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MODI'S TUMULTUOUS NEW INNINGS

WORLD 8

GROWING CLAMOUR FOR BIDEN TO STEP DOWN

MONEY 10

INDIAN ECONOMY SET FOR STABLE HIGH GROWTH

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HARDIK BIG-STAGE PLAYER: SANJAY MANJREKAR 12 SPORTS

New Criminal Laws kick in



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ending colonial era laws from Monday, three new criminal laws—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA)—will come into effect across the country, replacing the British era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively. The new laws will bring in a modern justice system, incorporating provisions such as Zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, summonses through electronic modes such as SMS and mandatory videography of crime scenes for all heinous crimes. The new laws in India marks a significant shift in priorities,

placing crimes against women, children, and the nation at the forefront. This is in stark contrast to colonial era laws, where concerns like treason and treasury offenses outweighed the needs of ordinary citizens. The Government has held regular meetings with States and Union Territories and they are fully geared up in terms of technology, capacity building and awareness generation to implement the new criminal laws. BNS has 358 sections (instead of 511 sections in the IPC). A total of 20 new crimes have been added and the imprisonment sentence has been increased for 33 of them. The amount of the fine has been increased in 83 crimes and mandatory minimum punishment has been introduced in 23 crimes.

The penalty of community service has been introduced for six crimes and 19 sections have been repealed or removed from the bill. BNSS has 531 sections (in place of 484 sections of CrPC). A total of 177 provisions have been changed in the bill, and nine new sections as well as 39 new sub-sections have been added to it. The new act has added 44 new provisions and clarifications. Timelines have been added to 35 sections and audio-video provision has been added at 35 places. A total of 14 sections have been repealed and removed. BSA has 170 provisions (instead of the original 167 provisions), and a total of 24 provisions have been changed. The new laws have also prioritised the investigations for offences against women and children, ensuring timely completion within two months of recording information. In the new criminal laws, it has become mandatory for forensic experts to visit crime scenes for serious offences and collect evidence. Summons can now be served electronically, expediting legal processes, reducing paperwork, and ensuring efficient communication between all parties involved.



PM Modi ki Mann Se Baat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi resumed his monthly radio programme "Mann ki Baat" on Sunday thanking the countrymen for their unwavering faith in the Constitution and the democratic system and participating in the Lok Sabha election 2024 in which over 65 crore of them voted. The radio programme of Modi had been paused since the last broadcast on February 25 due to the elections. Addressing the nation in his first Mann Ki Baat programme after assuming office for a third term, PM Modi expressed that he missed the conversation with the public since the February broadcast. He thanked people and congratulated the Election Commission and every

person associated with the process as he touched on a host of issues in his 30-minute radio address. The Prime Minister also cheered Indian athletes who will be competing in the Paris Olympics starting next month, and urged people to use "cheer4Bharat" hashtag to motivate them. He said the performance of Indian players in the previous Olympics in Tokyo had won the hearts of every citizen, and the participating athletes have been since whole-heartedly engaged in the preparations for the Paris Olympics. "If we take all the players together, then all of them have participated in nearly 900 international competitions. This is a very big number," he said, adding that Indians will get to witness certain things for the first time.

Virat and Rohit Sharma ride off into the sunset

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

The confetti shimmered like a thousand dreams realized, raining down on Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma as they held aloft the T20 World Cup trophy gleaming under the floodlights of Kensington Oval in Barbados. Virat and Rohit walked up to the microphone to give their victory speeches and a different kind of farewell on a night where billions of emotions were high after the triumph final. While receiving the Man of the Match award for his crucial innings of 76 of 39 balls, Virat said, "This was my last T20 World Cup, this is exactly what we (Indian Cricket Team) wanted to achieve, now it's time for the next generation to take over." After receiving the medals and awards, Rohit Sharma also announced his retirement officially. While addressing the post match conference Sharma said, "That was my last game as well. Honestly I have enjoyed it since the time I started playing this format. There's no better time to say good bye to this format, winning the World Cup is what I wanted." India's star all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja also hung up his boots from T20 Internationals. Kohli has always been the star performer for India from his debut 2012 World Cup.



