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BRIEF



One of the five Indian merchant navy sailors, who had been stranded in Iran after being implicated in a narcotics case in early 2020, unites with his family on his arrival at the airport in Mumbai, Friday.

Naxals surrender

Raipur: Sixteen Naxalites surrendered in Sukma and eight ultras were arrested in Narayanpur, Chhattisgarh police officials said on Friday. Of the 16 who have laid down arms, four, including a woman, carried collective reward of Rs 15 lakh on their heads, they added. These four are woman ultra Kawasi Pale alias Jogi, Padam Soma, Neelam Kawasi alias Neela and Padam Deva, Sukma Superintendent of Police Sunil Sharma said. "Jogi was active as member of the outlawed outfit's Rast Company Number 3 and she carried a reward of Rs 8 lakh on her head. Padam Soma, who carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh on his head, was the president of Kanta Area agriculture wing and area committee member (ACM)," he said.

Bank fraudsters

New Delhi: A 19-year-old Delhi University student was arrested for allegedly selling his bank account to fraudsters who cheated people by offering them lucrative returns on their investment, police said on Friday. The accused has been identified as Adil KK, a resident of Jangpura and a native of Kerala, they said. According to police, a case was registered where the complainant alleged that she was cheated online on the pretext of high returns on the investment. The woman had invested Rs 10.35 lakh through the website www.blackstonevip.com. After some time, she came to know that she has been cheated as she was unable to withdraw the invested amount, they said.

Life imprisonment

Balasore: A court in Odisha's Balasore district on Friday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for killing his wife. The additional district and sessions judge of Balasore, Biswajit Das also imposed a penalty of Rs 6,000 on the convict Bijay Das Das, a resident of Koirali under Basta police station was found guilty by the court. "The court after examining 16 witnesses and 20 exhibits held the accused guilty and awarded the punishment, life term in jail along with Rs 6,000 fine and a further one year term in case he failed to pay the penalty sum," said Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Panda.

Weather
High 33 Low 21
Market
NIFTY 16,945.05
SENSEX 57,527.10
Bullion
GOLD 59,748
SILVER 71,053

Rahul disqualified from Lok Sabha

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi arrives at Parliament House complex, in New Delhi, Friday.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has been disqualified from the Lok Sabha, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said on Friday.

His disqualification as Wayanad MP is effective from March 23, the day of his conviction, the secretariat said in its notification. A court in Surat sentenced Rahul Gandhi to two years in jail in a defamation case on Thursday, filed on a complaint by BJP MLA Purnesh Modi for his alleged remark, "How come all thieves have Modi as the common survivor?"

Rahul stands disqualified from contesting LS, Assembly polls for 8 years unless higher court stays conviction: Expert

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday stood disqualified from contesting Lok Sabha and Assembly elections for eight years unless a higher court stays his conviction, an expert on electoral laws said. Citing Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, the expert said the disqualification will be for eight years — two years of the jail term awarded by the court and another six years from the date of his release as prescribed in the law. Jail term of two years or more attracts disqualification under the Act. "He stands disqualified for a total period of eight years unless a higher court stays his conviction," said a former Election Commission official who is an expert on electoral laws. He also said "technically" the Election Commission can hold a bypoll to the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat in Kerala as there is more than one year before the term of the present Lok Sabha expires sometime in June next year. Assembly and parliamentary bypolls are avoided if the remaining term of the House is for less than one year. The expert, who did not wish to be named, felt that the EC is likely to wait for the 30-day period granted by the court to allow the former Congress president file an appeal against the conviction.

'I'm fighting for voice of India'

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said he is fighting for the voice of India and is ready to pay any price, hours after he was disqualified from Lok Sabha. In a tweet in Hindi, the 52-year-old former Congress president said, "I am fighting for the voice of India. I am ready to pay any price."

Baghel hits out at Centre with 'dictator' jibe, cites Indira's triumphant return

Raipur, Mar 24: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel attacked the Narendra Modi-led Union government over the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi as Lok Sabha MP on Friday and claimed a "dictator" was trying to scare someone who is telling the whole nation "don't be afraid". He also said such measures were taken against then prime minister Indira Gandhi but she returned triumphant, an apparent reference to two years of Janata Party rule after Emergency and her sweeping victory in the 1980 Lok Sabha polls. He said the Bharatiya Janata Party wants to murder democracy and action against Gandhi was its "living example". Rahul Gandhi, representing Wayanad parliamentary constituency in Kerala, was on Friday disqualified from the Lok Sabha a day after his conviction in a defamation case by a court in Surat in Gujarat.

Congress top brass meets after Rahul Gandhi's disqualification

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with party leaders Sonia Gandhi and others during a meeting at AICC headquarters, in New Delhi, Friday.

Cong slams govt, says it's finding new techniques to gag him

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday launched a scathing attack on the government over Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha, alleging that it signifies "strangulation of democracy" with the ruling dispensation finding new techniques of "gagging" him. Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here after Gandhi was disqualified from Lok Sabha, party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said the issue was both political and legal. "It is a political issue because it signifies the systematic emasculation of democratic institutions by the ruling party and the strangulation of democracy itself," he said. He alleged that there had been "unthinkable assaults" on the freedom of speech with people being told that they will face the worst possible consequences — civil, criminal, incarceration, intimidation and harassment. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh was also present in the press conference.

Chhattisgarh: 3.9 magnitude tremor recorded in Surguja; no damage reported

Ambikapur/Surajpur, Mar 24 (PTI): A tremor of 3.9 magnitude hit Surguja district in north Chhattisgarh on Friday, officials said.

No loss of property or lives due to it has been reported so far, they said.

"A 3.9 magnitude earthquake was felt in Ambikapur town (the headquarters of Surguja district) around 10.28 am. Its epicentre was 10 km deep from the surface of the earth and around 12 km away from Ambikapur town in West South West (WSW) direction," H P Chandra, meteorologist at

Meteorological Centre Raipur, said. "It was a light category earthquake that did not cause any major destruction," he said, adding that it may, however, result in damage to kutch (mud) houses located within 20 km radius of the epicentre.

According to the official, it was the sixth earthquake in Chhattisgarh in the last 10 months and most of them occurred in the northern parts of the state. The aftershocks were felt in some parts of Surguja and neighbouring Surajpur district, but so far no loss of property or

lives has been reported, officials said.

Local officials have been instructed to carefully monitor the situation and report if damage has been caused, they added.

Meanwhile, Surajpur district education officer (DEO) has instructed all government and private schools to declare holiday on Friday in view of the safety of students after tremor was felt in the district.

Similarly in Ambikapur town, some private schools have declared a holiday on Friday as a precautionary measure.

Amit Shah to attend CRPF's 84th Raising event today

Jagdalpur, Mar 24 (PTI):

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday arrived in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district to attend the 84th Raising Day event of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Security has been strengthened in the region in view of the high-profile visit, said officials.

The CRPF's annual celebration is being held for the first time in a Naxal-affected area, according to officials.

The function will be held at Karapur camp of the 201st battalion of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), an elite anti-Naxal unit of the CRPF, on Saturday at 8 am, they said.

Shah landed at Jagdalpur airport in a special aircraft shortly after 5 pm and headed for Karapur camp, some 20 km from here, in a helicopter, a senior police official said.

The Union minister was received by BJP leaders from Bastar, including the state's former minister Kedar Kashyap, and senior paramilitary and police officials, he said.

Shah is scheduled to hold a meeting with senior paramilitary and police personnel in the camp, he said.

On Saturday morning, he will attend the 84th Raising Day of the CRPF there and then visit a security camp at Potakalli village in the neighbouring

Narayapur and Bijapur. The CRPF is extensively deployed in south Bastar region that comprises Sukma, Dantewada and Bijapur districts that have seen several major Maoist attacks and counter-offensive operations by security forces led by the CRPF.

Talking to reporters earlier in the day, Director-General of CRPF Dr Sujoy Lal Thaosen claimed that Naxalism has been losing its ground slowly and very soon security forces will be in a decisive situation.

The CRPF battalions deployed in Chhattisgarh have significantly reduced Naxal-related incidents. There has been a decline in the killings of civilians and officers in the area, he said.

'GANGAUR' FESTIVAL



Women perform prayers during the celebrations of 'Gangaur' festival, in Jaipur, Friday.

Amruta Fadnavis threat case

Court sends designer Aniksha Jaisinghani to 14-day judicial custody

Mumbai, Mar 24 (PTI):

A court here on Friday sent Aniksha Jaisinghani, arrested for allegedly offering a bribe to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's wife Amruta and also threatening her, to 14-day judicial custody, turning down the cop's plea to extend her police remand.

Aniksha's lawyer Manan Sanghvi submitted that no new ground was made out for extending the police remand.

The court, after hearing both sides, rejected the investigators' plea and remanded the accused in ju-

nction of Rs 10 crore from the latter. The police produced Aniksha before sessions court judge D D Almale at the end of her previous remand.

The police, represented by special public prosecutor Ajay Misra, sought her custody for three more days to confront her with a witness.

Aniksha's lawyer Manan Sanghvi submitted that no new ground was made out for extending the police remand.

The court, after hearing both sides, rejected the investigators' plea and remanded the accused in ju-

dicial custody. Police have also arrested her father and suspected bookie Anil Jaisinghani and their relative Nirmal Jaisinghani in connection with the case.

The duo are in police custody till March 27. They have been booked under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections for conspiracy and extortion and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act. As per the FIR, Aniksha was in touch with Amruta for the past 16 months and also visited her residence. In her statement to the police, Amruta said she first met Aniksha in November 2021.

In a relief to taxpayers opting for deductions and exemption-free new tax regime, individuals earning marginally higher income than no-tax ceiling of Rs 7 lakh will continue to pay nil tax.

Under the new tax

regime with effect from April 1, if a taxpayer has an annual income of Rs 7 lakh s/he pays no tax. But if s/he has income of Rs 7,00,100 s/he pays tax of 25,010. Thus an additional income of Rs 100 leads to a tax of Rs 25,010.

The amendment provides that the tax payable should not be more than

Tax benefits for debt mutual funds removed



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Lok Sabha during Budget Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Friday.

Individual taxpayers with income marginally over Rs 7 lakh to get relief under new tax regime

New Delhi: In a relief to taxpayers opting for new tax regime, individuals earning marginally higher income than no-tax ceiling of Rs 7 lakh will pay tax only on the differential income after the government amended the Finance Bill. The Finance Bill 2023, passed by the Lok Sabha on Friday, has proposed a marginal relief to taxpayers under new tax regime. Explaining the provision, the finance ministry said under the new tax regime with effect from April 1, if a taxpayer has an annual income of Rs 7 lakh s/he pays no tax. But if s/he has income of Rs 7,00,100 s/he pays tax of 25,010. Thus an additional income of Rs 100 leads to a tax of Rs 25,010. Hence, marginal relief is proposed to that so that the tax what one pays should not be more than the income that exceeds Rs 7 lakh (Rs 100 in this case), the ministry

the income that exceeds Rs 7 lakh. This means, an individual having income up to Rs 7,27,700 could stand to benefit from this marginal relief.

Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):

The Lok Sabha on Friday approved The Finance Bill 2023 with 64 official amendments including providing tax relief to some taxpayers opting for new tax regime, and removing long-term tax benefit for debt mutual funds to bring them at par with other interest earning instruments.

In a relief to taxpayers opting for deductions and exemption-free new tax regime, individuals earning marginally higher income than no-tax ceiling of Rs 7 lakh will continue to pay nil tax.

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The amendment provides that the tax payable should not be more than



Chhattisgarh's NYAY

Transforming Villages into Self-Reliant Hubs

25th March, 2023

Transferring ₹1949.26 crore to Farmers



3 Successful Years
of Incentivizing Agriculture

Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana

Direct Benefit Transfer of ₹1,793 Cr
to 23.23 lakh farmers

Payment of ₹18,208 cr so far

Chhattisgarh Farmers Receiving
Highest Benefit in the Country

from Sargaon, Mungeli

Inauguration of

278 Multi-activity Rural Industrial Parks



by
Shri Bhupesh baghel
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

Boosting the Income of Landless Farmers

Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Bhoomihin Krishi Majdoor Nyay Yojana

Direct Benefit Transfer of ₹149.92 cr
4.99 lakh beneficiaries

Payment of ₹476.67 cr so far

Pioneering Livestock Management
and Livelihood Generation

Godhan Nyay Yojana

Direct Benefit Transfer of ₹6.34 cr to
Cattle Farmers, Women SHGs and Gauthan Committees

Payment of ₹407.61 cr so far



Congress workers throw stones, eggs at BJP workers

Clash breaks out in Raipur following Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha membership



Raipur, Mar 24: Clash broke out between Congress and BJP workers following disqualification of Rahul Gandhi's membership from Lok Sabha today. Aggrieved over Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha membership, the Congress workers stormed into BJP's Ekatma Parivar office and threw black ink on the posters of BJP leaders besides burning effigy and shouting slogans against the central government. Congress workers also pelted stones and eggs at the BJP workers. BJP workers also responded by

throwing stones. BJP Yuva Morcha District President Govinda Gupta was injured in stone pelting and sent to the hospital for treatment. Police kept on handling the workers of both the parties.

