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India wants to up import, PM to hold roundtable meeting with CEOs in US



EXPRESS AT G-7

SHUBHAJIT ROY
BIARRITZ, AUGUST 26

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will hold a roundtable meeting with the CEOs of top energy companies in Houston when he visits the US next month. And, before his visit, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is likely to visit the US to resolve trade-related issues.

In his 40-minute meeting with US President Donald Trump, Modi conveyed his intention to meet the top executives. Trump told him he would send top US officials to Houston to smoothen India's efforts to deepen energy trade with the US. Modi informed Trump that India was importing energy from the US worth about \$4 billion, and wanted to step it up.

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said the idea of a roundtable meeting was to explore how India can import more energy from the US and how Indian companies can invest more in the US. The two leaders also discussed trade issues; India and the US will now work towards scheduling a meeting between Goyal and his American counterpart, US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

"We are talking about trade, we're talking about military and many different things. We had some great discussions, we were together last night for dinner and I learned a lot about India," Trump said before the meeting.

"We welcome suggestions from the US on trade," Modi said, ahead of the meeting.

A White House statement said: "The two leaders discussed ways to broaden their strategic partnership and greatly increase trade between the US and India."

After the Osaka meeting, the two sides had agreed to get officials and ministers to meet and resolve issues related to trade.

Gokhale said India was approaching in a "forward-looking position". He said "both sides can look ahead and afresh". He said the Modi-Trump meeting was "very warm and very positive".



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with (from left) British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, European Council President Donald Tusk, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at a working lunch with world leaders during the G7 summit in Biarritz, France. *Reuters*

India's NSG bid: UN Secy Gen to help, says Gokhale

SHUBHAJIT ROY
BIARRITZ, AUGUST 26

UNITED NATIONS Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Monday told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he would "help out" Delhi in its quest for membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Modi and Guterres met in Biarritz on the sidelines of the G-7 summit.

In 2016, India had tried to push through its membership bid to the NSG, the most elite export control regime in the world, but China had blocked entry, saying that it is not a signatory to the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty).

Delhi has lobbied hard with other members, and has got approval from all major countries barring China. It has established a mechanism to consult with Beijing's negotiators on nuclear issues, but, though they meet once every year, there has been no headway in the past three years.

Guterres's efforts may open a new window for India. It may be recalled that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar played a key role in pushing for the NSG

membership when he was Foreign Secretary. With him at the helm now, the issue is likely to get a fresh boost.

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said that when the UN Secretary General talked about thermal power plants in India, Modi drew his attention to India's focus on renewable energy, and, in this context, referred to "nuclear power". He told Guterres that NSG membership is "crucial for investors' confidence" — this has been one of India's main arguments.

"He (Guterres) understood India's position" and said he would "help out in the matter", said Gokhale.

Modi, he said, had a brief meeting with the UN Secretary General, in which the main agenda was Modi's participation in the climate summit in New York next month. He said Guterres was "very enthusiastic" about Modi's leadership on climate change issues.

Modi spoke of the campaign against "single-use plastic", and his new initiative — Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure — to be launched next month. In this regard, Modi talked about the need to have a pool of trained volunteers.

India, UK to set up team to monitor economic agenda

SHUBHAJIT ROY
BIARRITZ, AUGUST 26

INDIA AND the UK have decided to set up a special team to carry forward the economic agenda, as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that UK had decided to leave the European Union on October 31.

Soon after Modi landed in Biarritz on Sunday, he met Johnson at the Sofitel Hotel here. Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said there was no discussion on J&K during the bilateral meeting. Describing the meeting as "very good", Gokhale said it focussed on bilateral relations.

The British PM, according to Gokhale, understood that it is "important for access to be given to Indians" to the UK, and understood the value that talented Indians bring to the economy and society. This is a key takeaway in the wake of stringent immigration policies followed by the UK government in recent years.

Modi, who congratulated Johnson on his re-election as well as England's win in the Third Test of the Ashes, conveyed that he would stand by him and was ready to work with him post-Brexit. "A

small team will be set up to track the progress on the economic agenda. The principal discussion was about how we can develop the partnership..." Gokhale said.

The two leaders held discussions on G-7, working together in Africa, and climate change. In this context, Modi informed Johnson about the government's campaign against "marine plastic" and "single-use plastic".

They discussed issues relevant to the Gulf, and the need to find a new pathway if the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) collapses. This is important since the UK is one of the signatories, and Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif made a sudden appearance at the G-7 Summit on France's invitation.

According to UK government's statement: "The leaders agreed to further strengthen our bilateral partnership after Brexit — including by working more closely together to overcome barriers to trade and build on our economic ties."

"They discussed the environment and agreed on the importance of tackling plastic pollution. The Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Modi for his leadership on the critical issue of climate change," the British PM's office said.