Rohit Sharma embraces Virat Kohli after India's T20 World Cup 2024 win (X/@ICC)

Over the years his statistics speaks for himself and whenever the team needed him he performed. The 35-year-old batsman has the record for the most number of 1292 runs in T20 World Cup in 35 matches with overall average 58.72 followed by Rohit Sharma who has second most number of runs in World Cup, 1220 in 47 matches with the average of 34.85. The former Indian Captain known for his match winning knocks in T20 World Cup campaigns, his feat came in big matches like 2014 semi final and final, 2016 Semi Final, and the clash against Pakistan in Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG 2022), to which Virat rated his biggest T20 innings of his career. Rohit whose debut for India was in the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007 under the leadership of MS Dhoni, from being the middle order batsman to being the opening batsman his journey has been remarkable. He appeared in nine World Cup Campaigns (2007-2024).



General Upendra Dwivedi takes over as 30th Chief of Army Staff from General Manoj Pande PTI

General Dwivedi new Army chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

General Upendra Dwivedi on Sunday here assumed charge as the 30th Army chief. He succeeds General Manoj Pande who retired after more than 40 years of service. Incidentally, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and the new Army chief are classmates. They studied together in class five in Sainik School, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh in the 1970s. While they were studying in Class 5A, their roll numbers were 931 and 938 respectively. Official spokesperson of the Defence Minister, A Bharat Bhushan Babu, said in a social media post, "For the first time in Indian Military history, Chiefs of Navy and Army hail from the same school. This rare honour of nurturing two prodigious students, who would go on to lead their respective Services 50 years later, goes to Sainik School, Rewa in Madhya Pradesh." Navy Chief Tripathi took charge on May 1.

Parliament resumes on RajNEETi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament is set to witness heated debates on a range of issues like the NEET paper leak row, the Agnipath initiative and inflation when both the Houses reconvene on Monday. Besides the paper leak matter, the Opposition parties under the INDIA Bloc are also likely to raise the issue of unemployment and the alleged misuse of probing agencies by the NDA Government when Parliament is scheduled to take the debate on the Motion of Thanks of President's Address. The Lok Sabha has allocated 16 hours for the debate on the Motion of Thanks, which will conclude with the reply by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday. In the Rajya Sabha, 21 hours have been set aside for the debate and the Prime Minister is likely to reply on Wednesday. Opposition INDIA Bloc members forced adjournment in Lok Sabha when the House was to take up the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, demanding a dedicated discussion on the NEET issue. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Sunday announced that leaders of the INDIA bloc will protest in the Parliament complex on Monday morning against the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's alleged misuse of the CBI and the ED to target Opposition leaders. "The BJP-led Central Government

and its prime investigating agencies are misusing power. Modi is targeting Opposition parties and filing fake cases. The CBI and the ED have filed false cases and investigations against every Opposition leader, from senior Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi to Mamata Banerjee to DMK leaders. They have arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Singh. The ED and the CBI will go against whoever speaks against and does not join the BJP," Singh said at a press conference on Sunday. Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Sunday asserted that the Government was in touch with "all stakeholders" in the NEET

paper leak case and a decision "in the best interests of students" will be taken at an "appropriate" time. He also slammed the Opposition for stalling Parliament's proceedings over the issue, alleging that it reflected a "flawed mindset" (galat soch). Taking a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he addressed the first episode of Mann ki Baat in his third term, Congress' media and publicity head Pawan Khera questioned why he did not mention NEET, the railway accident or the "infrastructure collapses". He said the Opposition Parliamentarians will keep on protesting until the Government debates on the issue for a resolution that no young minds are affected due to such paper leaks.

NEET-UG was conducted by the NTA on May 5 with around 24 lakh candidates appearing. The results were announced on June 4, but they were followed by allegations of question paper leaks in States such as Bihar, besides other irregularities. BJP member and former Union Minister Anurag Thakur is set to initiate the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address which is to be seconded by first term Lok Sabha member Bansuri Swaraj, the daughter of BJP stalwart late Sushma Swaraj. The debate has already been initiated in the Rajya Sabha by member Sudhanshu Trivedi on Friday but could not proceed due to protests by the Opposition.