There was a jam on the road leading from Turning Point Chowk to the Vidhan Sabha. After stone pelting, BJP workers also staged a blockade at Turning Point

Chowk. Common people faced difficulty in commuting due to road blockade.

Earlier Congressmen started trying to enter inside the BJP office. Enraged at the sight of Congress workers BJP worker also came on the road carrying the flag and started raising slogans against Rahul Gandhi. BJP and Congress workers clashed for about

half an hour in absence of police force. Subsequently police personnel were called.

Bharatiya Janata Party leader Anurag Agrawal told that Congress goons wanted to enter the BJP office and attack. BJP workers tried to stop them. Hooliganism of Congressmen cannot be ignored and Bharatiya Janata Party will answer this, he said. Additional SP Abhishek Maheshwari reached the spot after the

situation deteriorated. He deployed additional force and tried to calm the atmosphere.

Seeing worsening situation, additional police force was deployed outside the Congress building as well. Congress workers also started reaching Rajiv Bhawan in large numbers. BJP workers reached outside the Congress building. The police tried hard to stop them, but they threw soot in the Congress office.

At Fafadih Waltair Rail line

State's first full-height Four lane Railway Under-bridge on Raipur-Bilaspur Highway

Under-bridge constructed at a cost of Rs. 28.11 crores

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 24: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel inaugurated a full-height four-lane railway under-bridge constructed on the level crossing in the Raipur-Vijaynagar branch railway line, located on the Raipur-Bilaspur road

railway under-bridge will provide the benefit of smooth traffic to about five lakh people belonging to the urban areas of the city. Because of the frequent passing of trains across the level crossing on the Raipur-Vijaynagar railway line in the Raipur to Bilaspur road, the railway gate used to close, which caused traffic jams.

Keeping in mind the interests of the public, the state government had given approval to this crucial project of under-bridge construction in 2017. The total length of this bridge including the approach road is 336.96 meters.

On this occasion, Chief Minister Mr. Baghel said that the State Government has taken initiatives on all levels for the speedy completion of this project. Today, this project is being inaugurated after its completion and the long-awaited demand of people is being fulfilled. With the launch of this under-bridge, traffic will run smoothly and there will be considerable ease

in transport.

The Chief Minister said that in the last four years, the State Government has made continuous efforts in easing the traffic and transportation in Chhattisgarh. During this, construction work of 9 railway over-bridges and 6 under-bridges has been completed.

The Chief Minister said that we have constructed infrastructures speedily while considering the present and future needs of the state. The coordination of our strengthened infrastructure and a strong economy will help Chhattisgarh state in creating new dimensions of development.

At the inauguration event of the railway under-bridge, PWD Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, Parliamentary Secretary Vikas Upadhyay, President of Chhattisgarh Housing Board and MLA Kuldeep Juneja, Raipur Mayor Ajaz Dhebar, and other public representatives and officers were present.

Action be taken on violation of PCPNDT Act: Singhdeo

Health Minister instructs for regular inspection of sonography centres



Act held at Swasthya Bhawan, Nava Raipur today, Singhdeo directed the officials to compulsorily inspect each center at least once in a year. He also asked for wide publicity of the provisions of the Act. Members of the Board of Supervisors MLAs Dr Ambika Singhdeo and Mrs Uttari

Jangde, Health Department Secretary Prasanna R, Director of Health Services Bhim Singh, Directors of National Health Mission Bhoskar Vilas Sandipan and Dr Chandrika Sahu and other members also joined the meeting. Dr Prashant Srivastava, Joint Director, PCPNDT

centers and suspend two centres.

The implementation of ART and Surrogacy Act, 2021 in the state was also discussed in the meeting. Joint Director Dr Srivastava informed that 34 ART clinics, ten ART banks and 12 surrogacy clinics are registered in the state under the Act. As per the provision of the Act, a state level team has been formed to inspect them. Permission was also given to keep human resources for the implementation of the Act.

The construction of this full-height four-lane



"We are working steadfastly towards ensuring an inclusive, accessible and equitable future for our Divyang sisters and brothers."

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

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Organizing shivirs at various locations across the country

Free distribution of Assistive Devices to 15 thousand beneficiaries

Total cost being borne by the Government of India

Facility of registration is also available for new beneficiaries at the Shivirs

For details of places of camp visit: www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in

25th March, 2023

Transforming lives of Divyangjan

13.5 thousand Shivirs organized so far

Aids and assistive devices distributed to 24.25 lakh beneficiaries, More than 35 thousand Divyangjan benefited with motorized tricycles

More than 5 thousand cochlear implant surgeries conducted

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CRPF: The Largest Central Armed Police Force

- Decorated with 2469 Gallantry Medals including 01 George Cross, 03 King PMG, 01 Ashok Chakra, 01 Vir Chakra, 10 Kirti Chakra, and 39 Shaurya Chakra.
- 246 dedicated Battalions deployed across the country for upholding the Unity and Integrity of the Nation.
- Instrumental in containing Terrorism, Left Wing Extremism, and Insurgency.
- Provides impregnable coverage to elections, vital installations, and important occasions and is engaged in various facets of Internal Security.
- Specialised wings like CoBRA, RAF, VIP security, PDG, and SDG.

'Jyoti Kalash' lit in Maa Mahamaya Temple



- 803 lamps lit in Maa Mahamaya, 83 in Sheetla, 32 in Satti Mata Temple

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 24: A total of 803 Manokamma Jyoti Kalash have been lit in the famous Adishakti Devi Maa Mahamaya Temple of Kamal Kshetra, whereas 83 Jyoti Kalash in Sheetla Temple, 32 Jyoti Kalash in Devi Satti temple and one Jyoti Kalash has been lit in Chandi temple.

Apart from these, 35 Jyoti Kalash has been lit in Jagat Janani Maa Durga Temple located in Kuleshwarnath Mahadev Temple premises. Apart from this, along with Brahmacharini Darbar, Khandoba Tulja Bhavani, Jyot Janwara has also been lit by the devotees in their homes.

Maa Mahamaya Sheetla Management Committee

President Lileshwar Yadu, Vice President Narayan Sahu, Secretary Fagu Nishad, Valmiki Dhivar, Raju Sahu, Patron Jitendra Sonkar, Lala Sahu, Ashok Srivastava, Phaguva Nishad, Lakhman Nirmalkar, Advocate Mahesh Yadav, Ramkumar Sahu, Pawan Soni, Priest Baldu Thakur, Panda Gopal Nishad, Punaram Nishad, Shatrughan Nirmalkar, Pitambar Yadav, Vicky Sahu, in the presence of Vimal Nishad,

Ballu Nishad, Shravan Sahu and priests Pandit Vijay Sharma and Ashok Sharma lit the lamp on the auspicious time along with chanting.

On the first day worship was done in the form of Maa Shailputri and prasad has been arranged for the visitors. It was told that CCTV cameras have been installed in the entire temple premises for the devotees not to face any kind of problem.

From the very first day,

the songs of Mata Seva have started resounding and service songs are being presented by the Sevak Dal praising the glory of Mother with musical instruments like cymbals, manjira, dholak, tasak, dafda, majira etc. Devotees were seen dancing after listening to them, and the devotion of the mother is clearly visible.

Unique example of two Goddesses in the same sanctum

Rajim: Maa Mahamaya

Temple is very ancient and the statue of goddess Kali hanging of mother Mahamaya is very special. Here Lord Ganesh, and Bhairav Baba are seated in the Mahamandap, Mavli Mata on the parikrama path, and Danteshwari Devi is seated, with lions sitting in front of the temple. Meanwhile people fasting during Navratri consume fruits and the prices of fruits are presently skyrocketing due to constant demand and supply.

Collector conducts inspection of Schools

- In Patrapali Anganwadi and primary school

Central Chronicle News

Korea, Mar 24: District Collector Vinay Kumar Langeh here conducted a surprise inspection of Anganbharri Center and Government Primary School in Patrapali of Baikunthpur block.

The Collector observed hot food, drinking water, growth report, kitchen, nutritional supplement, attendance register etc. for children in Anganwadi. He took information about malnourished children and anaemic women registered in the center from the Anganwadi worker and asistant present here.

Talking to the Shishuvati mothers present at the center, Collector Mr. Langeh took feedback regarding



the arrangement of the Anganwadi center and the quality of food. During the inspection, Collector Langeh said that pregnant and infantile anaemic women who are unable to come to the center should be provided food through Tiffin and he specifically directed the Anganwadi worker to send severely malnourished children to nutritional rehabilitation centers.

The Collector checked the running water in the campus and gave instructions for necessary improvements. He said that all such schools should be identified where the condition of toilets is bad and they should be improved immediately.

The Collector also met children in government primary school, and checked the attendance register, foster register, stock register and incoming register of the teachers and said that negligence will not be tolerated in the register maintenance work. Similarly, the headmaster was also reprimanded for his negligence in work.

Bike rally organized on occasion of Hindu New Year

Central Chronicle News

Kotmi, Mar 24: Santan religion lovers jointly by senior social workers and youths of the area inaugurated the program of bike rally by worshiping and reciting Shri Hanuman Chalisa at bus stand Kotmi Shiv Mandir.

With the announcement of Jai Jai Shri Ram, rally was taken out by hoisting the flag, in which mainly, Satish Sharma, Ratan Kesarwani, Manimohan Rai, Shiv Prasad Gupta, Nirupender Rai, Krishna Kumar Sahu, Mukesh Jaiswal, Sanjay Shukla, Sonu Jaiswal, Rajkamal Gupta, Ajit Gupta, Sagar



Srivastava, Amit Kesarwani, Badal Gupta were present. After worship at Sekhwa Devi Chaura, at Madai Chaura, at Dumdum Devi Chaura,

at Deori Kala Devi Chaura, at Kotmi Chaura, at Police Chowki Kotmi, Hanuman Temple, Shiv Mandir Hanuman Sahu and the program was concluded.

sweet prasad was distributed. The Prasad was distributed by Manimohan Rai and Krishna Kumar Sahu and the program was concluded.

JCC(J) demands compensation for crop damage

Central Chronicle News

Pandariya, Mar 24: Jogi Congress has demanded the district administration to assess the crop damage due to rains and have demanded a compensation amount to the farmers and submitted a memorandum for the same.

Demanding from the Collector to pay compensation to the farmers suffering from the sudden change of weather patterns in the region due to untimely rains and hailstorms Ravi Chandravanshi of the



Janata Congress Chhattisgarh told that in many places Due to heavy rains, thunderclap, storm and hailstorm, the worries

of the farmers have increased and crops of gram, tiwara, maize and wheat have been destroyed. Chandravanshi

told that the damage assessment should be done soon and funds should be allocated to the farmers under RBC 6/4.

Similarly Aswani Yadu said that the villagers of Litipur village of Vidhansabha Pandariya (Kawardha block) have been going around the administration for the last several years for a paved road, the administration should comply to it too soon. Many including Ravi Chandravanshi, Ashwani Yadu, Nemsingh Yadav, Ranjit Verma, Jitendra, Suresh Sahu were present.

Indefinite agitation by Rajhara TU demanding city development

Central Chronicle News

Dalli-Rajhara, Mar 24: Indefinite agitation by Rajhara Traders Union demanding city development entered the fourth day, with close support from Antagarh, Bhanupratappur and Kusumaksa Traders' Union.

Government administration and people's representatives are showing inaction on our demand, till now MPs, MLAs and top officials have not reached the stage with meaningful and concrete initiative and the government administration has forced the peace-loving city dweller and businessman

to start a fierce movement, he said.

Also the Rajhara Traders Association gave a memorandum to the Collector to the Sub-Divisional Officer. The Union has made various demands from Railway Department, State Government, Government Administration and BSP, namely demand for Balod Dallirajhara United District, simplification of land registry, opening of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bypass Construction and completion of Water Augmentation Yojana.

It has also demanded the upliftment of Health facility, for 100 bed hospital should be constructed soon and free lease provision to people living on 270 + 130 acres of land of entire Dalli Rajhara city. The Union has also demanded the Demu passenger train operation daily, running from Dalli Rajhara to Nyaydhani Bilaspur and to increase the number of bogies.

Central Chronicle News

tration and people's representatives in the Iron city of Dalli-Rajhara, which gives royalty worth crores, Rajhara city is continuously lagging behind in the field of development.

Government administration and people's representatives are showing inaction on our demand, till now MPs, MLAs and top officials have not reached the stage with meaningful and concrete initiative and the government administration has forced the peace-loving city dweller and businessman

Addressing the business and the general public sitting in protest at Gupta Chowk President of the Traders Association, Govind Wadhwanvi said that due to the inaction of the government adminis-

tration and people's representatives in the Iron city of Dalli-Rajhara, which gives royalty worth crores, Rajhara city is continuously lagging behind in the field of development.

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tration and people's representatives in the Iron city of Dalli-Rajhara, which gives royalty worth crores, Rajhara city is continuously lagging behind in the field of development.

Date : 1st & 2nd April, 2023 (Saturday & Sunday)

Time : 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

Venue : Hotel East Park, Agrasen Square, Bilaspur

Candidates may walk-in with Resume (photograph affixed), copy of proof of salary i.e. latest 3 months pay slips or Increment Letter or 3 months bank statement and Aadhar Card.

WALK-IN INTERVIEWS

We are looking for Engineers (BE/Diploma) / Technicians (ITI) with 5 to 10 yrs. of relevant experience in Power plants / Sugar plants/ Cogen plants for O&M of our 6 MW WIE Plant in Rewa, MP.