Nirmohi Akhara unnecessarily opposing deity's plea: Apex court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 26

NIRMOHI AKHARA is "unnecessarily" opposing the plea of the deity, Ramlalla, for the title of the disputed Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land as both parties will "stand" or "fall" together, the Supreme Court said on Monday.

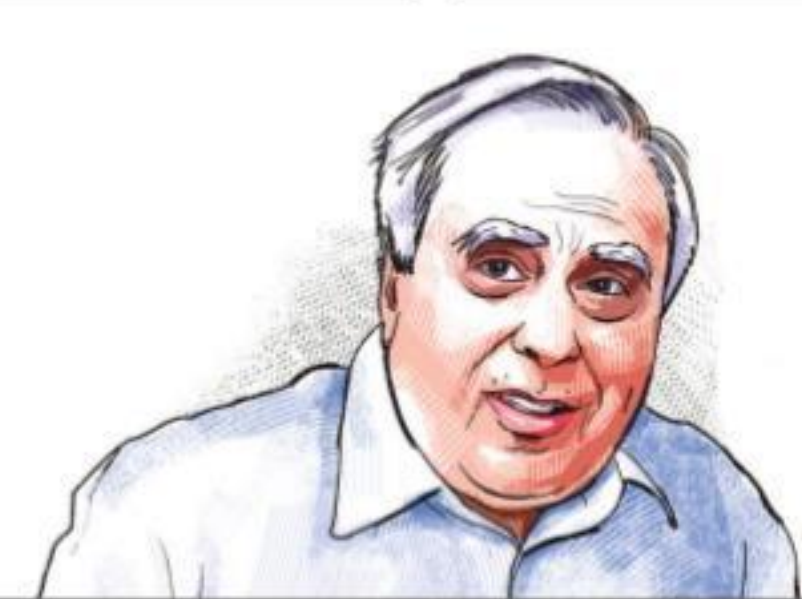
A five-judge Constitution bench headed by CJI Ranjan Gogoi was critical of the Akhara's submission - that being the 'shebait' (devotee), only its lawsuit was maintainable and that the case filed Ramlalla Virajman through next friend Deoki Nandan Agrawal should not be allowed.

"There is no conflict between your (Akhara's) suit and the suit filed by plaintiff number 1 (Ramlalla)... Even if the suit of plaintiff (deity and others) is allowed, your right as 'shebait' stands," the bench said on the 12th day of the hearing. "You (Akhara) can claim your 'shebait' right independently. Unnecessarily, you are entering into the conflicting territory you need not go to. It is for Sunni Waqf Board to do that," said the bench, comprising Justices SA Bobde, DY Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and SA Nazeer.

The bench asked senior advocate Sushil Jain, appearing for the Akhara, if the lawsuit of the deity was disallowed who will the Akhara be 'shebait' of. "You (Akhara) stand together and you will fall together. Your argument is that Deoki Nandan Agrawal (who filed the lawsuit on behalf of the deity as the next friend) had no right to file the suit," the copourt said. "You (Akhara) cannot be 'shebait' of the mosque."

Jain said the Akhara was not saying anything against the deity and, moreover, the law is now well settled that the deity need not be a party in all the lawsuits and can be represented through 'shebait'. He said, "A shebait can maintain the suit on behalf of the deity in its own name and need not implead the deity as a party." The bench asked Jain to apprise it of the Akhara's view Tuesday.

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



AT ARM'S LENGTH

AN EXCHANGE between lawyers on who has the "longer arm" had the courtroom in splits during the hearing on P Chidambaram's bail plea in the Supreme Court on Monday. Denying the ED's charge that Chidambaram was trying to tamper with evidence in the money laundering case against him, senior advocate Kapil Sibal wondered how he could tamper with bank accounts and added, "I must have really long arms". Breaking into a laugh after a few seconds of studied silence, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta countered, "You have. I will show that." Sibal replied with a smile, "But your arms are longer than mine. That's why you are there and I'm here arguing."

ON TECH TRACK

HOW CAN the might of big technology help Indian Railways better its services? The answer to this will be explored as Railways is working jointly with Google and a working group has been formed. Technological solutions to processes relating to real-time customer queries and meeting Indian Railways' vast data with the best that IT can offer are the latest areas of collaboration.

TREADING CAREFULLY

WHEN A group of leaders, mainly from PDP's Kargil unit, came to join the BJP at its headquarters, the party had to take extra precautions to prevent any moment of embarrassment. After Anil Baluni, head of BJP's National Media Cell, welcomed the leaders, Haji Anayat Ali, the J&K Legislative Council chairman, was called to speak to the media. Ali, who praised the BJP government's efforts to bring development in Ladakh, said he would help the ruling party bring more people into its fold. He added, "They will have to come, because there is no other option." Baluni tried to intervene but Ali went on. The party ensured that Ali did not speak to television channels.