MONSOON BECKONS



Dark clouds hover in the sky above Royal Cenotaphs at Devi Kund Sagar, in Bikaner PTI

Drivers, Mind your Lanes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Wrong side driving, a big safety menace leading to fatal road accidents, has become more prevalent in the national Capital. The Delhi Traffic Police has booked more than 2,500 violators for driving in the incorrect lane till June 15 this year, 250 per cent higher than the last year. "The statistics reveal that in 2024, the Delhi Traffic Police booked 2,577 violators for driving in the incorrect lane, a significant increase from the 732 challans issued in 2023. This represents an almost 252 per cent rise in

prosecutions over the previous year," a statement by the traffic police stated. The maximum number of challans reported was 572 at the IGI Airport circle. According to the officials, the Delhi Traffic Police has observed a significant increase in the number of prosecutions for lane discipline violations during the current year. "In an effort to enhance road safety and reduce traffic congestion, stricter measures have been implemented to ensure that motorists adhere to proper lane driving," an official stated.

A colourful way this monsoon

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Much to the delight of tribal women of Kerala's Attappadi, their Karthumbi, the colourful handmade umbrellas, are the toast of the country liked by fashion lovers and many others. An initiative launched in 2015 in Kerala's Attappadi, an exclusive region for the tribals, Karthumbi umbrellas have now become a cynosure of all eyes. Karthumbi was launched by Thampu, a non-governmental organization functioning in Attappadi to help the tribals get over the challenges of life. In fact, Attappadi had reported more than 200 infant deaths during 2013, 2014 and 2015 as a fall out of



malnutrition and hunger. Though the Kerala Government tried to cover up the issue, the tribals numbering 32,000 stand witness to these deaths. The area had no roads, hospitals or schools to speak about. Moreover the encroachers of forest land from other parts of the State painted the region red with their nocturnal "adventures". Rajendra Prasad, a tribal activist based in Kochi who is the founder of Thampu had an answer. Empower the tribal women by offering them an avenue with which they can supplement their income. That's how they chose umbrella manufacturing as a

source of income and that too by working from home. The Thampu initiative resulted in Karthumbi, handmade umbrellas which are without doubt a step ahead of umbrellas manufactured by major companies. "More than 700 women from the tribal community were trained in umbrella making during 2014 to 2017. Right now around 60 women are in the job of umbrella manufacturing and all of them work from their home, convener said K A Ramu. He said the response from the customers was overwhelming and the women make Rs 30 for every umbrella crafted by them. The Karthumbi brand of umbrella has become a status symbol for the fashion

conscious women of the State and many parts of the country. "I make 10 to 20 umbrellas per day and the work is done after completing my other works like the employment guarantee programme. It has helped me to buy a scooty too," said Lakshmi Unnikrishnan, a homemaker belonging to Mudugar tribals. Prasad said at the time of launching Karthumbi umbrellas, they used to pay each woman Rs 50 per umbrella. "The Covid 19 pandemic, and the deluge literally put an end to our business. But the determination of the women workers from the tribal communities helped us to sustain the venture.

Avalanche hits Gandhi Sarovar near Kedarnath

PNS ■ RUDRAPRAYAG

A massive avalanche hit the Gandhi Sarovar located four kilometre above the Kedarnath Dham in Uttarakhand early Sunday morning. This avalanche that occurred near the Chorabari glacier fell into the valley in the same area but there was no loss of life or property. Devotees who went to visit the Kedarnath temple this morning captured the natural phenomenon, which occurred around 5 am, on their mobile phones. A huge cloud of snow was seen sliding down with speed and stopped after falling into a deep ravine. The avalanche



occurred in the upper region of the Gandhi Sarovar in Chorabari glacier, below the snow-covered Meru-Sumeru mountain range located at the

upper end of Kedarnath valley. Rudraprayag District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said there was no loss of life or property due to the avalanche. The entire area, including the Kedarnath valley, is safe, Rajwar said. Gopal Singh Rauthan, an employee of Garhwal Mandal Development Corporation, was present in the temple when the avalanche occurred. There was a lot of curiosity among the devotees who saw this natural phenomenon for about five minutes. Another avalanche occurred in the Chorabari glacier on June 8, Rauthan said.