Shift Incharges (Preferably BOE) / DCS Engineers (Boiler & Turbine) / Shift Maintenance Engineers (Mechanical/Electrical/C&I) / Chemists / Boiler Operators (1st & 2nd class) / Mechanical Fitters / Electricians / Instrument Technicians / Welders (IBR / Non-IBR) / Operators (Grab Crane / Turbine / Water Treatment Plant)

Date : 1st & 2nd April, 2023 (Saturday & Sunday)

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BRIEF



Devotees take part in Malai Uramma Rathotsava, near Chickmagalur, Friday.

Anti-drug meet

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh government will act on the decisions taken at the regional conference on Drug trafficking and National security, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said on Friday. He gave this assurance to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who presided over the conference, through video conference. The Chief Minister could not physically be present at the conference as a session of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly is in progress. "I could not attend as some money bills have to be passed in the Assembly," said Reddy. However, Director General of Police K V Rajendranath Reddy was present at the conference in Bengaluru, representing Andhra Pradesh, he added.

5 booked

Thane: An offence has been registered against an administrator appointed to oversee workings of cooperative housing societies and four others for alleged misappropriation of funds in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said on Friday. A case under sections 402 (cheating), 409 (criminal breach of trust) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code was registered against the accused, an official from Kapurbawdi police station said. According to the police, the main accused in the case was appointed to oversee the affairs of erring cooperative housing societies in the city, which had reported mismanagement.

Tripura speaker

Agartala: BJP MLA Biswanandha Sen was elected the speaker of the Tripura assembly on Friday. Sen received 32 votes, while opposition CPI(M)-Congress candidate Gopal Chandra Roy got 14 votes. Tipra Motha, which has 13 members in the assembly, stayed away from voting. Sen, a four-time MLA from Dharmanagar in North Tripura district, was the deputy speaker in the previous assembly.

Clerk arrested

Indore: A 42-year-old clerk working at the Indore collector's office was on Friday arrested for allegedly misappropriating Rs 5.68 crore of government funds in the last three years. Accused Milap Chauhan, posted in the accounts section, had been suspended four days ago after the crime came to light. A case has been registered against a total of 29 persons including two other clerks working at the same office under Indian Penal Code sections 420 (cheating), 468 (forgery) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) among others, said Raaji Bazar police station in-charge Pritam Singh Thakur.

'Corrupt Cong wants to make Karnataka its ATM, fill coffers'

Bengaluru, Mar 24 (PTI)



Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the Congress is degenerating across the country and has now set its eyes on Karnataka to make the state its ATM and fill its coffers at the national level.

Speaking in the poll-bound State, he appealed to people of Karnataka not to give a "half and incomplete government", and to form a BJP government with full majority and thereby strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Basavaraj

Bommai. "Congress party is degenerating across the country, the Congress peo-

ple don't have any state with them that can fill the Congress' central treasury, they want an ATM.... They want Karnataka to become Congress' ATM, and the corrupt Congress' eyes are now set on Karnataka," Shah said.

Addressing a beneficiaries' meet organised by Karnataka Cooperative department and other departments, he asked people whether they will form a BJP government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership in Karnataka or a Congress government with Rahul Gandhi at the helm.

"Wherever the Congress has formed the govern-

ment, their history is corruption, humiliation of Dalits, OBCs and Adivasis, and strengthening anti-national forces," he alleged.

Bommai, veteran BJP leader B S Yediyurappa, Karnataka Co-operation Minister S T Somashekhar among others were present at the event.

Highlighting that the Modi government banned Popular Font of India (PFI), Shah said, "Siddaramaiah's Congress government (earlier), used to withdraw cases against PFI, but Narendra Modi government by banning PFI has secured the entire South India, and also the entire country."

Priyanka Gandhi slams BJP

'Son of a martyred PM called 'Mir Jafar', hurled insults but Rahul won't bow down'

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI)

In a blistering attack on the BJP, Congress president Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday said Rahul Gandhi, the son of a martyred prime minister, was called "Mir Jafar" and insults were hurled at his family but he would not bow down as he belongs to a family whose members have nurtured democracy with their blood.

Her attack came after the former Congress president and her brother was disqualified from Lok Sabha, a day after he was convicted by a Surat court in a 2019 criminal defamation case Thursday.

In a series of tweets, Priyanka Gandhi

launched an all-out attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying in a tweet in Hindi, "Narendra Modi ji, your sycophants called the son of a martyred prime minister, a traitor, Mir Jafar. One of your Chief Minister raised questions as to who is the father of Rahul Gandhi? Following the custom of Kashmiri Pandits, a son wears 'pagdi' after his father's death, maintaining his family's tradition."

"Insulting the whole family and the Kashmiri Pandit community, you asked in Parliament why we don't keep the name Nehru. But no judge gave you a sentence of two years. Did not disqualify

you from the Parliament," she said.

The Congress general secretary said Gandhi is a "true patriot" and has questioned Adani Group's loot, raised questions on Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

"Has your friend Gautam Adani become bigger than the country's Parliament and the great people of India that you were rattled when his loot was questioned? You call my family dynasty, do note that this family has nurtured India's democracy with their blood," she said.

This family raised the voice of the people of India and fought for the truth for generations, she said.

SC refuses to hear plea challenging renaming of Maharashtra's Aurangabad

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI)

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea challenging the decision to rename Aurangabad in Maharashtra to 'Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar', saying Bombay High Court is seized of the matter.

"Appears before Bombay High Court now. The high court is seized of the matter," a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha and Justice JP Pardiwala told the petitioner's counsel.

The court then said that the matter should be decided there first.

Mohammed Mushtaq Ahmed had challenged the

approval granted by the state and the central governments to a proposal to change the name of the Maharashtra city.

The Aurangabad divisional commissioner, in a letter dated March 4, 2020, proposed that the city's name be changed to 'Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar'.

As soon as the matter came up for hearing, the counsel appearing for the state government told the bench that the high court is scheduled to hear the matter on Monday (March 27).

The court then said that the matter should be decided there first.

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI)

Delhi High Court on Friday asked the city government and the Union Public Service Commission to ensure that the process of recruitment of prosecutors in courts is concluded expeditiously.

A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sachin Datta asked the authorities to report compliance of the direction on May 9.

"The state govern-

PM Modi launches several initiatives to eliminate tuberculosis

Varanasi (UP), Mar 24 (PTI)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the 'One World TB Summit' at Rudrakash Convention Centre, in Varanasi, Friday.

India's ideology of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is giving the modern world an integrated vision and solutions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday as he launched a series of initiatives to eliminate tuberculosis. Addressing the 'One World TB Summit' on World TB Day, Modi said the country is working to eliminate tuberculosis by 2025 as against the global target of 2030. "India's image reflects in its ideology of 'Vasudeva Kutumbakam' (whole world one family). This old thought is giving the modern world an integrated vision and solutions," he said. As G20 president, India chose the theme of 'One Family, One World, One Future' based on such beliefs, Modi said. India is forwarding the vision of 'One Earth, One Health' in the world, he said while underlining that India is realising the resolutions of global good with the 'One World TB Summit'. The prime minister asserted that the thought and approach with

which India worked against tuberculosis after 2014 is "incredible". "This effort of India should be known to the whole world today because this is a new model in the global fight against TB." In nine years, India has united in this fight against TB on many fronts such as public participation, special campaigns for nutrition, new strategies for treatment, intensive use of technology and promoting good health through campaigns like Khelo India and Yoga," he said. Another major resolution of India is

to eliminate tuberculosis by 2025 as against the global target of 2030, Modi said.

Referring to the capacity and health infrastructure enhancement during the Covid pandemic, Modi underlined the high use of trace, test, track, treat and technology in the fight against the disease. There is massive global potential in this local approach of India, said the prime minister. Noting that 80 per cent of tuberculosis medicines are made in India, he said, "I would like that more and more countries get the benefit of all such campaigns, innovations and modern technology of India." Modi said the country launched a unique campaign to fight the disease. "We had called upon the people of the country to make 'Ni-kshay Mitra' to join the campaign of TB-free India. After the campaign, 10 lakh TB patients have been adopted by the common citizens. You would be surprised to know that in our country even 10-12 year old children are taking forward the fight against TB by becoming Ni-kshay Mitra," he said.

The raids were conducted by ED under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002 while investi-

ED raids multiple locations in Arunachal in APPSC, APSSB scams

Itanagar, Mar 24 (PTI)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted multiple raids in Papum Pare district as part of investigation into the Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board (APSSB) and APPSC paper leak cases. "The ED initiated investigations under PMLA, 2002 based on FIR registered by the Special Investigation Cell (SIC) under various sections of Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988 and IPC1860 in the case of APPSB scam and FIR registered by SIC and CBI under various sections of PC Act, 1988 while investi-

PONGALA FESTIVAL



Foreign tourists offer 'Pongala' during the annual Pongala festival at Vellayanidevi temple, in Thiruvananthapuram, Friday.

Education Dept collecting evidence of anomalies in recruitment during LF regime in Bengal: Minister

Kolkata, Mar 24 (PTI)

collecting evidences."

"I will hand over to the chief minister details of all such evidences, the anomalies we have come across in the appointment of a CPI(M) leader in a college during the rule of the Left Front and is in the process of collecting more such evidence in state-run schools and colleges where such 'recruitments were done just by production of a chit'.

Addressing a press meet Basu said the Mamata Banerjee regime did not get into these details for 12 years since coming to power in 2011 "but as efforts are on to malign the entire TMC as corrupt," the time has come to unravel the skeletons of the erstwhile Left regime by

close relative of the CPI(M) leader who had got a job in 1987 and retired in 2020, but take out a white paper with all such cases so that it comes to the knowledge of the high court, to get to the root of the job recruitment irregularities malaise, for the interest of youth. I may also refer to the words of former CPI(M) minister Abdur Rezzak Mollah who is now with us. He had said recently that in almost every wholier family of CPI(M) there is a state government employee, including teachers and non-teaching staff," the minister said.

Basu said to a question his government will bring out a white paper about alleged teaching/non-teaching job irregularities in the 34 years of left rule in Bengal "and let the court decide."

He alleged the CPI(M) had never used the College Service Commission in a proper manner, the way it is being effectively used now by the TMC government. "We have the highest regard for law. As per the investigations into School Service Commission and TET job recruitment are concerned, we don't have any sympathy for the alleged offenders. Let law take its course and the guilty be punished. But while we are working to introduce a fair, transparent examination system to see the future of candidates are not jeopardised, the Left is trying to halt the process for political gains. The entire TMC party and its leaders cannot be vilified by the Left who should hold the mirror to themselves first," he added.

'Ensure recruitment process of prosecutors completed expeditiously'

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI)

HC to Delhi govt, UPSC

the city. Advocate Ashish Dixit, representing one of the petitioners, submitted that the result of recruiting assistant public prosecutors was declared on March 13. However, appointment orders were not issued yet. The court further directed the UPSC to take appropriate steps for appointing chief public prosecutors in

and report the progress on the next date of hearing.

It listed the matter for further hearing on May 9. The UPSC earlier told the high court that it had not received any fresh proposal from the Delhi government for filling posts of prosecutors in courts here and a statement made by the state about it was "incorrect" and "inappropriate".

The UPSC's statement was made in an affidavit in response to the Delhi government's submis-

sion before the court on January 17 that a fresh requisition had been sent to the commission for filling up 108 vacant public prosecutors' posts. Earlier, one of the petitioners' counsel claimed there are so many vacancies for the post of prosecutors despite continuous orders of the court.

The Delhi government's counsel had said recruitment is an ongoing process and steps are being taken to fill the vacancies.

Several students manhandled, 'detained' on DU premises during protest over varsity action

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI)

es.

According to police, 11 students demonstrating near the Vivekananda statue were removed to maintain peace and tranquillity in DU North Campus. Meanwhile, the university has said that the students did not seek permission before the protest and added that such indiscipline will not be tolerated.

The students were sitting on an indefinite strike

to protest against the "draconian" action by the university authorities. There was no immediate reaction from the varsity authority and the police.

The students have claimed that heavy police and paramilitary forces were deployed inside the Arts Faculty ahead of the protest.

"Students who gathered for the indefinite strike against debarring of two students from DU have

been beaten and detained by Delhi Police and DU Guards. As many as 25 students have been detained." All India Students' Association (AISA) Delhi president Abhigyan told PTI. According to sources, several students have been taken to Burari police station. "Students gathered at Arts Faculty against the arbitrary notice debarring two students have been brutally beaten, manhandled and detained."

The agency claimed that, during the search operation on Tuesday, it recovered incriminating documents and Rs 1.41 crore which has been frozen. According to sources, the ED raided the house of Taket Jerang, the main accused in the APPSC paper leak case. Jerang is the main accused in all the scams related to the APPSC since 2014. The ED officials reportedly recov-

ered some important documents from his residence and are planning a follow-up action based on the documents, the sources said.

In another case, the ED reportedly froze and attached the accounts of Kapter Ringu and her relatives, in regard to the APPSC cash-for-job scam.

The SIC investigating the APPSC cash-for-job scam, had charge sheeted 19 persons in November 2020 for their alleged involvement in the case.