MSCB scam: FIR registered against former office-bearers

Mumbai: Five days after the Bombay High Court directed that an FIR be registered in the Maharashtra State Co-operative Bank (MSCB) scam, the Economic Offences Wing of Mumbai Police registered an FIR. The accused are alleged to have caused losses to the MSCB worth around Rs 1,000

crore between 2007 and 2011.

In the past, NCP leader Ajit Pawar along with over 70 others have faced accusations for their alleged role in the scam. While Pawar was the director, there were several officials holding various designations at the MSCB when the scam took place. **ENS**

RAJ KUMAR YADAV, SOUTH SIKKIM DM

AWARD CATEGORY: NORTHEAST DISTRICTS

How a rural development programme transformed schools, lives in remote Sikkim villages

SANTANU CHOWDHURY
RONG-BUL GRAM PANCHAYAT UNIT (GPU), SOUTH SIKKIM, AUGUST 26

THE 13-KM road from Namchi block to Rong village, located at an altitude of 4,400 ft, is riddled with craters, with certain stretches of it washed away. Despite such hardships, the Rong-Bul Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU) in remote South Sikkim is home to one of the most innovative schooling programmes in the country.

In 2015, then district collector of South Sikkim, Raj Kumar Yadav, began a six-month pilot project called the District Administration's Adopted Village (DAAV) in Rong-Bul Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU), which has six wards (villages) and a population of 1,351 (as of March 2016).

While DAAV is a rural development programme that broadly focuses on the social and cultural development of village, improvement of the school system is a key aspect of it.

Under the DAAV scheme, six schools and one primary health centre in Rong-Bul were overhauled. Infrastructure was enhanced and residents were trained to undertake maintenance



nance of the establishments. The quality of mid-day meals was improved and smart classes were introduced to attract children to schools. The students were also roped in for the beautification of the school premises and classroom walls doubled up as learning spaces.

Besides, career counselling programmes were held and experts from various fields and departments were called in to conduct programmes.

Since the launch of the programme, school teachers say the dropout rate has dropped from 36 per cent in 2014 to zero, with a marked improvement in the



Neeraj Priyadarshi

Raj Kumar Yadav receives the award from Minister of State in the PMO Jitendra Singh; (right) At Rong Secondary School, one of the six schools that are part of the DAAV programme.



Santanu Chowdhury



daily attendance.

On August 21, Yadav was among 15 district magistrates who were honoured with The Indian Express Excellence in Governance Awards that celebrated the finest work done by DMs across the country.

"Our endeavour began with

conducting a gram sabha with all the stakeholders, where we worked on identifying problems. We decided to focus on a number of issues such as education, roads, electricity, 100 per cent Aadhaar enrollment and ensuring that everybody has bank accounts. In the case of schools, our

first challenge was to make government schools attractive so that students enjoy attending them. Once that was addressed, we turned to quality of teaching and introduced smart classes and educational cartoons for them. We also promoted extra-curricular activities by promoting many

competitive activities between the schools in the area," Yadav said after receiving the award. Yadav has since been posted to East Sikkim as District Collector.

"My daughter was never regular to school. She was not interested in her studies and preferred watching television at

home and helping her mother with household chores. After smart classes were introduced in her school, she is among students who have registered almost 100 per cent attendance," says farmer Ajit Rai, a resident of Rong village.

Noel Rai, assistant headmaster of Rong Secondary School, one of the six schools that are part of the DAAV programme, says, "Our first task was to make sure that the students attend classes. There were instances of children staying home and spending all their time in front of the TV. The collector sir noticed this and installed smart TVs in schools so that the students could watch educational cartoon shows for an hour after class. We made sure that we didn't show them the entire episode — that forced students to return to school the next day to watch the rest of it."

About 30 students are enrolled in the Rong primary school and about 200 in the secondary school. Extra-curricular activities and remedial classes were also introduced.

Apart from the schooling programme, under the DAAV programme, toilets were built in every household, facilities in the only primary health sub-centre in the gram panchayat were improved, reservoirs were created and rain-water harvesting systems were installed.

"Rong-Bul has always been drought-prone. But villagers

now no longer complain of water scarcity. We have also opened a district control-room for disaster management. Equipment such as helmets, ropes, blankets, tarpaulin and shovels have been stored in that room to tackle emergency situations," says Rong-Bul GPU president Raju Gurung.

According to Namchi Block Development Officer Bimal Rai, the district administration ensured that the gram panchayat continued with the development programmes even after the completion of the six-month pilot programme.

Enthusied by the success of the DAAV programme in Rong-Bul, in 2016, the South Sikkim district administration started the programme in another gram panchayat, Mamley Kamrang, 8 km from Namchi block. This gram panchayat has five schools and an ITI centre. The measures taken in Rong-Bul were replicated in Mamley Kamrang as well.