Every drop of water will be used in MP and Rajasthan: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has said that conforming to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative, an important decision was taken today to utilize the water streams of Chambal-Parvati-Kalisindh for Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been formalized between the two states to commence this transformative project. This agreement promises enhanced drinking water and irrigation facilities across 13 districts, including Morena, Gwalior, Sheopur, and Rajgarh. With every drop of water slated for efficient use in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, this initiative marks a pivotal moment in the developmental journey of both states. Valued at Rs 72,000

crores, this project heralds a historic milestone for Madhya Pradesh, embodying both innovation and the collaborative spirit of federal governance in our nation. Chief Minister Yadav was addressing the program organized for joint initiative for the implementation of Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal Inter-State River Link Project at Kushabhau Thackeray Auditorium today. Chief Minister Yadav and Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma inaugurated the joint initiative for the implementation of Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal Inter-State River Link Project by lighting the lamp in the Kushabhau Thackeray Auditorium and immersing the sacred water of the rivers in the urn. On this occasion, Water Resources Minister Tulsiram Silavat, New

and Renewable Energy Minister Rakesh Shukla, Minister of State for Backward Classes and Minority Welfare (Independent Charge) Krishna Gaur and MLA Bhagwandas Sabnani were present. Chief Minister Yadav emphasized that while states have their own interests, none should supersede the welfare of the country. He underscored that this initiative aligns with Prime Minister Modi's vision, emphasizing continual state collaboration to resolve issues, particularly concerning water sharing. Yadav acknowledged Prime Minister Modi's generous allocation of funds to Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, foreseeing substantial opportunities for tourism development as a result of resolving water issues between the states. He highlighted the tourism potential in

regions like Chambal, Sheopur, and Ranthambore, noting Rajasthan's success in desert tourism and Madhya Pradesh's significant potential in religious tourism, with efforts focused on promoting sites like Omkareshwar and Mahakaleshwar in Madhya Pradesh along the path of Lord Krishna. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav highlighted that the successful completion of this project will significantly boost employment opportunities. Additionally, both states will collaborate on leveraging their mineral wealth. He emphasized the potential for Ayurveda in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, noting joint efforts under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana. Dr. Yadav also underscored cooperative initiatives to benefit farmers through opium cultivation.

Furthermore, he expressed a commitment to joint wildlife conservation efforts and promoting tourism and employment-oriented industries. Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma praised Chief Minister Dr. Yadav for advancing the joint initiative of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, aligning closely with Prime Minister Modi's vision. He emphasized their shared commitment to advancing both states together, anticipating significant progress upon the completion of this project. Shri Sharma underscored the collaborative efforts between the state and the Centre to propel this project forward, noting the changed landscape from earlier times with now expanded resources.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav with Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma during the launch of Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal interstate river linking project, in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

The project's benefits will

Healing therapist cheated of Rs 44 lakh in name of buying land for ashram

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Kolar police have booked an employee of healing therapist for cheating his master of Rs 44 lakh, accused had taken the money in the name of buying land to build an ashram. The police have registered a case in this matter. Search for the accused is on. According to TI Ashutosh Upadhyay, Yogendra Mishra, who lives in Sai Sidda Homes, does healing therapy, his employee Prince Goyal also worked with him. He was originally from Punjab. The accused used to look after all the work related to his office. The accused had won Yogendra's trust. Taking advantage of this, he deceived the complainant to get him land to build an

The accused had also given fake documents to Complainant Yogendra, who trusted him to such an extent that he gave so much money to the accused without seeing the land, just on the basis of documents

ashram. Because Yogendra was already looking for land for the ashram. He agreed to buy the land mentioned by the accused. Taking advantage of this, the accused took Rs 44 lakh from the complainant in five installments by telling him about the expenses of buying the land, getting it constructed and other expenses including registration. The accused had also given fake documents to Complainant Yogendra, who trusted him to such an

extent that he gave so much money to the accused without seeing the land, just on the basis of documents. The accused left saying he was going to Punjab and never returned. The incident took place between April 1, 2023 and December 2023. For a long time, he kept on giving false assurances of returning soon on calls. From March 2024, he even stopped picking up the complainant's calls. After which a complaint was lodged in the police station.

