

## Proposal for Rs 1,000 minimum monthly pension approved: Govt

New Delhi, July 7: Government has approved minimum monthly pension of Rs 1,000 under Employees Pension Scheme 1995 (EPS-95) run by the retirement body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Parliament was informed today.

The decision of the government would immediately benefit 28 lakh pensioners including 5 lakh widows getting less than Rs 1000 as pension every month. In all, there are 44 lakh pensioners under the EPS-95 scheme.

"Yes, Government has approved minimum pension of Rs 1000 per month to the pensioners under the EPS-95," Minister of state for Steel, Mines, Labour and Employment Vishnu Deo Sai said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

According to the Minister, several representations have been received for enhancement of pension under EPS-95 and based on those, "government has approved minimum pension of Rs 1,000 to pensioners under the EPS-95."

Earlier, Labour Minister Narendra Singh Tomar had discussed the proposal with trade

unions on June 24 and assured the government will take a decision within two weeks.

As per the proposal, pensioners were to get the benefit with effect from April 1 this year. The government would have to provide an additional amount of around Rs 1,217 crore to ensure a minimum pension of Rs 1,000 for 2014-15.

A senior official said the new government did not want to provide this entitlement merely for one financial year and wanted this to be implemented for all times to come. That is why the proposal was reviewed.

The proposal was already approved by the UPA government for the current financial year but could not be implemented as it was not notified.

However a senior EPFO official, when contacted, said that the body has not yet received any notification or official order in this regard from the Labour Ministry.

According to him, the government could formally announce this entitlement in the forthcoming budget on Thursday. ■

## Iraq's political and military fightback stumbles

Baghdad, July 7: Iraqi forces struggled to regain ground lost last month to militants and politicians remained divided today despite mounting pressure to unite and agree on a new leadership.

Nearly a month after militants led by the group now calling itself the Islamic State (IS) swept through northern Iraq, plunging the country into one of its worst crises in years, the prospect of either a military or a political solution still looked distant.

Iraqi forces have regrouped after the debacle that saw some soldiers abandon their positions, weapons and uniforms as

militants conquered Iraq's second city of Mosul and advanced to within about 80 kilometres of the capital Baghdad.

It has for more than a week attempted to wrest back the Sunni stronghold of Tikrit seized by IS fighters in their lightning onslaught last month but has so far failed to achieve a breakthrough.

"The army and the police are seen as sectarian... And therefore the Sunni community doesn't provide support or, crucially, intelligence to the security forces," said John Drake, an analyst at the AKE Group security company. (AFP)

# Rajiv Gandhi assassination: Nalini moves Supreme Court

New Delhi, July 7: S Nalini, who has been undergoing life imprisonment in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, has approached the Supreme Court seeking to declare as "null and void" a provision in law mandating Tamil Nadu government to consult the Centre before releasing seven life term convicts in the case.

In her petition, Nalini challenged Section 435(1) of the Criminal Procedure Code which mandates the state government to consult the Centre before premature release of a convict if the case was investigated by the CBI.

Nalini has been in jail for the last 23 year and undergoing life imprisonment after her death sentence was commuted. She was sentenced to death penalty by the trial court in the case on January 28, 1998.

Nalini's death sentence was commuted to life term by the Tamil Nadu Governor on April 24, 2000.

"Though 2200 life convicts who had put in less than 10 years of imprisonment were prematurely released by the Tamil Nadu Government during the last about 15 years, she was excluded from consideration for pre-

ature release only on the ground that her offence was investigated by the CBI i.e. Her case was covered by Section 435(1) (a) CrPC. The said section is unconstitutional," the petition said.

A day after the apex court had commuted the death sentences of convicts Murugan, Santhan and Perarivalan, the Jayalithaa government on February 19 had proposed to remit the sentences of all seven lifers, including the three, and release them.

The decision of the state government to release the

convicts was challenged by the Centre before the Supreme Court which had stayed the decision and referred the matter to a Constitution bench.

The three-judge bench had said that the Constitution Bench will decide whether the sentence of a prisoner, whose death penalty has been commuted to life, can be remitted by the government.

The court had on February 20 stayed the decision to release of three convicts--Murugan, Santhan and Arivu-- whose death sentence was commuted to life term by it on

February 18 in the case, saying there had been procedural lapses on the part of the state government on the decision to release them.

The apex court later on had also stayed release of convicts Nalini, Robert Pious, Jayakumar and Ravichandran in the case.

Santhan, Murugan and Arivu are currently lodged in the Central Prison, Vellore and they are in jail since 1991.

The other four are also undergoing life sentence for their role in Gandhi's assassination on May 21, 1991 in Sriperumbudur. ■

## UPSC puts up CSE marksheets online

New Delhi, July 7: The marksheets of civil services examination, results of which were declared last month, have been put up on the website of Union Public Service Commission.

Candidates, who appeared in the 2013 civil services examination, can log on to the UPSC website--www.Upsc.Gov.In--to access their marksheets.

The marksheets of candidates who were recommended and not recommended for prestigious government jobs on the basis of the civil services exam, and detailed results of those who could not qualify the main examination have been made available on the UPSC portal.

The marksheets of civil services (preliminary) examination 2013 have also been made available online. ■

## 3 judges assume charge in SC, taking strength to 27

New Delhi, July 7: Justices Arun Mishra, Adarsh Kumar Goel and Rohinton F Nariman today assumed charge as Supreme Court judges, taking the apex court's strength to 27, including Chief Justice R M Lodha.

Justices Mishra, 59, and Goel, 61, were the Chief Jus-

tice of the Calcutta High Court and the Orissa High Court respectively. 58-year-old Justice Nariman, who was a senior advocate and in the panel recommended by the Supreme Court collegium, has been elevated as an apex court judge from the bar.

The sanctioned strength

of judges in the apex court is 31, including the CJ.

The three judges were elevated to apex court and were administered the oath of office by CJI Lodha.

Justice Mishra was part of law faculty in Jiwaji University, Gwalior from 1986 to 1996. He was appointed

as Additional Judge in the Madhya Pradesh High Court on October 25, 1999 and was made a Permanent Judge on October 24, 2001.

He was appointed Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court on November 26, 2010 and was transferred to the Calcutta High Court as Chief

Justice on December 14, 2012. He will have a tenure of about seven years in the apex court. Justice Goel was designated senior advocate by the Supreme Court in 1999 and two years later was appointed a judge of Punjab and Haryana High Court. He was appointed Chief Justice of

the Gauhati High Court on December 20, 2011 and was transferred to the Orissa High Court as CJ on October 12, last year.

Justice Nariman is the fifth lawyer to be elevated as a Supreme Court judge and will have a term of about seven years. ■

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