"The DAAV scheme has been extremely beneficial for this village. Earlier, we lacked pucca roads to reach the village and we were worried for the safety of our children. Concrete roads were constructed under DAAV and we have been encouraged to utilise the slopes of the village to carry out farming. We now use the land in and around the primary health centre and our village to grow vegetables," says Rani Gurung, a resident of Mamley Kamrang.

Shell firms used to launder money, alleges ED affidavit

INX MEDIA CASE Cong leader Chidambaram influencing witnesses, agency tells top court

Anvit Srivastava
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NEWDELHI: Former home minister P Chidambaram and his aides “created layers of money laundering web in a manner which is sufficient to make it difficult for law enforcing agencies to track the money trail of proceeds of crime”, according to an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court by the Enforcement Directorate, which is seeking his custody for interrogation in the INX Media corruption case, according to people aware of the matter.

In its affidavit, the investigating agency has said that even though it collected substantial evidence against the former Union minister to justify his arrest, it would be possible to unravel the truth only after his custodial interrogation. Hindustan Times has reviewed a copy of the document, which seeks to make a case against a bail application by the senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP.

The Supreme Court on Friday protected Chidambaram from arrest by ED, which is probing the money-laundering aspect of the INX Media case in connection with which he has been arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). On August 22, CBI produced Chidambaram before a special judge, which allowed the agency to interrogate him in custody till August 26. On Monday, the CBI court extended his custody till August 30.

On Monday, following arguments by lawyers from both sides, the court also granted him protection from arrest by the ED till Tuesday, when it will take up the matter again.

In the document, ED con-



■ Senior Congress leader and former finance minister P Chidambaram comes out of Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court after a hearing in New Delhi on Monday.

AMAL KSH/HT PHOTO

ED SAID THAT MONEY WAS LAUNDERED THROUGH SEVERAL SHELL COMPANIES, 17 BENAMI FOREIGN BANK ACCOUNTS AND INVESTED IN SEVERAL PROPERTIES AS WELL

tended that it received information about Chidambaram and his “co-conspirators” having influenced witnesses and that attempts were being made to tamper with the evidence in the case. “These are not bald assertions,” said the affidavit, “but can be shown to the Honourable court from case documents”.

The INX Media case relates to alleged irregularities in Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance given to the media group for foreign invest-

ment to the tune of ₹305 crore in 2007, when Chidambaram was finance minister. CBI registered a first information report on May 15, 2017, alleging irregularities in the manner clearance was awarded. ED filed a money-laundering case a year later.

In the affidavit, ED said that its investigation found that several shell companies and 17 benami foreign bank accounts through which money was laundered and invested in several properties were identified. Out of these, 10 properties situated outside India have been identified, the agency said. These investigations were carried out by the Financial Intelligence Unit, ED said.

“Several other shell companies, many more bank accounts and properties abroad have been identified on the basis of intelligence inputs which are received by the investigators working abroad under the PMLA (Pre-

vention of Money Laundering Act) and the investigation is continuing which can be completed only after the arrest and interrogation of the petitioner-accused and others,” the affidavit said.

ED also alleged that the former minister's co-conspirators changed the share-holding pattern of shell companies and made changes in the directors of such firms during investigations to distance Chidambaram and his family from the money already laundered.

“It is also found that one bank account of one of the shell companies is closed and another bank account is opened by a co-conspirator. The agency has also received information about sale of properties purchased out of laundered money by one shell company to another shell company,” it said.

While Chidambaram's lawyers have insisted that the case pertains to events in 2007 and doesn't require custodial interrogation, ED said in its affidavit that “the accused and co-conspirator [Karti Chidambaram] are still laundering and enjoying proceeds of crime”.

Chidambaram's legal team declined to comment on the affidavit filed by the ED.

Appearing for Chidambaram, senior advocate Kapil Sibal on Monday opposed the plea for the CBI remand's extension, arguing that no documents have been shown so far to prove the allegations made against the former Union minister.

Chidambaram and Karti have consistently denied any wrongdoing and said the case are “political vendetta” by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

CHIDAMBARAM HEARINGS

Note, case diary trigger hectic debate

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NEWDELHI: Documents related to investigations against P Chidambaram were in focus on Monday as arguments in two courts centred on the Enforcement Directorate's case diary in the INX Media case and a “note” that lawyers of the former home minister said was prepared by the agency and used by the Delhi high court in its order denying anticipatory bail.

Chidambaram's lawyers said the note was prepared by ED and copied “word by word” in the high court order. The investigating agency, however, denied in the Supreme Court that it filed any such document.

The INX Media case relates to alleged irregularities in Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance given to the media group for foreign investment to the tune of ₹305 crore in 2007, when Chidambaram was finance minister. CBI registered a first information report on May 15, 2017, alleging irregularities in

CHIDAMBARAM'S LAWYERS SAID THE DELHI HIGH COURT COPIED THE ED'S “SECRET NOTE” WHILE DENYING HIM ANTICIPATORY BAIL ON AUGUST 20

the manner the clearance had been awarded. ED filed a money-laundering case a year later.