UN delegate describes India's 'Namami Gange' mission as 'beacon of hope'

United Nations, Mar 24 (PTI):



India has high ambitions for improving its water sector and the 'Namami Gange' mission for the rejuvenation of the country's longest river is a "beacon of hope" and an inspirational story, a UN delegate highlighted at the ongoing water conference here.

The UN 2023 Water Conference, formally known as the 2023 Conference for the Midterm Comprehensive Review of Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation (2018-2028) is currently underway at the UN Headquarters.

Co-hosted by Tajikistan and the Netherlands, the March 22-24 conference will result in a summary of proceedings from the UN General Assembly (UNGA) President Csaba Korosi that will feed into the 2023 session of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The Ganga river is one of the iconic and vital streams in society that "help us understand the importance of how we deal with the critical resource," said Special Envoy for International Water

Affairs for the Netherlands and Sherpa of the UN 2023 Water Conference Henk Ovink.

He was speaking at a session on Namami Gange - An integrated and holistic approach towards conservation and rejuvenation of River Ganga and its ecosystems.

Ovink said the Ganga river also "shows us how vulnerable water can be in the context of our growing societies. And, if we invest in that river and that resource, we can survive."

Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat also addressed the session organised by the Permanent Mission of

India to the UN on Thursday on the margins of the ongoing Water Conference.

Ovink said the 'Namami Gange, Mission for Clean Ganga', is giving an inspirational story on how to change course at a time when the world is grappling with the challenges of the water crisis.

"The Clean Ganga mission, the mission of India and the way it deals with water are a beacon of hope," Ovink said.

"By putting water central to our work, we can achieve a healthy environment, justice in our society, opportunities for women and girls, build re-

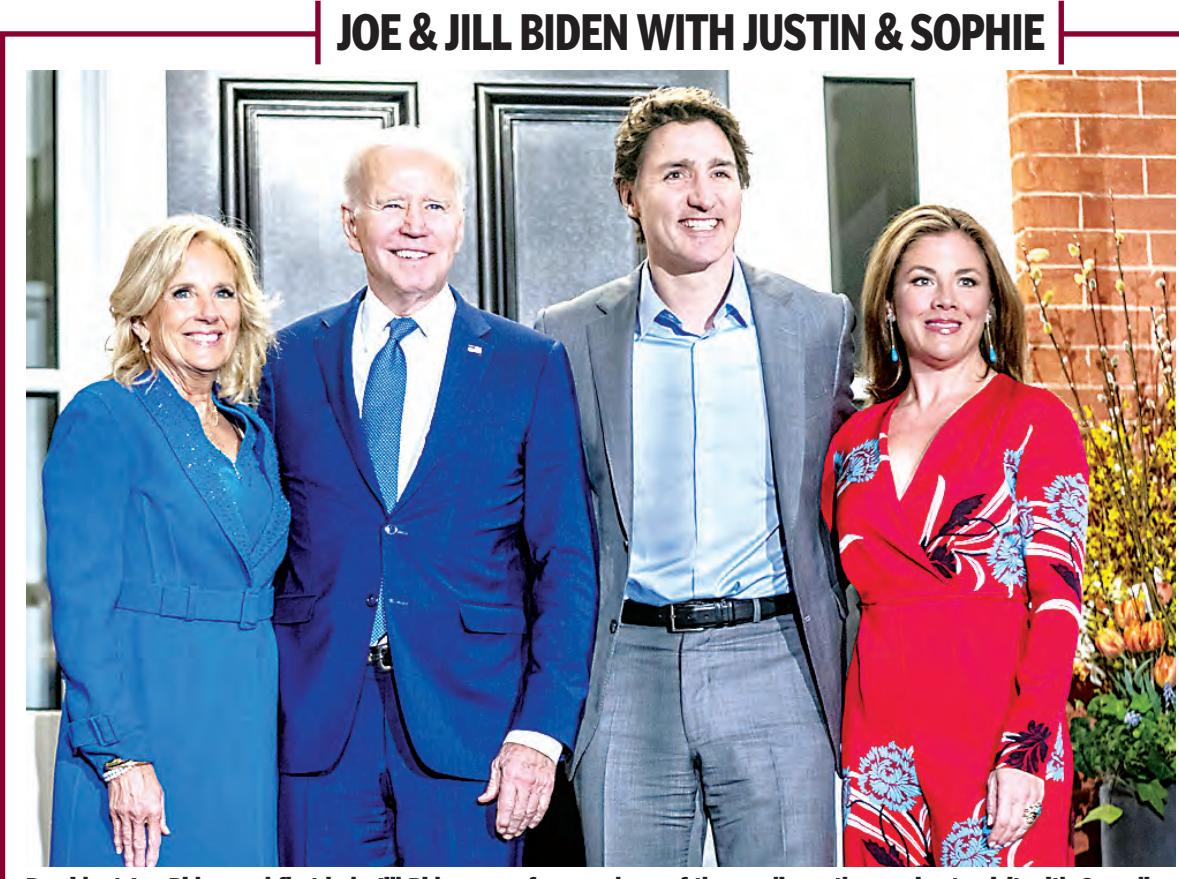
silience, curb biodiversity loss, combat climate change and forge partnerships... I take a lot of inspiration in the partnership that we have with India," he said.

Minister Shekhawat stressed that people's participation was the most critical factor in ensuring the success of the ambitious initiative.

"People of the cities and rural areas, living on the banks of the Ganga, have come together, joined hands for the success of this mission and for restoration of this pristine river," he said.

Apart from delivering the national statement at the General Debate, Shekhawat spoke at key events hosted by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN on the margins of the Water Conference.

He highlighted India's initiatives on WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) at an event 'WASH as a driver of improved health'. He also addressed members of the Indian-American community at a diaspora reception hosted at the Consulate General of India in New York.



President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden pose for members of the media as they arrive to visit with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife Sophie Gregoire Trudeau at Rideau Cottage, in Ottawa, Canada.

China threatens consequences over US warship's actions

Bangkok, Mar 24 (AP):

China threatened "serious consequences" Friday after the US Navy sailed a destroyer around the disputed Paracel Islands in the South China Sea for the second day in a row, in a move Beijing claimed was a violation of its sovereignty and security.

The warning comes amid growing tensions between China and the United States in the region, as Washington pushes back at Beijing's growingly assertive posture in

the South China Sea, a strategic waterway it claims virtually in its entirety. On Thursday, after the U.S. sailed the USS Milius guided-missile destroyer near the Paracel Islands, China said its navy and air force had forced the American vessel away, a claim the U.S. military denied. The U.S. on Friday sailed the ship again in the vicinity of the islands, which are occupied by China but also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam, as part of what it called a "freedom of

navigation operation" challenging requirements from all three nations requiring either advance notification or permission before a military vessel sails by. "Unlawful and sweeping maritime claims in the South China Sea pose a serious threat to the freedom of the seas, including the freedoms of navigation and overflight,

free trade and unimpeded commerce, and freedom of economic opportunity for South China Sea littoral nations," said U.S. 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. j.g. Luka Bakic in an emailed statement. "The United States challenges excessive maritime claims around the world regardless of the identity of the claimant," Bakic added.

Pak receives \$2bn rollover deposits from China to get IMF bailout

Islamabad, Mar 24 (PTI):

Cash-strapped Pakistan has received a rollover of USD 2 billion in deposits for a period of one year from its all-weather ally China to help Islamabad get a much-needed bailout from the IMF to stabilise its economy, a

media report said on Friday. The rollover, which basically is not a loan but a financial deposit to be kept at Pakistan's central bank for a period of one year, is one of the requirements of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in meeting its external financing needs in order to

move towards inking the staff-level agreement. The News International reported. Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar confirmed the development. "Yes," Dar was quoted as saying in a brief response when asked about getting a rollover of USD 2 billion SAFE (State Administration of Foreign Exchange) deposits from China. Pakistan and the IMF have been negotiating the release of a USD 1.1 billion loan since February

but so far without any success due to the tough conditions by the donor which Pakistan is slow to fulfil.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY ADDITIONAL DATE ON E-AUCTION NOTICE
No.: S/PA/2022-23, Date: 20.03.2023.
ADDITIONAL DATE IN MONTH OF MARCH ON E-AUCTION SALE IN BILASPUR DIVISION.
Additional date of E-auction on 29.03.2023 in Bilaspur Division.
For Principal Chief Material CPRI/10/506 Manager Bilaspur.
f South East Central Railway @secreal

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) ई-प्रोक्स्योरमेंट निविदा सूचना
क्र. 58/न.पा.नि./जल विभाग/2022-23 दिनांक 24/03/2023
निमंत्रित कम्पनी अधिकृत विक्रेताओं से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ई-प्रोक्स्योरमेंट (Online) निविदा दिनांक 27/04/2023 तक आमंत्रित की जाती है:-
सिलेट एंड नं. कार्य का विवरण अनुमति लागत (रु. लाख में) घरेहर राशि
128659 Procurement of Star Rating Submersible Pump set. 46.53 1,40,000.00
उपरोक्त निविदा की सामान शर्तें, घरेहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विवरण, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्स्योरमेंट वेबसाईट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से दिनांक 28-03-2023 से जाउलोड की जा सकती है। कार्यालय निविदा नगर पालिक निगम, बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)
Green City, Clean City, Dream City.

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NEHRU MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

Ministry of Culture, Government of India
Teen Murti House, New Delhi - 110011

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Tremors in Indian politics

Rahul Gandhi, the former president of the Indian National Congress, was disqualified from Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament on March 24, following his conviction by a Surat court in a 2019 criminal defamation case. Under the Representation of the People Act, 1951, Section 8(3) states that the moment an MP is convicted of any offense and sentenced for at least two years, he or she attracts disqualification. Based on the Surat court order, the Lok Sabha Secretariat has disqualified Rahul Gandhi and declared his constituency vacant. The Election Commission can now announce a special election for the seat. Gandhi can also be asked to vacate his government bungalow in central Delhi. If the verdict is not canceled by any higher court, Rahul Gandhi will also not be allowed to contest elections for the next eight years. According to Gandhi's team, he plans to challenge the verdict in a higher court. If the appeal for suspension of sentence and a freeze on the order is not accepted there, they will make their way up to the Supreme Court. Over the years, the law has changed when it comes to disqualification. Under the RPA, Section 8(4) stated that the disqualification takes effect only "after three months have elapsed" from the date of conviction. Within that period, lawmakers could file an appeal against the sentence before the High Court. However, in the landmark 2013 ruling in 'Lily Thomas v Union of India,' the Supreme Court struck down Section 8(4) of the RPA as unconstitutional. This is what has allowed the Lok Sabha Secretariat to immediately disqualify Rahul Gandhi. The disqualification can be reversed if a higher court grants a stay on the conviction or decides the appeal in favour of the convicted lawmaker. Significantly, the stay cannot merely be a suspension of sentence under Section 389 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), but a stay of conviction. Gandhi's disqualification has raised several questions on the functioning of Indian democracy. Many political leaders have alleged that the ruling party is involved in vindictive politics. The Congress has called this move an attempt to silence Rahul Gandhi's voice and has vowed to fight the battle legally and politically. Several other opposition parties, including Trinamool Congress and Aam Aadmi Party, have expressed strong support for Gandhi. The disqualification has shifted the dynamics of Opposition ranks, and many leaders have criticized the BJP for its actions. The disqualification of a sitting MP is not new in Indian politics, but the circumstances surrounding Gandhi's disqualification have raised several questions. Many have alleged that the ruling party is involved in vindictive politics and is using every means possible to silence the opposition's voice. This is a worrying trend for Indian democracy, where the opposition has a critical role to play in holding the ruling party accountable. The disqualification of Rahul Gandhi is a significant event in Indian politics, and its consequences are yet to unfold. The BJP's actions have put the opposition in a tight spot, and it remains to be seen how they will react to this development. This has also put the spotlight on the judiciary's role in Indian democracy, and its decision on Gandhi's appeal will have far-reaching implications. The disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha has sparked a debate on the functioning of Indian democracy and the role of the ruling party in the country's politics. While the BJP claims that the decision was in accordance with the law, many opposition leaders have criticized the move as politically motivated. This will have a significant impact on the Opposition ranks, and it remains to be seen how it will play out in the upcoming elections. However, for now, Rahul Gandhi and his supporters have vowed to fight the decision legally and politically.

