannesburg are South Africa's last games in the World Cup Super League — and they must win both if they are realistically to stay in contention for automatic qualification for the Cricket World Cup in India in October and November.

"We have named our strongest possible squad given the importance of these matches in the context of qualifying for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup," said coach Rob Walter. "We have a job to do and I am confident that with this group of players we can get the job done."

Netherlands would not normally be expected to provide stiff competition for South Africa — but they beat the Proteas in the



T20 World Cup in Australia last November, ending South Africa's hopes of playing in the semi-finals. Only eight teams qualify automatically. South Africa are currently in ninth place.

Two wins would put them in a strong position, ahead of West Indies and with Sri Lanka. If Ireland win all three

matches in a series against Bangladesh in May they could finish level on points with South Africa if the Proteas win both matches against the Netherlands.

In that case net run rate, which currently favours the South Africans, will come into play.

Failure to finish in the top

eight would consign South Africa to play in a 10-team qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe in June and July for one of the last two places in the tournament. Cricket South Africa insisted that players contracted to the Indian Premier League, including fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje, must put their country first.

This will mean them missing the start of the IPL on Friday. The two fast bowlers and their IPL colleagues Quinton de Kock, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Sisanda Magala, Aiden Markram, David Miller and Lungi Ngidi will only be able to join their franchises from April 3.

**Squad:** Temba Bavuma (capt), Quinton de Kock (wk), Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Sisanda Magala, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Wayne Parnell, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen.

## Christchurch washout hits Sri Lanka WC hopes

AP ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Sri Lanka's hopes of securing automatic qualification for the World Cup took a major blow on Tuesday when heavy rain and gusting winds forced the second ODI against New Zealand to be abandoned without a ball being bowled.

Steady rain meant the covers stayed on all day at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch, with organisers calling the match off at 1630 local time (0330 GMT) with more showers forecast.

As a result the two teams split the points which further damages Sri Lanka's designs on a place in the top eight of the Super League, who automatically qualify for the World Cup in India in October and November.

Having also lost the first ODI in the three-match series, Sri Lanka are now ninth in the table with 82 points, six points behind West Indies.

To make the top eight, Sri Lanka must win the third ODI against New Zealand in three days' time and pray that South Africa lose at least once in their upcoming series against the Netherlands, and that Ireland fail to beat Bangladesh 3-0 when they meet in May.



The teams missing out on the top eight will go into a repechage 10-team tournament in Zimbabwe in June and July from which the final two teams will emerge.

New Zealand have already qualified for the World Cup and are now guaran-

teed to finish as Super League table-toppers even if they lose the third ODI in Hamilton on Friday.

Sri Lanka have lost all three tour games played so far in New Zealand, including a 2-0 whitewash in the Test series.