Arguing for interim protection for Chidambaram from arrest in the ED case, senior advocate Kapil Sibal told a bench headed by justice R Banumathi that the agency chose not to submit a formal affidavit, but filed a secret note against his client in the Delhi high court.

Rejecting Sibal's assertion, solicitor general Tushar Mehta said: “We have not handed any note to the court but only case diary for its perusal.” Mehta said he did not know “where Chidambaram's legal team got the note

from, but it was not by ED”. The former Union minister's legal team alleged that “word by word, comma by comma of the ED note has been reproduced by the HC judge in his order”.

The Delhi high court on August 20 denied interim protection from arrest to the senior Congress leader following which CBI arrested him from his residence in Jor Bagh.

“This note has been the basis for rejecting Chidambaram's anticipatory bail plea on August 20 by the Delhi high court,” Sibal said. He added that ED handed over the note to the court with-out giving Chidambaram's legal team a chance to rebut the allegations mentioned in it.

A CBI court in Delhi on Monday extended the custodial interrogation of Chidambaram by CBI by four more days until August 30, hours after the apex court dismissed his appeal against a Delhi high court order quashing his petition seeking protection from arrest in the INX Media case.

The court, however, extended

his protection from arrest until Tuesday on a money-laundering complaint lodged in connection with the same case by ED.

In the CBI court, lawyers from both sides sparred over the case diary that was handed over on loose printed papers and not in the form of a booklet. “Look at the case diary. How it has been given on loose printed papers,” Sibal said.

When the judge asked CBI about the format of the document, the solicitor general said that the conventional booklets used for case diaries were “out of stock”. The remarks led to laughter in the courtroom, prompting Mehta to add: “This is not the way. This is a court and the decorum has to be maintained. What is this laughing?”

“I will file the case diary in proper format for the conscience of my lords,” he said.

The solicitor general said the case diary was paginated but not bound as a booklet after Sibal said they were agast over the shape in which the document was presented.

Court extends ED custody of Nath's nephew by 4 days

HTC and Agencies
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NEWDELHI: A Delhi court on Monday extended by four days the Enforcement Directorate (ED)'s custodial interrogation of Ratul Puri, the nephew of Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath in a money laundering case related to a bank loan fraud.

Special Judge Sanjay Garg, who accepted ED's demand for custodial interrogation of Puri.

The ED had arrested Puri on August 20 in a money laundering case arising out of the bank loan fraud case. It had sought eight more days of Ratul's custody, saying that the trail of money was yet to be found and the proceeds of crime needed to be identified.

There is another money laundering case connected with VVIP chopper (Agusta Westland) scam in which the Delhi High Court last Tuesday dismissed his anticipatory bail plea, saying his custodial interrogation was “required for an effective investigation”.

Puri was arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in the bank fraud related case last week after he appeared before the central probe agency in the chopper case after it slapped a fresh criminal case against him and others, taking cognisance of a CBI FIR.

The latest PMLA case emerged from a Central Bureau of Investigation FIR of August 17, where Ratul Puri, his father Deepak Puri, mother Nita (Nath's sister) and others were booked in connection with a ₹354 crore bank fraud case filed by the Central Bank of India.

‘Black magic’ may be behind BJP leaders’ deaths, says Pragya

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BHOPAL: The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) member of Parliament from Bhopal, Pragya Thakur, suggested on Monday that “black magic” practised by members of opposition political parties may be behind deaths of top leaders of the BJP, including former Union ministers Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swara, and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Babul Gaur.

Thakur made the comments at a held in the BJP's state headquarters to pay tribute to the departed leaders.

“A saint met me during Lok Sabha elections and told me that the Opposition might use black magic (marak shakti) against the BJP, and that it would harm the party and the leaders who are efficient, hardworking and manage the party affairs,” Thakur said.

“I had forgotten what the saint had said in the crowd, but when I see today that party's top leaders Shushma ji, Jaitley ji and Babul Gaur ji are dying while undergoing pain, it occurs to me if it [the prophesy] is true,” she added.

Reacting to the MP's statement, the Congress's Madhya Pradesh media in-charge Sobha Oza dubbed the theory “absurd” and “highly objectionable”.

“Pragya Thakur has lost her equilibrium,” Oza added.

Thakur could not be reached for comment despite repeated phone calls.

When contacted, the state BJP



■ Pragya Singh Thakur

spokesperson Rajneesh Agrawal said: “Out party leaders are looking into the statement.”

This is not the first time that Thakur has been in the eye of the storm due to her statement.