Coping with Covid

The resurgence of Covid-19 in several states of India shows that the novel coronavirus is not yet a thing of the past in the country. As of the latest update, the daily caseload has reached 1,300 – the highest in over four months. According to reports, the eight states where the maximum number of Covid cases are being reported currently are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The Covid case tally was recorded at 4.47 crore (4,47,00,667) and the active cases now comprise 0.02 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has been recorded at 98.79 per cent, the ministry said. The death toll has increased to 5,30,818 with one death each reported by Karnataka and Gujarat, the data updated at 8 am stated. According to the ministry's website, 220.65 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide vaccination drive. A high-level review meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister on Wednesday, which happened to be the third anniversary of Janata Curfew – the precursor to the stringent nationwide lockdown of 2020. The PM stressed the need to enhance genome sequencing and maintain Covid-appropriate behaviour. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has asked all states and UTs to ensure the availability of drugs for influenza and Covid. The ministry has also stated that mock drills will soon be held across the country to assess Covid preparedness. Health experts have asserted that there is no need to panic as the fatality rate and the number of hospitalizations are not increasing significantly. The key takeaway from the Covid-induced restrictions imposed in the past three years is that they have merely delayed the inevitable. The lockdown of 2020 proved disastrous for the Indian economy, with millions of people losing their jobs. The country witnessed a devastating Covid wave in April-May 2021, but the situation has been under control after that, thanks to the country's commendable vaccination programme. The current surge is being attributed to Omicron XBB sub-variants. A recent US study says that vaccines and boosters are effective against these highly transmissible strains. The five-fold strategy – test-track-treat-vaccination-Covid-appropriate behaviour – should be continued in earnest as it has proved to be a success. An area of concern is the booster dose coverage, which has remained below par. The authorities need to revitalise the immunisation campaign and urge people to shed vaccine hesitancy. Covid is far from over, but if the basics are done right, things should be fine. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's recent measures to enhance Covid preparedness and maintain Covid-appropriate behaviour is a step in the right direction. The booster dose coverage needs to be revitalised, and vaccine hesitancy needs to be addressed. The five-fold strategy, which has proved to be successful, should be continued to fight the Covid pandemic in India.

SWASTHA DRISHTI, SAMRIDH KASHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the beneficiaries of 'Swastha Drishti, Samridh Kashi', in Varanasi, Friday, March 24. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are also seen.

Unmasking the Threat of Fake News and Disinformation in India

PRIYANKA SAURABH



The rise of fake news and misinformation has become a major challenge for Indian society today. It is crucial for every individual to take up the responsibility to combat this menace, from reducing the financial incentives for fake news to enhancing digital literacy among the general public. Several agencies in the country are working towards bringing the truth about fake news to the people. However, their reach is not yet widespread enough to curb the spread of fake news or ensure that the truth reaches people immediately. Social media platforms are also making efforts to tackle this issue, as their credibility has been questioned multiple times. Platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook have implemented changes in their features to stop the spread of fake news, but more work needs to be done to create a clean and reliable information environment. It is important for individuals to fact-check information before sharing it, and for media outlets to verify their sources and ensure accuracy in their reporting. By working together to combat fake news and disinformation, we can ensure a more informed and responsible society. This requires a collective effort from individuals, government agencies, media outlets, and social media platforms to fight against the growing threat of fake news and misinformation.

Fake news is false or misleading information presented as news and often intended to damage the reputation of a person or entity or to make money through advertising revenue. Data from the National Crime Records Bureau shows that 2020 saw an almost three-fold increase in incidents of fake news and rumor-mongering as compared to 2019. A total of 1,527 cases of fake news were registered in 2020, as against 486 cases in 2019 and 280 in 2018. Fake news and misinformation are a growing menace in India. False news and propaganda spreading continuously in India are becoming a serious social challenge for the country. In a country like India, this problem is becoming more serious and due to this, incidents of street riots and mob lynching are often seen. In India, which has over 750 million internet users, social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp have become major sources of fake

news transmission. Many such examples can be seen in India, where an innocent person has lost his life due to 'fake news' or false news. WhatsApp is considered to be the most vulnerable medium for 'fake news' in India, as its users often forward the news to many people without knowing its veracity, due to which misinformation reaches many people at once. She goes.

Propaganda, misinformation, and fake news have the potential to polarize public opinion to fuel violent extremism and hate speech. For example, the recent migrant crisis in Tamil Nadu was caused by the spread of fake news. Fake news articles are used intentionally and verifiably to influence politics and promote advertising, to manipulate people's perceptions of reality to manipulate elections. During and after the 2016 election, Russian agents created social media accounts to spread fake news that incited protests and

supported presidential candidate Donald Trump while discrediting candidate Hillary Clinton and her allies. Media companies promote sensational news and false headlines for high TRPs and viewership. For example Circulation of false videos showing shocking attacks on the Army in Kashmir Valley. Many times, fake news is used to mislead people who are not digitally literate. For example, after demonetization, the fake news of electronic chips in Rs 2000 notes created a lot of confusion among the people. The multilingual population is a problem in combating fake news in India, there are 22 official languages and only 10.67% of the population speak English. Existing fake news detection measures are most effective for English, which can lead to failure to recognize and process information in other languages.

Instant messaging platforms Since Internet messaging applications are end-to-end encrypted, identifying and debunking fake news is only possible with the support of users. Internet penetration in India has increased from 137 million internet users in 2012 to over 600 million in 2019. An increase in internet access coupled with digital illiteracy has resulted in a rise in fake news online. The European Union has implemented a 2022 Code of Conduct on Disinformation and the United Kingdom has proposed an online safety bill that will seek to proactively monitor controversial content from social media platforms. India too must put in place a robust framework to tackle the root causes of misinformation. All sections of the population should be made aware of the realities of fake news and propaganda by creating awareness and education. Fake news is often propagated by using ads focused on polarizing issues to exacerbate existing social divisions and partisan strife by imposing disclosure requirements for targeted ads. Therefore, there is a need to extend the advertising disclosure provisions to all issue-based advertising and advertisements for political candidates or campaigns.

The issue of inauthentic accounts and pages can be a significant motivator for the propagation of fake

news. Verification can help deal with this problem. If a cyber ombudsman is created, it can deal with the credibility of sources of news and can also handle complaints related to misinformation. To take the help of technology, technology firms should invest in technology to find fake news and identify it for users through algorithms and crowdsourcing. Today, every day many types of content are being made available around us through various mediums on the internet, but no one knows what is its truth. It has reached many people before going into its depth. The government should make strict laws regarding spreading such information so that the right news can reach the public. Even today, the cyber law of our country is very weak, from which anyone can easily escape, the government needs to think about it. Regarding this matter, the Supreme Court said that we need such a guideline so that those who commit online crimes and those who post misleading information on social media can be tracked. The government cannot escape by saying that it does not have any technology to stop the misuse of social media.

Fake news harms every section of society. Therefore, it is the responsibility of everyone to fight the menace of fake news and misinformation. It covers all dimensions from reducing financial incentives for fake news to improving digital literacy among the general public. Today, many agencies in the country are working to bring the truth of fake news to the people, but this is not enough because their reach is not yet widespread, due to which fake news can be curbed or the truth can reach the people immediately. At the same time, due to increasing fake news, social media platforms are also working on it, because many times their credibility has also been questioned. WhatsApp and Facebook have also made many changes in their feature to stop fake news, but on this yet And there is a need to work so that a clean environment can be created.

Research Scholar in Political Science, Poetess, freelance journalist, and columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sealed cover culture

Sealed cover culture that has been adopted in the name of secrecy and confidentiality in our judiciary system for many years. It is high time that we advocate transparency and fairness in the judiciary, and put an end to this practice. Chief Justice highlighted the issue and said, "We need to put an end to this sealed cover procedure which is being followed in the Supreme Court because then the High Courts will also start following. And this is fundamentally contrary to the basic process of fair justice." This statement reflects the need for transparency and openness in the judiciary, which is essential for a healthy democracy. Furthermore, the interpretation of any law is subject to the knowledge, intent, and subjectivity of a judge. The court is bound by the evidence before it, and the judges must decide objectively on the intentions of the government. The judiciary and the executive are both solid pillars on which democracy thrives, and they must work together as a team and not transgress into each other's domains. The judiciary must prioritize transparency and fairness over secrecy and confidentiality. It is imperative that we maintain the integrity of our democratic system by advocating for open and accountable institutions.

Yashpal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Morale booster for Putin

Recent visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Russia, which has gained significant attention, especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This visit is the first by a foreign head of state after the international criminal court issued an international warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin for alleged war crimes and other charges. Many experts believe that Xi's visit will provide a much-needed morale boost to Putin. It also sends a strong message to the Western world, which has been supporting Ukraine and its President Zelensky, that their efforts to isolate Putin have failed. However, one must not forget the importance of peace between Russia and Ukraine. It is essential for the stability of the region and the world as a whole. Therefore, we must hope that Xi's visit leads to a positive outcome, bringing the two countries closer to peace and mutual understanding.

Bal Govind, Noida.

More than neighbours

The close relationship between China and Russia, which has been maintained since the fragmentation of the USSR in 1991. While their alliance may have stood the test of time, it has the potential to create problems for other countries, including India. China's aggressive global diplomacy is concerning, and we must recognize that we need to improve our diplomatic skills to be able to tackle this. As a global bully, China's actions can have significant implications for India and other countries. In the current scenario, it is crucial that we work towards promoting peace and bringing about a ceasefire in ongoing conflicts. We must focus on bolstering our diplomatic relations with other countries and work towards finding common ground that benefits all.

Rewant Sharma, by mail.

Reviving India's Traditional Puppetry: A Dying Art Form



Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit



Traditional puppeteers like Ramesh Rawal, a 72-year-old Indian folk and puppet artist from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, are struggling to keep the culture of puppetry alive. Rawal has participated in various international puppet festivals across the globe, but he is now finding it difficult to get any work opportunities. Despite being a family profession for generations, the prospects of making a livelihood from puppetry shows are minimal in today's world. The lack of support from concerned authorities is another major issue that has pushed traditional puppetry towards a slow death. Most puppeteers feel that competition from cinema and TV has hit them hard. As Rawal says, "Television, especially, has given us a big blow."

Illiteracy and the reluctance to pass on their craft to their children further compound the problem. To revive the art of puppetry, schools can organize shows that teach children about different themes and provide valuable information in a fun and engaging manner. Puppetry can also encourage positive behavior change and hold children's attention.

For families like Ramesh Rawal's, who rely on puppetry for their livelihood, there is hope that this art form can be revived. Puppets are not only a form of entertainment but also a means of conveying important social messages to audiences of all ages. The government must consider long-term financial support for puppeteers and implement schemes for the revival of this unique art form. It is up to us to make a concerted effort to ensure that puppetry remains an integral part of our cultural heritage.

BRIEF

Sagar Manthan



New Delhi: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday launched Sagar Manthan, a digital platform having all the integrated data related to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, and other subsidiaries. According to an official statement, this dashboard will transform the workings of various departments by improving well-coordinated real-time information. Speaking on the occasion, Sonowal said the launch of the Sagar Manthan dashboard will have a significant impact on the overall performance of organisations.

Tested positive



Washington: World Bank presidential nominee Ajay Banga has tested positive for COVID-19 during routine testing in New Delhi where he was travelling on the last leg of his world tour, and is currently quarantining in isolation, the Department of Treasury said Thursday. India is witnessing a spike in influenza and coronavirus cases in the past two weeks. The country has recorded 1,134 new coronavirus cases, while the active cases increased to 7,026, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday. Banga's New Delhi visit (March 23 and March 24) is the final stop on his three-week global tour that began in Africa before progressing to Europe, Latin America and Asia. "During routine testing, Ajay Banga tested positive for COVID-19 but remains asymptomatic."

DigiClaim platform



New Delhi: Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched a 'DigiClaim' platform under the national crop insurance portal for speedy disbursal of claims to insured farmers. On the occasion, the Minister also transferred an insurance claim totaling Rs 1,260.35 crore through the DigiClaim platform to the insured farmers in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Haryana with a click of a button, an official statement said. In the current system, there have been several instances of insured farmers' claims being delayed due to a variety of factors.

Govt to set up panel headed by finance secretary to improve NPS

New Delhi, Mar 24:



The government on Friday announced that a committee under the finance secretary will be set up to improve the New Pension System (NPS) with a view to take care of the concerns of employees while maintaining fiscal prudence. While moving the Finance Bill 2023 for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabha, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the new approach to the NPS will be designed for adoption by both central and state governments.

"I propose to set up a committee under the finance secretary to look into the issue of pensions and evolve an approach which addresses the needs of employees while maintaining fiscal prudence to protect common citizens," she said. "The approach will be designed for adoption by both the central government and state governments," she said. The informed

Parliament that it is not considering any proposal to restore the OPS in respect of the central government employees recruited after January 1, 2004.

Under the OPS, retired government employees received 50 per cent of their last drawn salary as monthly pensions. The amount keeps increasing with hike in the DA rates. OPS is not fiscally sustainable as it is not contributory in nature and the burden on exchequer keeps on mounting.

The total assets under management under the National Pension System and Atal Pension Yojana stood at Rs 8.81 lakh crore as on March 4, 2023. NPS has been implemented for all government employees except those in armed forces joining central government on or after 1st of January 2004. Most of the state/Union Territory governments have also notified the NPS for their new employees.

Amazon Fashion unveils its Spring-Summer 2023

Mumbai, Mar 24:

Amazon Fashion unveiled its Spring-Summer 2023 collection featuring the best of fashion and beauty trends of the season. From flowy silhouettes and relaxed t-shirts to fashionable Y2K accessories, an nostalgic collection for Gen Z's, the collection provides a wide range of colours, designs, fabric and patterns to complete your outfit and evoke the bright and sunny days of spring and summer. Enjoy the laid-back and comfy summer fashion in the latest trends from over 100+ renowned brands, 1 lakh styles, across categories like men, women & kids western, casual and ethnic wear, occasion and work wear, sportswear, footwear, Fastrack, Titan, U.S.

summer jewels, beauty, summer travel essentials, personal care and much more. This Spring-Summer Amazon fashion brings chic cuts, bold florals, fit & flare dresses, maxi skirts, summer bralettes, denim dresses, in-vogue accessories, chic watches, trendy handbags, colour-pop t-shirts, casual shirts, fashion forward sneakers, travel must haves, sustainable skin and hair care, colourful eye palettes and much more. Customers can shop for trendiest collection across top fashion and beauty brands like Van Heusen, Vero Moda, Biba, Jack and Jones, Levis, Adidas, Puma, Giva, Zaveri Pearls, Crocs, Mochi, Tommy Hilfiger, Fastrack, Titan, U.S.