After about three months of investigation, the police have registered an FIR. Meanwhile in another case of fraud Home Guard personnel was cheated of Rs 6 lakh in the name of giving plot(land). Kolar police said that Surya Narayan Toraniya is Home Guard personnel who reported that that broker Jitendra Wadhvani and Richa Gaur had shown him a plot in village Imalia Jagir. The accused had told Surya Narayan that they wanted to sell the plot. Not only this, the accused had also taken about Rs 6 lakh from Surya Narayan for the plot. Later it was found out that the plot was not his. When the matter was revealed, the victim had given an application to the police. After investigating the application, the police registered a case.

Spell of heavy rains continue in several districts of Madhya Pradesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Spell of heavy rain continued in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday, several districts witnessed heavy rainfall in many districts including Bhopal and Indore. The highest rainfall of 2.9 inches was recorded in Nowgong of Chhatarpur district. 2.1 inches of water fell in Rewa. Nearly 1 inch of rain was recorded in Bhopal and Tikamgarh. Rainfall was witnessed in Mandla, Dhar, Gwalior, Khandwa, Raisen, Ratlam, Damoh, Jabalpur, Sagar, Umaria, Malajkhand. The Meteorological Department has issued an alert of heavy rain in many districts in the next few hours. Since morning, there was drizzle, sometimes heavy and sometimes drizzling rain in Bhopal. Due to this, the



roads were flooded in many areas of the city. Nearly one inch of rain was recorded in Bhopal. Meteorological Department, Bhopal said that 3 cyclonic circulations are active in the state. Moisture incursion from the Bay of Bengal and at the same time, the trough line is also passing due to this, a strong system of rain is formed in the entire state.

Its effect is more in the northern and eastern parts. Rain started with strong winds in many areas of Indore on Sunday afternoon. With the sudden cloud cover in the eastern and western parts of the city, a period of strong winds started. During this, light drizzle was seen in many parts and heavy rain in many parts. Heavy rain occurred in

Mandla on Sunday evening. Clouds were there since Sunday morning and the weather remained cool due to drizzle in between. But in the evening, the city got drenched due to heavy rain for about half an hour. One and a quarter inch rain was recorded here. The month of June was passing and the farmers were eagerly waiting for the monsoon rain. Shajapur was the coldest city in the state. The day temperature here was 25.4 degrees, while 22.4 degrees was recorded at night. The mercury remained below 30 degrees in Pachmarhi, Umaria, Naugaon, Malajkhand, Sagar and Seoni. Talking about big cities, Bhopal recorded 30.2 degrees, Indore 31.6 degrees, Gwalior 34.6 degrees, Jabalpur 30.5 degrees and Ujjain recorded 32.2 degrees.



Citizens take part in a 'Shakti Run' for gender justice and women's safety organised by ActionAid and other NGOs in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Two-day training programme on effective communication held

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A two-day training program on Effective Communication and Interpersonal Relations at Work for the youth representatives of the participating unions was organized the other day at the Training Workshop of Vishwakarma Hall (HRD Centre). This program was organized in coordination with HR-Industrial Relations and Human Resource Development Centre. This training program was organized in collaboration with the Dantopant Thengadi National Labour Education and Development Board. This 02 day training program was inaugurated by Birendra Kumar Singh, General Manager (HR), Arif Ahmed Siddiqui, Additional General Manager (HR), Smt. Swagata S. Saxena, Additional General Manager (HRD) and Ambrish Garg, Regional Director-in-



Charge Dantopant Thengadi National Labour Education and Development Board, Smt. Renu Verma Special Education Officer, National Labour Education and Development Board. R. K. Jaiswal, Deputy Manager (HR-IR) gave information about the origin and objectives of the program. This training program has been organized by the Industrial Relations Section for the pur-

pose of personality development for the union representatives for the past several years. < Birendra Kumar Singh, General Manager (HR) motivated the young representatives by explaining the importance of communication. Arif Ahmed, Siddiqui, Additional General Manager (HR), Swagata S Saxena, Additional General Manager (HR) wel-

comed all the guests present and told that any problem can be resolved only through mutual communication in the organization. Kirti Singh, Manager (HR) thanked the people who attended the inaugural ceremony. 28 participants from unions were present in this program. At the closing ceremony of the program on Friday, Chief Guest Hiralal Bharani, Additional General Manager & DRO (HSE), and Ambrish Garg, Regional Director-in-Charge, National Labour Education and Development Board, Smt. Renu Verma Special Education Officer, National Labour Education and Development Board addressed all the participants and distributed certificates. In the closing ceremony, a vote of thanks was given by Kirti Singh, Manager (HRD). The main objective of this program is to teach the art of personality development to the participants.