Immediately after she was named the BJP candidate from Bhopal in April this year, she said Mumbai anti-terror squad chief Hemant Karkare was killed during 26/11 attack because of her curse.

Karkare was part of the team that questioned her in the 2008 Malegaon blast case. After a political backlash, Thakur said she was withdrawing her statement and issued an apology.

Later in the same month, she also said drinking a mixture of cow urine and other cow products had cured her of cancer, and that the cure was scientific.

In May, Thakur said Nathuram Godse, the man who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, was a deshbhakt (patriot).

Thakur was served a show-cause notice by the party leadership for her comments, and she later issued an apology.

PTI

Cop's widow fears for safety after release of accused

HT Correspondent
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MEERUT: The widow of inspector Subodh Kumar Singh, killed in Bulandshahar violence over cow slaughter last year, on Monday expressed concern over the bail granted to the violence accused and said “it will not be good for society as it will encourage youngsters to commit crime.”

Rajni Singh, who lives in Noida with her two sons after the death of her husband, said she was worried about the security of her family after the release of the 10 accused in the case.

“I am worried about my family's security and have shared my apprehension with officials. I have appealed them to get the bail of the accused cancelled,” Rajni said adding that she did not receive any assurance from them.

She also questioned the court decision to grant them bail. “Was it right to grant bail so early? What message will it send to the entire country and society?” she said.

On the felicitation of the accused after their release, she said “Such act will encourage youngsters to commit crime and we must stop this in the interest of society and the country.”

She added that she expressed her concern regarding the bail to senior officials and appealed them to get their bail cancelled, but she had received no assurance from any of them.

A special investigation team, formed to investigate the case, booked 44 accused, including leaders of Bajrang Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party and Vishwa Hindu Parishad in the case and later charge of sedition was also imposed on them.

Ten of the accused, including BJP's Shikhar Agarwal and VHP's Upendra Raghav, booked under sedition charge, were released from jail on Saturday and their supporters gave them a rousing welcome.

According to ANI, deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said the BJP and the Uttar Pradesh government had no role in the welcome accorded to five accused in the Bulandshahr violence case after their release on bail.

TEN OF THE ACCUSED, INCLUDING BJP'S SHIKHAR AGARWAL BOOKED UNDER SEDITION CHARGE, WERE RELEASED FROM JAIL ON SATURDAY AND THEIR SUPPORTERS GAVE THEM A ROUSING WELCOME

JAITLEY'S ASHES IMMERSSED



■ Rohan Jaitley, the son of former Union minister Arun Jaitley, immerses his father's ashes in the Ganga in Haridwar on Monday.

PTI

Wage talks fail, HAL staff threaten strike

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BENGALURU: The All India HAL Trade Unions Coordination Committee (AIHALTUCC) said on Monday that it plans to launch an indefinite strike after discussions on a wage revision with management of state-run military plane-maker Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) broke down.

The talks were held on Saturday, two months after the union held a relay hunger strike protesting against disparity in the perks offered to executives and workers. The revision has been pending since 2017, when the executives' pay was revised.

Employees are “disappointed and dejected” with offers made by the management, said Suryadev Chandrashekhara, general secretary of the committee.

The union had demanded more than the 15% increase in fitment -- or basic salary -- and 35% rise in perks that were awarded to executives of the company in 2017. The management offered “offered only 11% fitment, 21% perks”, Chandrashekhara said.

The strike plan comes at a time when HAL is working on a number of critical projects including the light combat aircraft, light utility helicopter, medium lift helicopter, multi-role transport aircraft and advanced medium combat aircraft apart from a fifth generation fighter plane.

“Convenors have rejected the offer made by the management instantly and held a post AIHALTUCC meeting wherein chief convenor has proposed to the entire nine divisions' unions [to go on an] indefinite strike to achieve more than 15% fitment and 35% perks,” Chandrashekhara said, adding that a decision will be taken soon on when the

THE STRIKE PLAN COMES AT A TIME WHEN HAL IS WORKING ON A NUMBER OF CRITICAL PROJECTS INCLUDING LIGHT COMBAT AIRCRAFT, LIGHT UTILITY HELICOPTER, MEDIUM LIFT HELICOPTER

strike would be launched.

Employee issues at HAL had hit national headlines in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year and led to a political slugfest between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress. Congress president Rahul Gandhi held a meeting with the HAL unions in Bengaluru last October, alleging that the Centre had changed the terms of the Rafale aircraft deal with French planemaker Dassault Aviation to exclude HAL.

The HAL Management said it was regrettable that the Committee had decided to go on a strike. “Most of their contention is untenable,” said a HAL executive, requesting anonymity.

“The claim of the Unions that HAL management is deliberately delaying wage settlement and that offers given to them are meagre is not true as many rounds of discussions have already been held, some stretching for days.” The person said, adding that the process could be completed only with “the cooperation of the Unions, based on realistic and affordable expectations”.