Maruti Suzuki targets sales via Nexa outlets

To overtake volumes of Hyundai, Tata Motors by next year

New Delhi, Mar 24:



Maruti Suzuki India is targeting for its premium vehicles sold through the NEXA retail outlets to be more than the respective overall sales of Hyundai and Tata Motors by next year, according to Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Shashank Srivastava. The NEXA retail chain, started in 2015 to sell Maruti Suzuki's premium vehicles, has crossed the cumulative sales milestone of 20 lakh units. It currently sells models such as Baleno, Ignis, Ciaz, XL6 and Grand Vitara. Upcoming SUVs Fronx and Jimny will also be sold through the chain. The company, which has decided

to increase prices of its vehicles from April, feels that response of consumers to the increase in vehicle prices by auto manufacturers to meet regulatory requirements needs to be watched out for, although it expects passenger vehicle sales to grow between 5 per cent and 7.5 per cent in FY24. "We have completed the two million mark for the NEXA. The first million came in four

years, the next million has come in three years, despite the fact that we have had in the last three years, a little bit of a disturbance in the business environment because of the COVID-19," Srivastava told reporters in a virtual interaction.

He further said, "We are hopeful that next year, NEXA which is currently number four in the industry, we hope to make it the second largest brand in the auto industry next year."

Maruti Suzuki sells its mass market models through the Arena chain while NEXA retails its premium models. NEXA chain accounts for about 23 per cent of the company's overall sales this year and has grown around 47 per cent.

Sensex, Nifty fall nearly 1 pc amid weak trend



Mumbai, Mar 24:

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure for the second straight session to settle nearly 1 per cent lower on Friday as investors pared exposure to the metal, energy and realty stocks

amid a bearish trend in Asian and European markets. Besides, a depreciating rupee against the US dollar and fresh foreign fund outflows also hit investor sentiments, traders said. In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 398.18 points or 0.69 per cent to finish at 57,527.10. During the day, it went lower by 502.3 points or 0.86 per cent to 57,422.98. The broader NSE Nifty fell 131.85 points or 0.77 per cent to end at 16,945.05.

Bajaj Finserv was the biggest loser among the Sensex constituents, sliding 3.81 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech, SBI, Larsen & Toubro and Mahindra & Mahindra, Axis Bank and Titan.

German luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz plans to launch four new electric vehicles in India in the next 8-12 months to accelerate its electric mobility drive, Mercedes-Benz AG Head of Region Overseas Matthias Luehrs said. The company expects 25 per cent of its total sales in India to come from electric vehicles in India by 2027.

"We are very happy with the development of our EVs (electric vehicles) here in the Indian market with (models such as) the EQS and the EQB. We'll have four more vehicles coming in," Luehrs told reporters here in an interaction. The company currently sells four luxury electric vehicle models – EQS, EQB, EQC and EQS AMG – in the Indian market.

RING THE BELL



Bollywood actors Shekhar Suman and Manoj Joshi ring the bell at Bombay Stock Exchange for the IPO of Dr. Yogesh Lakhani's Bright Outdoor Media Ltd., in Mumbai, Friday, March 24.

India can become number one EV manufacturer by using lithium reserve in J&K: Gadkari

New Delhi, Mar 24:



Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said that if India can use recently discovered reserve of lithium in Jammu and Kashmir, it can become world's number one automobile manufacturer in electric vehicle segment. Addressing an event organised by industry body CII, the road, transport and highway minister said there is a need to encourage public transport, and electric buses are the future. Lithium is a crucial element in producing batteries that power electric vehicles. "Every year, we import 1,200 tonnes of lithium. Now, in Jammu and Kashmir, we got lithium. (If) we can use this lithium ion, we will be the

number one automobile manufacturing country in the world," he said. India has beaten Japan to become the third largest vehicle market in 2022 after China and the USA. According to Gadkari, presently India's automobile industry is worth Rs 7.5 lakh crore, and the sector's contribution to the overall GST revenue is maximum. The estimated

5.9-million tonne reserve of lithium, a crucial mineral for the manufacturing of electric vehicles and solar panels, had been discovered in Reasi district by the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

"Lithium falls in the critical resource category, which was not earlier available in India and we were dependent for its 100 per cent import."

The G3 (advanced) study of the GSI shows the presence of best quality lithium in abundant quantity in the foothills of Mata Vaishno Devi shrine at Salal village (Reasi)," J&K mining secretary Amit Sharma told PTI. Gadkari noted that good infrastructure is needed for the development of any country.

RBI's MPC to meet 6 times next fiscal

Mumbai, Mar 24:

The Reserve Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will meet six times in the next financial year. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) rate setting panel will be holding its first meeting of the next fiscal from April 3-6, the central bank said in a statement.

The RBI Governor announces the bi-monthly monetary policy after MPC's deliberations on the prevailing domestic and economic situations. The meetings are held over three days. According to the schedule released by the RBI on Friday, the first bi-monthly monetary policy of FY2023-24 is scheduled for April 3, 5 and 6; and next will be held during June 6-8. The third, fourth and fifth meetings have been scheduled for August 8-10, October 4-6, and December 6-8. The sixth bi-monthly meeting of the MPC is scheduled to be held on February 6-8, 2024.

The "storm clouds of food inflation and drum beats of recession continue this year: Suresh

Tata Motors announces price increase for commercial vehicles

Ahead of BS6 Phase II Emission Norms



Mumbai, Mar 24:

Tata Motors, the largest commercial vehicle manufacturer in India, will be implementing a price increase of up to 5% on its commercial vehicles starting from April 1st, 2023. The decision to increase prices is a result of the company's efforts to comply with the more stringent BS6 phase II emission norms. As Tata Motors transitions its entire vehicle portfolio to meet these standards, customers and fleet owners can expect a range of cleaner, greener, and technologically superior offerings that deliver higher benefits and lower total cost of ownership. The price increase will be applied across the entire range of commercial vehicles, with the exact amount varying according to the individual model and variant.

Storm clouds of food inflation and drum beats of recession continue this year: Suresh

New Delhi, Mar 24:

The "storm clouds of food inflation" and drum beats of recession in parts of the world continue to surround us". However, he said various measures that the company has undertaken, "combined with a strong commitment to sustainability and the power of our people and relationships of trust is a prequel to stay anchored through the storm". India is among the fastest growing markets for Nestle, Narayanan added. Terming 2022 as an "extraordinary year", Narayanan said the year began with the Omicron variant of coronavirus, impending climate concerns, the global geopolitical developments such as the Russia-Ukraine war.

acceleration of war and indeed the drum beats of recession in parts of the world continue to surround us". However, he said various measures that the company has undertaken, "combined with a strong commitment to sustainability and the power of our people and relationships of trust is a prequel to stay anchored through the storm". India is among the fastest growing markets for Nestle, Narayanan added. Terming 2022 as an "extraordinary year", Narayanan said the year began with the Omicron variant of coronavirus, impending climate concerns, the global geopolitical developments such as the Russia-Ukraine war.

Mercedes-Benz plans to launch 4 EVs in 8-12 months in India

New Delhi, Mar 24:



On the sales expectation from the EV portfolio in India, Luehrs said, "We will have 25 per cent of total sales, that's our planning assumption, of electric vehicles in the next four years." At present, sales of EVs account for around 3 per cent of the company's total sales in India. Last year, Mercedes-Benz India posted a 41 per cent growth in its total sales with a record 15,822 units compared to 11,242 units

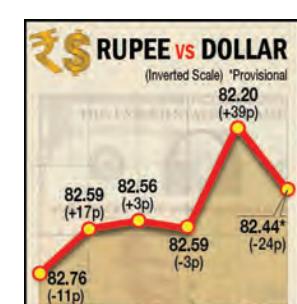
sold a year ago. Its previous best sales were achieved in 2018 at 15,583 units. On being asked when the new four EV models would be launched, Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director & CEO Santosh Iyer said it would be in the next 8-12 months, as a combination of import of completely built units and import of completely knocked down units assembled at the company's Chakan plant.

In terms of the potential of the market here, Luehrs said, at present, India is the fifth largest market in the "overseas" region – which comprises 120 markets other than Germany, the US, UK and China – for Mercedes-Benz. South Korea, Japan, Australia and Turkey are ahead of India in the company's rankings in the overseas markets.

Rupee falls 24 paise to close at 82.44 against US dollar

Mumbai, Mar 24:

The rupee depreciated by 24 paise to close at 82.44 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday weighed down by the strength of the American currency and massive selling in the domestic equity market. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened lower by 12 paise at 82.32 as the US dollar rebounded against global currencies. During intra-day trade, the rupee touched a high of 82.20 and a low of 82.49 against the greenback. The domestic unit finally settled at 82.44 (provisional) against the American currency, 24 paise lower against its previous close. On Thursday,



the rupee settled at 82.20 against the US dollar. According to Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, the Indian rupee depreciated due to weak domestic markets and a positive Dollar. Sustained FII outflows also weighed on the domestic currency.



My role is similar to Kareena Kapoor's character in 'Jab We Met': Deepika Aggarwal

Saath Nibhana Saathiya 2' actress Deepika Aggarwal talked about playing a similar character like Geet, essayed by Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor in 'Jab We Met,' in her upcoming Punjabi film 'Ucha Dar Babe Nanak Da'. The film also features actors like Jimmy Shergill, Isha Rikhi, and Tanya Chauhan. Briefing about bagging a Punjabi movie with Jimmy Shergill, Deepika said: "I feel extremely blessed to have the opportunity to work with such talented actors and be a part of this amazing project. The movie is set to be shot in the exotic locations of Canada and Jalandhar. It's a dream come true for me to play a role similar to Kareena Kapoor's character in 'Jab We Met.' She said: "I am grateful for the love and support that I have received from my fans and hope to do justice to this character." Deepika has previously appeared in the popular daily soap 'Saath Nibhana Saathiya 2', where she played the role of a fashion designer. She made her debut in the Punjabi film industry with the movie 'Ji Wife Ki Movie'. She has also appeared in several other TV shows and films.



Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor has seen more highs than lows in his career which spans over 15 years. However, the actor believes that his failures have always taught him more than his success and that he's running his own race.

Ranbir made his acting debut in 2007 with 'Saawariya'. He was then seen in hits such as 'Bachna Ae Haseeno', 'Wake Up Sid', 'Rockstar', 'Barfi!', 'Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani', 'Ae Dil Hai Mushkil', 'Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva' and Tu

ter to me. That gave me confidence." "I have never felt competitive towards anybody. I have never felt that I am better or worse than anybody. I

that "failures have always taught me more than my successes."

"Whenever your films work, I promise you the only feeling you get is 'phew!' till the next one. But when you have failure, you understand, you introspect and come to perspective."

He added: "I have had a very blessed 15 year career and I have a lot of self confidence in myself that I am the best of course I don't like to put

film 'Black' starring Amitabh Bachchan. Does behind the camera experience gives more edge to an actor?

Ranbir said: "More than being in a film school, I learnt from being on a film set. When I assisted Mr Bhansali in 'Black' that one year period that taught me so much about movies. I was seeing actors like Amitabh Bachchan and Rani Mukerji perform. I was seeing Mr Bhansali direct a movie." That experience really "grounded" Ranbir. He added: "I come from a little bit of a sheltered film family so

Ranbir Kapoor: I have never felt that I'm better or worse than anybody

Jhoothi Main Makkaar'.

Asked about when did he feel he's a star, Ranbir said: "My first film itself was a very big disaster, the disaster-ness was celebrated but somewhere as an actor and artiste I had a deep conviction that flops and hits won't mat-

feel like I am running my own race. I feel like I have very strong views on how and what I want to do in my life, the kind of films I want to do." "The kind of characters I want to portray and of course I am going to see a lot of failures." Ranbir believes

that energy out and say it but I tell myself I am the best because that keeps me going."

Before making it big as a Bollywood star, Ranbir worked behind the camera as an assistant director for filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali in the 2005

going out - and Mr Bhansali is a hard task master, if you make a mistake he will reprimand you in front of everybody - I think that kind of training was important for someone like me. So, it prepared me for any failure in the world.

Will Wagle family support Sakhi's dreams of studying abroad?



Monika Singh on being part of Bollywood: My vision is clear, soon I will be there

Actress Monika Singh, who has been part of shows such as 'Guddan Tumse Naa Ho Payega', 'Kulfi Kumar Bajewala', 'Bahut Pyar Karte Hai', says that soon she will be doing a Bollywood film and she is working on achieving her target.

"Bollywood demands a high level of commitment and talent where good looks only do not matter, you need to be a complete package to be even given a chance. It's difficult but not impossible. I have my vision clear and soon I will be there," she says.

Talking about how she got a break in TV, she says: "I have always been passionate about my screen career and have acted in school plays. One fine day, a friend told me about this audition for 'Guddan Tumse Na Ho Payega', and there was no looking back."

