

National News

P Chidambaram gets protection from arrest in ED case but will spend weekend in CBI custody

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Former Union minister P Chidambaram will be spending the weekend in CBI custody as the Supreme Court on Friday posted the hearing in both INX media cases — by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) — for Monday. The top court, however, granted the Congress leader interim protection from arrest in ED case till the next date of hearing.

The former finance and home minister is in jail after Delhi High Court on Tuesday rejected his pre-arrest bail in connection with a money laundering case in INX media case. He was arrested by the CBI after a 90-minute drama and was produced in a special court on Thursday that gave the Central Bureau of Investigation the custody of Chidambaram till August 26.

A bench comprising justices R Banumathi and A S Bopanna posted both the matters for hearing on Monday, August 26. The hearing witnessed exchange of words between prosecution counsel and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and senior advocate and Chidambaram's party colleagues Kapil Sibal and A M Singhvi. Mehta vehemently opposed the order granting protection from arrest to Chidambaram in the money laundering case registered by the ED. Arguing the case on Friday, Chidambaram's lawyer Kapil Sibal said, "The petition raises the issue of his fundamental right to liberty. High court gave the order after seven months at 3:20 pm on Wednesday and said we could move an application asking for time. At 4 pm the application is rejected. We come to the SC, request for an early hearing. We are told to move the senior most judge the next day... we prepare the petition overnight, a notice is pasted at 12 in the night asking me (Chidambaram) to appear before CBI for two hours... there is no provision for bail as Chidambaram was in



custody. "The court here is dealing with an offence against the finance minister who granted FIPB approval to a company called INX media, controlled by Peter and Indrani mukherjea. CBI has a statement of indrani... that is the predicate offence. ED proceedings on money laundering started after this predicate offence was made out," Mehta argued. Stating that Chidambaram has been evasive and not answering questions, Mehta urged the court to examine the evidence adduced so far. "The court must satisfy its conscience before extending a protective benefit to Chidambaram," Mehta said arguing against any interim protection to the Congress leader in ED case.

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 Rs 305 crore in 2007, when Chidambaram was finance minister. CBI registered a first information report on May 15, 2017, alleging irregularities in the manner the clearance had been awarded. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a money laundering case a year later. The agency alleges that the former directors of INX Media, Indrani Mukerjea and Peter Mukerjea, made a payment of \$5 million and \$450,000 to Chidambaram in 2007-08 and 2008-09, allegedly for giving the FIPB approval. Peter Mukerjea and Indrani Mukerjea are behind bars in connection with the murder of Sheena Bora, Indrani's daughter from another marriage.

Chidambaram was arrested late on Wednesday night after the Delhi High Court on Tuesday rejected his pre-arrest bail. His legal team desperately sought

to have the Supreme Court hear the matter on Tuesday and Wednesday but failed. Chidambaram then made an appearance at the Congress HQ and made a statement. He was arrested by CBI shortly after. The Enforcement Directorate is yet to arrest him. People familiar with the matter said Singhvi and Sibal want to thwart the possibility of Chidambaram being picked up by ED even when he is granted bail in the CBI case.

While some legal experts say Chidambaram's SLP has now become infructuous as he has been taken into custody by CBI, Congress leaders point out that the SLP was filed much before the arrest took place and not otherwise. So, there is still a possibility to argue the petition, they added. The usual norm for the SC has been to send the petitioners seeking bail to an appropriate court.

A special court had rejected arguments by his lawyers, who sought his bail by stressing that the personal liberty of their client was under threat. The CBI sought Chidambaram's five-day custodial interrogation, saying that the senior Congress leader did not cooperate in the probe and that there was a need to unearth a "larger conspiracy".

"Considering the facts and circumstances as brought to the notice of the court, I am of the view that police custody remand of the accused, P Chidambaram, is justified and accordingly the accused is remanded to police custody till August 26," judge Ajay Kumar Kohar ruled.