The person added: “They expressed willingness to continue talks so we don't expect them to follow through on the strike.”

Congo fever resurfaces in Gujarat, 1 dead

HT Correspondent
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AHMEDABAD: Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic Fever virus has made an appearance in Gujarat after three years and claimed a life on Monday with another suspected case being reported.

Sukhiben Meniya (75) from Jamdi village in the Limbdi taluka of Surendranagar district, died at the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation-run Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (SCP) Hospital around midnight on Sunday, hospital officials said on Monday.

“Pune-based National Institute for Virology, where Meniya's samples were sent, tested it positive for the Congo fever,” said AMC Health Officer Dr Bhavin Solanki.

Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever is a zoonotic viral disease transmitted from animals to humans by a ticks that kills. It has fatality rate of up to 30% of those infected.

According to hospital records, Meniya was shifted from CU Shah Civil Hospital in Surendranagar to SCP Hospital in Ahmedabad on August 20. Another patient suspected to be suffering from the disease, a 25-year-old man, has also been admitted in the same hospital in Ahmedabad.

As a precaution, Solanki said, the paramedic staff involved in her treatment has also been tested and treated -- including three staff members who developed mild fever.

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CHENNAI: The Madras high court on Monday took strong exception to the Vellore district administration's move to allocate a separate crematorium for Dalits.

The high court had taken suo motu cognisance of the matter in the wake of a video, in which the body of a Dalit man being lowered from a bridge over the Palar river for cremation, was widely circulated on social media on August 17. The court on Thursday asked the district administration to submit a report on this incident, following which the latter informed that they had allotted separate land for Dalits in Narayanapur village. The high court then sought to know the reason why a separate crematorium was assigned for Dalits.

Solanki.

The SVP authorities have also alerted CU Shah hospital where a woman, who was admitted along with Meniya and treated for dengue, died on August 20.

In 2016, the fever claimed the life of a farmer from Ahmedabad district.

According to the World Health Organisation, the virus is primarily transmitted to people from infected ticks and livestock animals. Human-to-human transmission can occur from close contact -- through blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids -- of infected persons.

The first Congo fever outbreak in India was reported from Gujarat in 2011; three people died in that. Since then, there have been reports of the virus infecting people

in several districts of Gujarat. The last major outbreak was reported in 2016, according to health department.

Dr Balram Bhargava, director general, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) confirmed the death was due to CCHF virus in Gujarat.

“Our NIV team has confirmed a case and the healthcare workers have been alerted and asked to take precautions such as wearing personal protection equipment etc.,” he said.

The symptoms vary from sudden onset of fever to muscle ache, dizziness and stiffness. There may also be nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and sore throat. In severe cases, there can be sharp mood swings.

J'khand cops, CRPF men booked for minor's death

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DALTONGANJ: The police have booked unknown CRPF personnel and policemen from Manika police station for a three-year old girl's death. The girl was allegedly killed after one member of the raiding party flung her on to the ground, claimed the child's mother in her police complaint.

The incident happened during a search operation at Bakoria village in Jharkhand's Palamu district in the intervening night of Friday and Saturday.

The Palamu superintendent of police Ajay Linda said, “The case was registered with Satbarwa police station on the basis of a complaint made by Babita Devi, the mother of the killed girl. We are investigating the matter.”

Top CRPF officials could not be reached for comment despite repeated attempts.

In the FIR, the woman said, “Persons identifying themselves as men from CRPF and Manika police knocked at my door. They were searching for my husband Binod Singh, whom they claimed to be Jharkhand Jan Mukti Parishad (JJMP) ultra. When we did not open the door, one of them entered our home through a ventilator and opened the door.”

“After entering the house, one of them flung my three-year-old daughter to the ground and she died on the spot. When I started crying, they asked me to shut at gun point and left,” the woman mentioned in the FIR.

The police have invoked section 304 (unintentional killing) and 456 (trespassing) of the IPC in this case.

Land case: ED files complaint against AJL, Cong leaders

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NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a complaint against Associate Journals Limited (AJL), publisher of the National Herald newspaper, Congress veteran Motilal Vora and former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda in the court of a special judge in Panchkula dealing with cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the agency said in a statement.

The case pertains to the restoration of an institutional plot at Panchkula that had been taken back by the Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) to AJL at old rates in 2005, when Hooda headed a Congress government in the state.

AJL, Vora and Hooda were “directly involved in the process/ activity connected with acquisition, possession or projection of ‘Proceeds of Crime’ i.e. Plot No.C-17, Sector 6, Panchkula to the tune of ₹64.9 crores,” said the statement by ED, which investigates cases of money laundering and foreign exchange rule violations. ED has attached the plot, and the Adjudicating Authority, PMLA, has ordered confirmation of the provisional attachments order, it said.