She adds, "I had to



make two to three videos and give auditions, competing with many talented girls. I did my best to get selected."

Talking about her journey before starting her career in acting, she says: "I have been brought up in a simple family. I have a Bachelor's degree in Arts and have been through 2-3 different sales jobs in Maruti, Ravera Diamonds. I was working in a designer boutique in Delhi before I became an actor. I have a three-month diploma in acting from Institute of Creative Excellence, Mumbai."

In fact, Monika would also like to do a reality show. "I have never tried to bag any reality show till date. Bigg Boss is a very big platform. It's a dream for anyone and if given an offer, of course, I will do it for sure," she says.

Aayush reveals the grind behind shooting a shirtless scene for a body shot



Having recently wrapped the Azerbaijan shoot schedule of his upcoming film AS04, Aayush Sharma shared a throwback video of his last minute grind to ace the perfect body shot physique to shoot a shirtless scene.

Aayush recently announced the wrap of his straining schedule packed with action in Azerbaijan, which also included a body shot flaunting his washboard abs and toned muscles. The actor shared a video presenting the grind needed minutes before the main shot, to define the abs and muscles more prominently.

Ever since his jaw-dropping transformation from the lean, guy-next-door look from his debut film to the beefed up, toned, physique with washboard abs for Antim: The Final Truth, Aayush Sharma has bagged his permanent spot amongst the fittest actors of the business. Further surprising everyone with his muscular built, Aayush Sharma regularly treated his fans and followers with glimpses into his rigorous workout routine as he gears for his upcoming film AS04. Launching debutante Sushri Mishra, the film is slated for release in 2023.

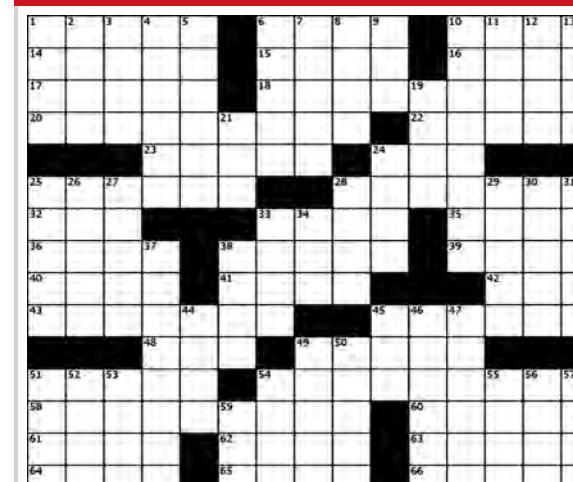
Sharma also roped in veteran South Indian actor Jagapathi Babu for the film. Produced by KK Radhamohan, under the banner of Srisathysai Arts, the yet untitled action entertainer AS04 stars Aayush Sharma as the lead, co-starring debutante Sushri Mishra. Directed by Katayan Shivpuri, the film is slated for release in 2023.

Suniel Shetty on how his character from 'Dhadkan' helped him bag his first award



With a very heavy heart, I had to let go of the film. They started shooting with someone else, but Dharmesh ji wasn't convinced as he felt that only I could do justice to the character of Dev. Suniel had done several action films in the 1990s and he received a lot of fame with the films like 'Dilwale', 'Mohra', 'Gopi Kishan', 'Rakshak', among others. Later, he acted in other genres and became part of romantic movies such as 'Pyar Ishq Aur Mohabbat', 'Dhadkan' or comedy films such as 'Hera Pheri', and many more. Currently, he is part of the web series 'Hunter - Toote Nahi, Todega'. The 61-year-old actor also learned an important lesson while working in the movie 'Dhadkan'. Being such a huge director, he came back to me, and I was really touched by this. Eventually, I learnt a very important lesson about acting i.e., acting is all about your belief in the character and your confidence. That actually worked out for me, and I actually received the Best Villain award for the same." He appeared on the singing reality show as a celebrity guest. 'Indian Idol 13' airs on Sony Entertainment Television.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

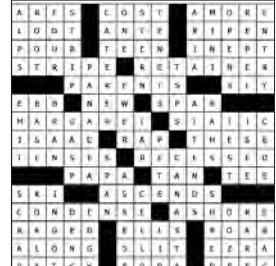
- Parsley piece
- Norwegian city
- Machu Picchu dweller
- Keyboard instrument
- Gradual
- Sign gas
- Greek vowel
- Pink flower
- Strike back
- Southern beauty
- Untruthful ones
- Above, in verse
- Soup vessel
- Made a menu selection
- Lennon's lady
- Dress for Caesar
- Rescue
- Chest bones
- Will
- Forest plant
- Horn sound
- Entice
- Conclusion

- Came in
- Warns of danger
- Not cooked
- Goes by taxi
- Reads quickly
- Arrange grounds artistically
- Five-sided base (2 wds.)
- More sensible
- Native minerals
- Perpetually
- "Carmen," e.g.
- Left
- Direction
- Salamanders
- Ship's pole
- Heap
- Engrossed
- Take a breath
- Certain hockey player
- Felix's roommate
- Bed supports
- Folk wisdom
- Have title to
- Loan charge
- Singer _____ Diamond
- Chill
- Actress _____ Bancroft
- Sleeping
- Author _____ Fleming
- Examination type
- Rich dessert
- Labor group
- Mechanical man
- Eye amorously
- Less common

597

- Impact sound
- Boat paddle
- Most severe
- Large quantity
- Grating sound
- Tack on
- Instruction
- Get free
- Fixed prices
- Inactive
- Exhibit
- Earth's center
- Be it!
- Volcanic flow
- Afresh
- Jaunty
- Significant times
- Director Spike

SOLUTION 596



Ronaldo, Kane break records in wins for Portugal, England

London, Mar 24 (AP):

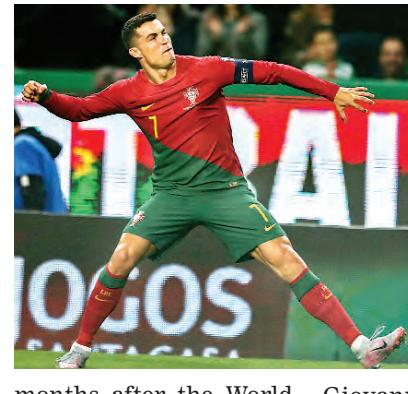
It was a record-breaking night for Cristiano Ronaldo and Harry Kane as qualifying for the European Championship in 2024 got underway.

Already the leading scorer in men's international soccer, the 38-year-old Ronaldo now has more international appearances than any other male player after racking up No. 197 in Portugal's 4-0 win over Liechtenstein.

The former Real Madrid and Manchester United striker marked the occasion by converting a penalty and adding another second-half goal to move onto 120 in international matches.

Kane, meanwhile, became England's outright leading scorer of all time by netting a first-half penalty in a 2-1 win at Italy. It lifted Kane to 54 goals for his country, one more than Wayne Rooney.

Qualifying for Euro 2024, which will take place in Germany, started three



months after the World Cup finished.

BELATED REVENGE

Call it belated revenge for England. The meeting with Italy in Naples was a repeat of the Euro 2020 final won by the Azzurri at Wembley Stadium.

The teams have met since then twice, in fact, with Italy

gaining a win and a draw in Nations League qualifying last year.

This time, England held on after first-half goals by Declan Rice and Kane, who tucked away a spot kick awarded following a VAR review after it was determined that Italy defender

Giovanni Di Lorenzo touched the ball with his hand while attempting to prevent Kane from reaching a corner.

Argentina-born forward Mateo Retegui, who has Italian citizenship through his maternal grandmother, pulled a goal back on his debut and England played with 10 men from the 80th after left back Luke Shaw collected two yellow cards in the space of 54 seconds. North Macedonia beat Malta 2-1 in the other match in Group C, which also contains Ukraine.

EASY FOR PORTUGAL

Roberto Martinez enjoyed a comfortable start to his tenure as Portugal coach after handing Ronaldo a start against Liechtenstein. The striker was left out of Portugal's last matches at the World Cup but was selected up front alongside Joao Felix and repaid the faith shown in him by Martinez, who left his role as Belgium after the tournament in Qatar. Joao Cancelo and Bernardo Silva scored before Ronaldo's double in Lisbon. Also in Group J, Bosnia-Herzegovina beat Iceland 3-0, while Slovakia and Luxembourg drew 0-0.

With WPL, there is no reason for men and women's game to be viewed as different: Barclay

Mumbai, Mar 24 (PTI):

Earlier on Thursday, world No. 9 and fifth seed H S Prannoy made a shock second-round exit after losing in straight games against unseeded Christo Popov of France.

Prannoy, favourite coming into the contest, looked a pale shadow of himself in front of world No. 40 Popov as he failed to give any fight, losing 8-21 8-21 to bow out of the men's singles event.

But it was Kidambi Srikanth, who was the first to crash out on Thursday, losing to Hong Kong's Cheuk Yiu Lee.

Going by rankings, there was hardly anything to separate the two as Srikanth is placed 20th in the world as against his rival's 19th position.

It was a hard-fought match, but Lee kept his composure to emerge 22-20 21-17 winner in the singles pre-quarterfinal contest.

National champion Mithun Manjunath also bowed out in the second round, losing 19-21 10-21 to Chia Hao Lee of Chinese Taipei.

"... As I say, I think it will be a great uplift for the women's game and I am looking forward to see how this tournament plays out," Barclay told the BCCI.

"Now, there is no reason for the two parts of the game, men and women, to be viewed as different. This is people playing cricket and they should be treated equally."

Rudrankksh wins bronze

Bhopal, Mar 24 (PTI): Reigning world champion Rudrankksh Patil won bronze in the men's 10m air rifle, his second of the tournament, even as China extended their golden run at the ISSF World Cup by winning both gold medals on offer for the second consecutive day here.

Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Sheng Lihao of China won gold in the men's 10m air rifle while compatriot Huang Yuting, a double gold medalist at the Cairo World Championships last year, won the women's event. China maintained their top position on the medal tally at the end of competition day three with five gold, one silver and two bronze in their kitty. India lay second with three bronze medals to go with a gold and silver each.

Playing back-to-back matches can never be easy, especially in a home World Cup, but the champion shooter that he is, Rudrankksh delivered yet again, clinching bronze from what at one point seemed a lost cause. He shot a solid 631.0 in qualification to finish fourth after leading in the initial stages. In the 25-shot top eight ranking round, he was well outside the medal positions till the third five-shot series, before a fantastic fourth series, where he shot the highest score of 53.5, brought him back into contention.

Hardik Pandya similar to MS Dhoni as captain: R Sai Kishore

Mumbai, Mar 24 (PTI):

Having watched both of them from close quarters, Gujarat Titans spinner R Sai Kishore feels that his franchise skipper Hardik Pandya is very similar to legendary MS Dhoni in terms of leadership traits.

Sai Kishore, before joining Gujarat Titans, was with CSK for a couple of years.

"Hardik and Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) are pretty similar in the way they handle things, they both are pretty calm," Sai Kishore told the media during a virtual interaction session on Friday.

"One thing that I really admire about Hardik is his ability to handle success and failure equally that is something very unique about him. He is a level-headed guy and that works (for him)," he added. The 28-year-old said Gujarat Titans, who won the IPL last year in their debut season, will have to replicate their performances from last season in order to be successful. "The tag of being



defending champions is up to us whether to take it or not. We played well last year and that is why we won. I think if we can do that (then) the tag won't matter much," he said.

Sai Kishore said the new rule of having an 'Impact Player' in IPL will make it more manageable than what it was in domestic circuit.

"It is more like the super-sub rule where we can either use a bowler or a batsman. It is basically like playing with 12 people. We have already played with this (rule) in domestic (cricket). The only change is that we

can use it till the 20th over, in domestic it was restricted to the 14th over. In 20 overs, it should be a lot easier to handle," he said.

The Tamil Nadu left-arm spinner said he is eyeing a place in the Indian side via strong performances in the IPL.

"Yes, there are a lot of left-arm spinners in India and this (IPL) is a very good opportunity but I would like to be here now in the present and play well for Gujarat. In the last five years, my skill set has gone up and I want to keep improving. If it happens that I do very well in the IPL, I am going to play for India," he said.

However, Sai Kishore admitted that he has to improve his batting to come into national reckoning.

"It is a work in progress. I have done well in domestic (cricket) also. I know the areas where I am good at and areas where I need to work on. I am trying to put in hours into my batting and fielding," he said.

Harmanpreet to play for Trent Rockets: The Hundred

Mandhana retained by Southern Brave



London, Mar 24 (PTI):

the Women's Premier League. I know that Jay Shah (BCCI president) and his board and his team are really committed to making this one one of the biggest and best tournaments that it can possibly be.

"I am sure that they will be successful in that respect. I am really pleased and very appreciative that this has happened," Barclay said.

"I take my hat off to Jay and his team at the BCCI for the way they have approached this. That is exactly what I would have expected out of an Indian run competition, it's absolutely amazing."

"Jay and his team are doing a wonderful job in leading the way in terms of getting the women's game to where it needs to be," he signed off.

Barclay is serving his second term as the chair of the game's apex body.