He allowed Chidambaram's family members and lawyers to meet him for half-an-hour every day during this period. Sibal, who appeared for Chidambaram in the special CBI

court, said all other accused in the case, including Karti, have already been granted bail. Singhvi, who also argued for Chidambaram, said the agency could not seek his remand on the ground of "evasive replies".

In the special court, solicitor general (SG) Tushar Mehta, who appeared for CBI, said the agency was not extorting a confession from Chidambaram. Mehta said Chidambaram's custodial interrogation was necessary to unearth the "quid pro quo and larger conspiracy" in a serious case.

The CBI's arguments were based on three key points: Chidambaram did not cooperate with the investigation and gave evasive replies on many crucial questions; his replies were in contradiction to the stand taken by other co-accused and witnesses; and the probe revealed that Karti received payments from several companies, which received FIPB approvals during Chidambaram's tenure as finance minister.

Chidambaram's arrest triggered a war of words between the government and the principal opposition party.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday, Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said: "Over the last two days India witnessed the broad daylight murder of democracy and the rule of law by a government hell-bent upon using the CBI and ED as personal revenge-seeking departments for the party in power."

He said the "vindictive, selective and malicious manner" in which Chidambaram was "persecuted and prosecuted is nothing short of a brazen personal and political vendetta". The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre hit back at the Congress for defending Chidambaram. Senior BJP leader and information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar said the law is now catching up with the Congress. "It's a case of massive corruption. It's a scam."

Chanakya IAS Academy signs MoU with MEPSC for introducing vocational courses

By Correspondent New Delhi Aug 23,



To boost the initiative of "Skill India" by our Hon'ble PM, Shri Narendra Modi, Chanakya IAS Academy signs MoU with MEPSC (Management and Entrepreneurship and Professional skill Council) to introduce vocational courses across PAN India. Chanakya IAS Academy, being a pioneer institute for civil services examination, will organize training programs on Management skills, Entrepreneurship, Train The Trainer, Professional skills and other skill related trainings that will create a diversity to the potency of an individual and will significantly contribute towards Nation's requirement of skilled workforce and better employability skills.

MOU was signed between the Founder and Managing Director of Chanakya IAS Academy, Mr. A.K Mishra and Col. Pokhriyal - CEO, MEPSC recently. Moving forward, Chanakya IAS Academy, being a Training Partner of MEPSC

of the Trainer from being a provider to enabler, facilitator and change-agent where learner is in the focus." Said Success Guru Mr AK Mishra, Founder and Managing Director, Chanakya IAS Academy. Training of Master Trainers programme is designed to provide opportunities to Master Trainers for the development skills to facilitate, create and manage a learner based environment. Training of Master Trainers to provide advanced facilitation skills towards the end to end training as per the qualification pack for 'Lead Trainer'.

Triple Talaq law to come under Supreme Court lens, notice issued to Centre

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The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine a batch of petitions that challenge the triple talaq law on the ground that the law was not only disproportionate but also extremely excessive and stringent. The Centre has also asked the central government to respond to petitions filed by various groups against the law, formally called the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019.

"We will examine this," a bench of the top court comprising justices NV Ramana and Ajay Rastogi told senior advocate Salman Khurshid, who was appearing for one of the petitioners.

The Supreme Court had rendered instant triple talaq — under which a Muslim man can divorce his wife by uttering the word "talaq" thrice in succession — unconstitutional in the Shayara Bano case in August 2017. The Centre had come up with a bill to make instant triple talaq punishable soon after but it got stuck in the Rajya Sabha where the NDA government

did not have a majority. In the interim, the "triple talaq" ban was enforced through an ordinance.

The bill was finally passed after several aborted attempts during the monsoon session, a feat made possible due to the opposition's depleted strength in the Rajya Sabha. The petitions filed by two organisations and an individual - Samatha Kerala Jamiaath Ulama, religious organisation of Sunni Muslim scholars; Amir Rashid Madni a politician and Islamic scholar and a Muslim organisation 'Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind' - have asked that the law be held unconstitutional and struck down.