Investigation under the PMLA was based on the fact that the plot had been allotted to AJL in 1982, but was resumed by HUDA through an order dated October 30, 1992, the statement said. AJL had not carried out any construction on the plot, as it was required to by the allotment letter.

The National Herald, a Congress party publication, was founded in 1938 by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Akhara a ‘sevait’, its rights are tied to deity, says SC

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday served a warning to Nirmohi Akhara for seeking dismissal of the suit filed on behalf of deity ‘Ram Lalla’, who claims ownership over the 2.77 acre disputed Ayodhya land, by saying that as ‘sevait’, the Akhara did not have a right independent of the deity.

The Akhara, through senior advocate Sushil Jain, has been labouring for the last three hearing days to convince the SC that it was the sole ‘sevait’, which had carried out traditional puja and management of idols at the disputed site since 1934, and hence it must be given management rights of the entire 2.77 acre disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land in Ayodhya.

Jain had argued that the suit filed by the deity through Devki Nandan Agarwal, in which the Allahabad High Court had on September 30, 2010, divided the disputed land into three equal parts and allotted one each to the deity, Akhara and Sunni Waqf Board, was not maintainable.

A bench of CJ Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer repeatedly asked how a ‘sevait’ could seek dismissal of the deity’s suit as a ‘sevait’ did not have any right independent of the deity.

The bench asked, “If the deity does not get anything at the end of the case, the Akhara

will be sevait of what? A sevait and deity stand and fall together. You (Akhara) cannot have an independent right. If the deity does not get anything, can you (Akhara) become sevait of the mosque?”

The judges also told the Akhara that it was contradicting itself by arguing that the suit filed on behalf of the deity was not maintainable and at the same time conceding that the deity was a juridical person. “The deity moving the court through a next friend (Agarwal) is not inconsistent with the provisions of law,” it said. Jain said there was never any dispute about the

AYODHYA CASE

Akhara being the sole body carrying out puja and rituals associated with Ram Lalla at the disputed site. To the argument that the Akhara alone should be in charge of puja and rituals, the bench said, “Worshipping, seva and puja can be done by anyone.”

Jain said that to claim rights of ‘sevait’, the Akhara need not make the deity a party as it was not necessary. “For the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, I would seek cooperation and contribution from all. But the sole claim of the Akhara is to conduct the tradition of puja. It cannot be changed. Presence of Nirmohi Akhara at the disputed site alone has been proved with documentary evidence,” he said. The SC asked the Akhara to complete its arguments on Tuesday.

‘India head’ of B’desh terror outfit JMB nabbed in Gaya

Dwaipayan Ghosh & Abdul Qadir | TNN

Kolkata/Gaya: Kolkata police on Monday claimed to have arrested Taufeeq Raza alias Ejaz Ahmed (31), the India head of the terror group Jammat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) that was involved in the 2014 Khagragarh blast. The accused, a resident of Bengal’s Birbhum district, was nabbed from Gaya in Bihar on Monday morning. Police claimed that incriminating documents and a laptop were found

from his possession. Ahmed is accused in multiple cases of terror attacks, including the one at Gaya last year during the visit of the Dalai Lama. Gaya SSP Rajiv Mishra said: “He was produced before a Gaya court before being forwarded to West Bengal.”

After the arrest of around 15 odd JMB men in the past two years by the STF and NIA, including its original India head Kausar alias Jahidul Islam, Ahmed was tasked with the charge of reorganizing the terror group.

HC to hear today PIL seeking panel on uniform civil code

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

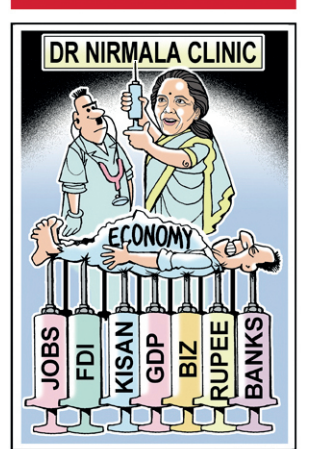
New Delhi: The Delhi HC on Monday agreed to hear on Tuesday a PIL seeking direction to the Centre to constitute a judicial commission or a high-level expert committee to draft a uniform civil code for securing gender justice, equality and dignity of women.

The plea was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar, which tagged it for hearing along with a similar pending petition. The petition also seeks a direction to the Law Commission to draft a UCC within three months taking into account the best practices of all religions and sects, civil laws of developed countries and international conventions and publish that on its website for at least 90 days for public debate and feedback.

Another petition by BJP leader and lawyer Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking framing of the UCC to promote unity, fraternity and national integration is also pending before the court.

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board has moved the HC opposing Upadhyay and sought to be impleaded as a party in the matter, saying the petition was not maintainable in law. The fresh petition said the nature and purpose of the Article 44 is to introduce a common civil code for all.

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(MISC-154/2019-20)

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