Draft. The women's draft was held for the first time. Among big names among men, Pakistanis Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf were picked up by Welsh Fire, Pakistan captain Babar Azam went unsold. Former West Indies captain Kieron Pollard and New Zealand left-arm pacer Trent Boult also were unsold. The 2023 edition of The Hundred will begin on August 1, with Trent Rockets taking on Southern Brave in the men's and women's competition respectively.

Sindhu exits, Satwik-Chirag duo enters quarters of Swiss Open



Putri Kusuma Wardani

Basel, Mar 24 (PTI):

at the international level on Thursday night.

But second-seeded men's pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty kept India's flag flying by entering the quarterfinals with a hard-fought 12-21 21-17 28-26 win over Taiwanese pair of Fang-Chih Lee and Fang-Jen Lee.

The world No. 6 Indian duo will next face Danish pair of Jeppe Bay and Lasse Molhede later on

Friday.

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Pant irreplaceable, Warner will open: Ponting

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):

Rishabh Pant is irreplaceable in Delhi Capitals set-up and no one can bring in the requisite impact that he brings in, Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting said here on Friday, ahead of the team's upcoming IPL season.

Pant, who survived a horrific car crash last December, is out for an indefinite period and if Ponting would have his way, he wants his favourite player to be beside him in the Delhi Capitals' dug-out during home games.

"Pant is a huge loss and it doesn't matter who we bring in as we are still going to miss Rishabh. I am not going to joke or try and gloss over that fact and he is one of the best players in the world in three formats of the game," Ponting was straight as ramrod in his reply, when asked how he plans to fill up the maverick keeper-batter's slot.

Warner will continue to open

David Warner might have batted at number four for Australia in the

recently-concluded third ODI against India but for DC, the skipper for this edition will continue to open, a slot where he has got all his success over the past decade. "I don't want Warner to bat at No. 4. He has been one of the most successful openers in IPL history. I think we saw the games he played for DC last year. "He was our leading run-scorer and the number of games that he won with his own batting. And he is such a competitive guy, guy who is going at top of the order and you know he can take the game on and skilful, experienced and he is our leader," Ponting said.

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KASHMIRI NAVREH



Kashmiri Pandit women in colourful traditional dresses celebrate Zangtri, as part of three-day Navreh (Kashmiri new year) festival, at Mata Badrakali temple on the outskirts of Jammu, Friday.

MP Bar Council blames shortage of judges for case backlog as lawyers' agitation continues

Indore, Mar 24 (PTI):

The State Bar Council of Madhya Pradesh (SBCMP) on Friday blamed shortage of judges for the pendency of cases as the lawyers abstained from work for the second day to protest a High Court order.

The lawyers are up in the arms against the Madhya Pradesh High Court's directive to trial courts to shortlist old cases and dispose them of in three months.

According to the SBCMP, there are 1.1 lakh advocates in MP and the

agitation has affected court proceedings and caused problems for litigants across the state.

It was the SBCMP which had given a call for the three-day stir.

"No case can be disposed of within the time limit. And if there is a (huge) pendency of cases, it is due to the shortage of judges," SBCMP chairman Prem Singh P S Bhadouria told reporters here.

More judges should be appointed in the High Court and trial courts to overcome the case pendency, he added.

While the three-day agitation would end on Saturday, the future course of action will be decided on Sunday, Bhaouria said.

"If the bench and the bar sit together and understand each other's difficulties, things will be resolved. We have requested a dialogue to apprise the judiciary of our difficulties," he said.

SBCMP vice chairman R K Singh Saini told PTI in Jabalpur that the lawyers across the state abstained from work, including at the High Court, on Friday.

President Murmu accepts credentials from envoys of five nations

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday accepted credentials from envoys of five nations including Mauritius and Portugal at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

Those who presented their credentials were Istvan Szabo, Ambassador of Hungary, Haymadyal Dillum, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mauritius, Askar Beshimov, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic,

Joao Manuel Mendes Ribeiro de Almeida, Ambassador of Portugal and Mohammed Ahmed Salem Mohammed Rara,

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a statement.



President Droupadi Murmu accepts credentials from Haymadyal Dillum, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mauritius, at Rashtrapati Bhawan, in New Delhi, Friday

Radical preacher Amritpal tried to incite Sikhs through speeches: Officials

Chandigarh, Mar 23 (PTI):

Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh, before escaping a Punjab Police crackdown on his outfit and supporters, attended five events in 10 days, and in these, he tried to radicalise Sikhs, coaxing 800-1,000 individuals to remain prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, officials said.

The radical preacher's brazen activities evinced his methodical efforts to undermine the fabric of society, they claimed and added that he during his speeches and sermons alleged that the government was leaving no stone unturned in its quest to disarm Sikhs by revoking their weapons licences.

Amritpal Singh, who took over as Waris Punjab De' chief after its founder

actor-activist Deep Sindhu's death last year, is on the run after police launched a massive crackdown on March 18 in the state and arrested several of his supporters.

It began weeks after the preacher and his supporters stormed the Ajnala police station near Amritsar on February 23 to secure the release of an arrested associate. The episode raised fears over the possibility of the return of Khalistani militancy to Punjab that borders Pakistan.

The officials said the preacher allegedly implored youngsters to unify for securing "Khalsa rule" for the coming generations of Punjab, proclaiming that the division within the Sikh Panth made them "vulnerable to the enemy's onslaught".

During the Ajnala incident, he openly defied authorities and did not re-

The Ajnala incident had reignited fears of a resurgence of Khalistani militancy in the state, they said and pointed out that Amritpal Singh had ulterior motives to sully the peaceful ambience of Punjab, and this was exemplified by the abduction and assault on Barinder Singh.

Barinder Singh, in his complaint, had told police that Amritpal Singh's associates had abducted him from Ajnala and took him to an unknown place where he was brutally thrashed.

In February, Dubai-return Amritpal Singh's supporters stormed the police station to get Toofan Singh, the accused, released.

During the Ajnala incident, he openly defied autho-

rises from injuring police men in the process, according to officials.

Amritpal Singh had showed no qualms in engaging in sacrilege and vandalising gurdwaras in Kapurthala and Jalandhar, and stoking communal tension by delivering provocative speeches targeting other religions, they claimed.

He also brazenly encouraged violence and gun culture, exploited youth for his pernicious agenda, and described his private militia as the 'Anandpur Khalsa Fau', the officials alleged.

Earlier, they had said the fugitive preacher had been targeting drug addicts and rogue ex-service men to help him build a gang that could be easily transformed into a terrorist outfit.

Delhi HC directs police to form SIT to locate, produce missing girl as parents apprehend trafficking

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):

The Deputy Commissioner of Police concerned.

Delhi High Court has directed the city police to set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to locate and produce a 12-year-old missing girl whose parents apprehend that their daughter is in illegal custody or has been trafficked to someone in India or abroad. A bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice Mini Pushkarna said the child shall be produced before the court expeditiously.

The high court also transferred investigation of the case to the Anti Human Trafficking Unit (Crime Branch) of Delhi Police, to be supervised by

the Deputy Commissioner of Police concerned.

"We consider it appropriate to transfer the investigation regarding the disappearance of (girl), the 12-year-old daughter of the petitioner, to the Anti Human Trafficking Unit (Crime Branch), to be supervised by the DCP concerned.

"The DCP concerned is directed to set up an SIT to locate, recover and produce the missing child before this court expeditiously..." the bench said in its March 22 order. The court listed the matter for further hearing on April 4.

The court was hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by the girl's parents,

who used to live in Nepal. A habeas corpus petition is filed for producing before a court a person who is in illegal custody or in unlawful detention.

In the plea, the parents claimed that they used to live in Nepal in a woman's house that was frequently visited by her sister-in-law. The sister-in-law asked them to send their daughter with her to Delhi for her proper upbringing and studies and the couple were convinced.

However, the plea said the girl went missing from her caretaker's home in Shaheen Bagh here last August. It said the sister-in-law's husband had filed a complaint with Delhi

Police, levelling theft allegations against the girl. When her parents tried to reach out to the man, he stated that they would get their daughter but after four-five years.

"The petitioners are living under great fear of their daughter's life who is missing. The petitioners are under the belief that their daughter has been trafficked to someone in India or abroad by respondent 2 and 3 (sister-in-law and her husband) or is in their illegal custody."

"The investigation may also be monitored by this court to see whether it is an isolated incident or a racket is working in Delhi," the petition said.

Delhi court reserves order on bail plea of former Dy-CM Manish Sisodia in CBI's excise policy case

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):

"A brief written submission on behalf of CBI has been filed in opposition to the regular bail application of the accused. Copy thereof as well as case law has been given to the counsel of accused. Copy of part of case diary and statements of some witnesses have been also made available," the special judge said.

On March 21, the judge had deferred the hearing on Sisodia's bail plea till March 24 for any further clarifica-

tion and submissions.

The CBI, so far, has quizzed Sisodia in its custody for seven days.

The agency on February 26 arrested Sisodia in connection with alleged corruption in the formulation and implementation of the now-scraped Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22.

The Enforcement Directorate arrested Sisodia on March 9 evening in Tihar jail, where he was lodged in connection with the case being probed by the CBI.

Jharkhand celebrates Sarhul, state's biggest tribal festival

Ranchi, Mar 24 (PTI):

A large number of people sporting traditional dresses thronged the streets and marched in processions in different parts of Jharkhand on Friday to celebrate Sarhul, the state's biggest tribal festival.

Governor CP Radhakrishnan and Chief Minister Hemant Soren greeted the citizens of the state on the occasion and participated in rituals of the festival in Ranchi.

Soren visited Sarna Sthal, a place of worship, at the Tribal Hostel Campus and Siram Toli in Ranchi and offered his prayers to the Sal tree.

Speaking at Siram Toli, he said, "Tribals are worshippers of nature. The existence of Jal, Jungle,

Jamin (water, forest and land) decides the existence of tribal. It is high time to think about how to strike a balance between nature and development."

He announced that his government has decided to conserve all Sarna, Masna and other religious places of tribal worship - new or old.

The chief minister also said that the Tribal Hostel will be renovated soon.

The Jharkhand governor, while addressing the people at the Sarhul Puja Mahotsav organised by the department of tribal and regional languages, Ranchi University, said,

"Sarhul is not just a festival, but a unique example of the unbreakable relationship between human life and nature. Sarhul gives the message that



Tribals wearing traditional attires beat traditional drum 'Mandar' and 'Nagada' during 'Sarhul' festival, in Ranchi, Friday.

human does not have any existence without nature."

The three-day festival begins on the third day of the month Chaitra. People of various tribes such as Oraon, Munda and Ho pay obeisance to the Sal tree and thank mother nature for providing shelter, livelihood and food to them.

Sarhul, also called the spring festival, started with rituals in the morning.

The three-day festival begins on the third day of the month Chaitra. People of various tribes such as Oraon, Munda and Ho pay obeisance to the Sal tree and thank mother nature for providing shelter, livelihood and food to them.

overnight at the Sarna Sthal.

The priest after reviewing traditional methods of prediction announced that Jharkhand would get normal rainfall this year and harvest will be good.

The priest said, "We observe the water level kept in two pitchers overnight. If the level reduces by the morning, it means there will be less rainfall. If the water level remains unchanged, it means there will be good rainfall."

In 2022, the priest had predicted normal rainfall and the state received near-normal rainfall with an overall rainfall deficit of 20 per cent. A deviation of 19 per cent rainfall, either surplus or deficit, is considered to be normal by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

India to help Cambodia's tiger reintroduction programme

New Delhi, Mar 24 (PTI):

India is considering sending tigers to Cambodia to help it reintroduce the big cat to its forests, officials said on Friday. New Delhi signed a pact with Phnom Penh for the world's first transnational tiger reintroduction programme last year, they said.

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), conservationists in Cambodia declared tigers "functionally extinct" in 2016. Cambodia's last tiger was seen on a camera trap in the eastern province of Mondulkiri in 2007.

In September 2017, the Cambodian government announced plans to reintroduce tigers in the country with the help of the WWF. Recently, India signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with

Cambodia, which is seeking our support for tiger reintroduction. The country has lost all its tigers due to poaching, habitat loss and other issues.

"A delegation from Cambodia has already been to India. Our delegation also went there. Discussions are underway on how we can support them," said SP Yadav, member secretary of the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

The official said India would ensure that Cambodia meets all the requirements before providing tigers to the country.

"We must find out the cause of tiger disappearance there and ensure that all factors responsible for it such as prey base, poaching, patrolling, infrastructure... are taken care of. If Cambodia meets all

the requirements, we have already provided a checklist, then only we will go ahead," he said.

Yadav said the two countries would follow all protocols of the International Union for Conservation of Nature for the tiger reintroduction programme.

India launched Project Tiger on April 1, 1973, to promote tiger conservation. Initially it covered nine tiger reserves spread over 18,278 sq km.

At present, India has 53 tiger reserves covering more than 75,000 sq km (approximately 2.4 per cent of the country's geographical area).

With a population of about 3,000 tigers, India is home to more than 70 per cent of the global wild tiger population and their number is increasing at six per cent per



धिप्लस कॉर्सेटिक सर्जरी द्वारा गालों में स्थायी धिप्लस

च.ज.शासन से मानवता प्राप्त

कालड़ा बन्ड एंड लाइस्टिक कॉर्सेटिक सर्जरी सेंटर

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