Ophthalmology deptt of AIIMS Bhopal achieves new milestone

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under the guidance of Executive Director Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, the Ophthalmology Department of AIIMS Bhopal has achieved another significant milestone. On Sunday, the department received two eye donations for corneal retrieval, marking a momentous occasion in its ongoing efforts to restore vision to those in need. Ayush Jharbade, a resident of Mandideep, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, exhibited exceptional generosity and humanity by voluntarily donating the corneas of his late father, Ganesh Jharbade, aged 42 years. This philanthropic contribution will provide vision to two individuals, significantly enhancing their quality of life. Expressing his gratitude, Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh stated, "We are extremely grateful to our eye donors and their families. Their selfless donation has set a remarkable example of social contribution and compassion. These dona-

tions are a ray of hope and light for the visually impaired." The Ophthalmology Department at AIIMS Bhopal is committed to bringing revolutionary changes in the lives of many by restoring their vision through this program. Dr. Bhavana Sharma, head of the Eye Department, explained the importance of corneal donations: "The cornea is a dome-shaped surface on the eye that helps focus while reading or seeing. When a person donates their eyes after death, the cornea is removed and transplanted into the eyes of someone whose cornea is damaged, allowing them to see again. When the cornea of a person's eye is damaged and cannot be treated with medicine, doctors recommend corneal transplant surgery." AIIMS Bhopal has been performing corneal retrieval for the past five years, and this recent achievement underscores its dedication to improving the lives of individuals through advanced medical interventions.

Third issue of e-magazine 'Srijan'

Bhopal: The third issue of Hindi e-magazine 'Srijan' of Tool and Gauge Department was released by the General Manager - Feeders, Rupesh Telang at BHEL, Bhopal on Saturday. On this occasion, he congratulated all the team members associated with the publication of the e-magazine and expressed hope for the continuous increase in the efforts being made by TGM for the promotion and effective implementation of the official language. He further said that working for the e-magazine while performing their daily responsibilities in this period of professional difficulties shows the immense potential of the members. Just as this work has been possible due to team work, in the same way, if we are determined, we can achieve the goals of our organization by facing the biggest difficulties. On this occasion, Additional General Manager (CIM, PRM, CIT, TGM & CTX) V.V. Khare - President (Hindi Working Committee), Deputy Manager (Official Language) Poonam Sahu, Deputy Manager Dinesh Adgulkar - Secretary (TGM Hindi Working Committee), Pushpa Mishra, Editorial Board of the magazine and writers - Prahlad Vyas, Savita Patel, Satya Pahad, Manish Bawaskar were present.

Woman accuses her father-in-law for sexual assault on her

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A married woman in the Kolar area of Bhopal has accused her father-in-law of sexually assaulting her; police have registered case and started investigation. According to Kolar police, the 24-year-old victim lives in a colony. She is originally from Khajuraho. On February 14 (Valentine's Day), she was alone in her house and taking advantage her father-in-law raped her. Not only this, when the victim told the whole thing to her mother-in-law, she started threatening her. Upset by this, the woman went to her maternal home. The accused father-in-law kept calling her even then. Fed up, the victim complained to her maternal family. After this, the maternal family took the victim to Khajuraho police. After investigating the complaint, the police registered a case there. From there, after registering the case of zero FIR, the

On February 14 (Valentine's Day), she was alone in her house and taking advantage her father-in-law raped her. Not only this, when the victim told the whole thing to her mother-in-law

diary was given to Kolar police. Where the police registered the case. After this incident, the victim woman returned to her maternal home. The accused husband started talking obscenely to her even on call. Then the victim gave a complaint application to Khajuraho police station. After investigating the application, the police there registered a case on zero and handed over the case diary to Kolar police on Saturday. The police have registered a case against the accused mother-in-law and father-in-law and have started searching for them.