The judges did have a few questions before they agreed to issue notice and asked the petitioner why a practice already held null and void could not be made a punishable offence. Senior lawyer Salman Khurshid told the bench that there were many dimensions, including making the practice a punishable offence and a jail term of up to three years, which should be examined by the top court.

The Centre has pitched the ban on instant triple talaq as a huge step for empowerment of women. According to the law, the practice of instant triple talaq is a cognizable offence. A cognizable offence is one in which the police may carry out an arrest without a warrant, and is used for serious crimes such as theft, rape and murder. Jamiat-Uluma-I-Hind, one of the three that petitioned the court, said the provisions imposed excessive and disproportionate punishment and defined instant triple talaq, also called talaq-e-biddat, a non-bailable offence.

There are graver offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for which lesser punishment is prescribed, the organization has submitted. Section 4 of the Act punishes a guilty muslimman with three years of imprisonment and shall also be liable to pay fine. Some of the IPC offences, quoted by the petitioner, with lesser punishment are rioting (2 years), bribery (one year), adulteration of food or drink (six months or fine or both), causing death by negligence and rash driving or riding on a public way (six months or fine of Rs 1,000 or both).

India, France to work together to combat terrorism, PM Modi to address Indian community in Paris today

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the Indian Community at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO building in Paris this afternoon. Mr. Modi will also inaugurate the memorial of the tragic victims of Air India crash from the UNESCO headquarters which happened

in 1950 and 1966. Homi Jehangir Bhabha, the father of Indian Nuclear Program was passed away in the accident in 1966.

More than a lakh Indians from different parts of the country have been living in France for more than four generations. In the last financial year alone, India's export to France has been pegged at five billion dollars. The export ranges from minerals, mineral oil, textiles, electrical items among



ten other products amounted to five billion dollars.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Modi met the Prime Minister of France Eduardo Philippe. The Prime Minister, who reached France yesterday, met the French President Emmanuel Macron and held bilateral talks. In his statement yesterday after the talks, the Prime Minister appreciated France's support to fight against cross border terrorism and vowed to work for peace in the region.

Pakistan blacklisted by Asia-Pacific Group of FATF for its failure to comply with terror funding standards

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The Asia-Pacific Group of the global watchdog for terror financing and money laundering has put Pakistan in the Enhanced Expedited Follow Up List (Blacklist) for

its failure to meet its standards.

The Asia Pacific Group (APG) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has also found that Pakistan was non-compliant on 32 of the 40 compliance parameters of terror financing and money

laundering. The officials said, FATF APG meeting was held in Canberra, Australia and the discussions lasted over seven hours over two days.

On 11 effectiveness parameters of terror financing and money laundering, Pakistan was adjudged as low

on 10. The official said despite its efforts, Pakistan could not convince the 41-member plenary to upgrade it on any parameter. Now, Pakistan has to focus on avoiding the blacklist in October, when the 15-month timeline ends on the FATF's 27-point action plan.

WCD Ministry sets target to connect 44 cr people through Poshan Abhiyaan to tackle malnutrition

Agency New Delhi Aug 23,

Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani today gave away the Poshan Abhiyaan Awards for 2018-19 in different categories at a function in New Delhi. The awards were given to the States, Districts, blocks and Anganwadi Workers for their contributions in scaling up the Abhiyaan and ensuring that it reaches every household in the country.

The awards are aimed at motivating the primary stakeholders and encourage large scale citizen participation in creating awareness to combat malnutrition. The awards are also intended to foster a spirit of healthy competition among States to improve service delivery to beneficiaries. Speaking on the occasion, Mrs Smriti Irani said, as many as 363 awards were given and 22 crore rupees were

disbursed to the awardees. She expressed hope that with the help of all the stakeholders, the challenges of malnutrition will be addressed and the country will become malnutrition free. She said, from next month, a month-long Poshan Abhiyaan will begin in which the government has set a target to connect 44 crore people through this campaign. She said, last year, 22 crore people added through this programme.