Youth Congress State President Mitendra Darshan Singh talking to media persons at PCC headquarters in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

55 bulk litres of hand-made liquor seized in Ujjain

PNS ■ UJJAIN

Under the direction of Collector Ujjain Neeraj Kumar Singh and guidance of Assistant Excise Commissioner Rajnarayan Soni and under the leadership of ADEO Vijay Meda, information was received from the informer in Circle Khachrod that illegal liquor is going to come from Ratlam-Khachrod Bypass Road

Village - Palana Chauraha. On the basis of information, the Excise raid team waited for the vehicle to arrive. A TVS Axle Super Heavy Duty motorcycle number MP-13 DZ-6001 was seen coming from Khachrod. When it was stopped and duly searched, 55 bulk liters of hand-made liquor was recovered in a blue can. The driver Bapu Singh Panwar, resident of Palna, police station Khachrod

was arrested and the liquor was taken into possession. Due action was taken on the spot. Since the quantity of liquor was more than 50 bulk liters, action was taken against the accused under section 34(1)A and 34(2) of the Madhya Pradesh Excise Act. The accused was sent to jail in judicial custody. The market value of the seized liquor and vehicle was estimated to be Rs 21000.

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Parliament should pass law on quota to exceed 50 per cent cap: Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Sunday said Parliament should pass a law to enable reservations to exceed the 50-per cent cap, a day after NDA constituent JD (U) demanded that the quota increase in Bihar be included in the 9th schedule of the Constitution.

At a meeting of the Janata Dal-United's national executive here on Saturday, the party expressed concern over a recent Patna High Court verdict striking down the Bihar government's decision to increase the quota for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 65 per cent from 50 per cent.

In a political resolution passed at the meet, the JD(U) urged the BJP-led Centre to put the state's law under the Constitution's 9th Schedule to rule out its judicial review.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said through-



out the Lok Sabha poll campaign, the opposition party has been saying that all state laws related to reservation for the SCs, STs and all backward classes should be included in the 9th Schedule, as was the case for a Tamil Nadu law in 1994.

"It is a good thing that JD(U) has made the same demand in

Patna yesterday. But its ally BJP, both in the state and at the Centre, is completely silent on this matter," Ramesh said.

"However, bringing reservation laws beyond the 50 per cent limit into the Ninth Schedule is also not a solution, because according to a 2007 Supreme Court decision, such laws are also subject to judicial

review," the former Union minister said, adding that a Constitution amendment law is required for the purpose.

"In such a situation, the only way out is for the Parliament to pass a Constitution Amendment Bill which will enable the reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and All Backward Classes to exceed 50 per cent," he said.

Ramesh said the current limit of 50 per cent is not explicitly mandated by the Constitution, but has been decided through various Supreme Court decisions.

"This was and remains one of the main guarantees of the Indian National Congress for the Lok Sabha elections." Will the non-biological Prime Minister clear his stand? Our demand is that such a bill should be introduced in the next session of Parliament. JD (U) should not be limited to just passing resolutions," he added.

Doctors' body meets Nadda to discuss NEET-PG postponement concerns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Representatives of the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association have met Union Health Minister J P Nadda to discuss their concerns over medical education with a focus on the postponement of the NEET-PG exam.

At the meeting, FORDA stressed on the importance of promptly announcing the new exam dates and conducting the exams transparently and efficiently even as it focused on the confusion among the NEET PG aspirants due to the postponement of the NEET-PG exam, said a representative from the Association.

The NEET-PG, which was scheduled to be held on June 23, was postponed a night before the entrance exam, as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of recent allegations on the integrity of certain competitive exams.

The FORDA delegation included its President Dr Aviral Mathur, General Secretary Dr Sarvesh Pandey, Dr Gautam Sharma (RML), Dr Sarada (LHMC), Dr Bharani, Dr Ayush (VMMC and SJH), and Dr Meet Ghonia (NITRD).

Dr Mathur later said that the Union Health Minister has assured the delegation that his ministry and the government are committed to the welfare of students and are determined to improve the current system.

The reasons behind the postponement of NEET-PG are being addressed and fresh dates for the exam will be announced soon, the Union Health Minister told the FORDA delegation.

The delegation also raised other significant issues pending resolution since before the Lok Sabha elections and Nadda assured them that further meetings would be held to address these matters.

AYUSH Ministry's CSMCARI inks medicine research pact

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences - Captain Srinivasa Murthy Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CSMCARI), under the Union Ministry of AYUSH, on Sunday inked a pact with the Commissionerate of Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy (CIM&H).

The MoU outlines a collaborative framework for testing services, imparting training, and executing a collaborative project on "research studies for the standardisation of selected higher-order medicines."

The partnership aims to carry out testing of selected raw drugs and finished products for the standardisation of medicine, said an official from the Union Ayush ministry.

It will also provide NABL accreditation training guidance to the laboratory of CIM&H. "This MoU between CCRAS



and CIM&H has set precedence for other states of India also, they can come forward and join hands with CCRAS, MoAyush for various research and development activities," said Rabinarayan Acharya Director General, CCRAS, Chennai.

This MoU marks a significant step towards strengthening the collaborative efforts between these premier institutions, and is targeted to enhance the quality and safety of Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic medicines; boost collaborative research initiatives; and capacity building and knowledge exchange, the official added.

More tribals opting for Govt hospitals over traditional healers, reveals study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As India targets malaria elimination by 2030, a study from Northeastern Meghalaya indicates a positive trend: tribal communities increasingly seek treatment at government hospitals instead of traditional healers. This shift, partly due to the belief that timely and effective malaria treatment is available in the public health system, reflects significant progress in the country's malaria control efforts, according to the study published in the journal Malaria.

"By recognising these evolving attitudes, policymakers and healthcare providers can better tailor their interventions and communication strategies to more effectively address ongoing needs and concerns as India faces the 'last mile' in malaria elimination," the researchers noted. Malaria in India is predominantly concentrated in the eastern and central parts of the country, particularly in forested and hilly states with tribal populations and limited health



services. These states include Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra, as well as the northeastern states of Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram. Transmission in these areas is often challenging and persistent due to social and ecological factors, including conflict-affected regions and low community awareness about malaria prevention and control.

However, the study highlighted that patients still incur out-of-pocket expenses for travel, medications, or services unavailable at the PHC (primary health centre) level, leading some to seek private healthcare providers. The lack of awareness and knowledge about preventive measures, such as insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor resid-

ual spraying, and timely healthcare-seeking, can hinder efforts to reduce malaria transmission.

To address these issues, the study focused on West Khasi Hills (WKH), West Jaintia Hills (WJH), and South Garo Hills (SGH) in Meghalaya, which had the highest Annual Parasite Index (API) between 2016 and 2019. Data were collected from August 2019 to November 2021 from residents of 23 villages served by four PHCs across these districts. Researchers examined community preferences for treatment and the use of healthcare services, such as visiting public or private health facilities or seeking care from traditional healers.

The study found growing acceptance of public health providers, with the majority of participants preferring public healthcare institutions like PHCs for malaria treatment, citing affordability and the availability of free services. In the three districts, participants and healthcare providers noted that frontline health workers were now

equipped with basic rapid diagnostic tests (RDT) for malaria, allowing for prompt identification and timely referral for appropriate treatment. This improved outcomes and reduced the risk of complications.

In the SGH district, community members reported a significant decline in seeking traditional healers for malaria treatment due to increased awareness of diagnostic tests, treatments, and services available at PHCs or hospitals. The availability of diagnostic tools used by village ASHA and ANM workers at health sub-centres also encouraged villagers to seek help from these healthcare providers.

Recognising these shifting attitudes is crucial for policymakers and healthcare practitioners to tailor interventions and communication strategies more effectively as India approaches the final stages of malaria elimination, said the study's lead author, Carinthia B. Nengngong, from the Indian Institute of Public Health, Shillong.

Family pensioners' issues set for resolution



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh will launch a special campaign for the effective redressal of family pensioners' grievances here on Monday.

Presently, around 90,000 cases are being registered on an online Centralised Pension Grievance and Redress System (CPENGRAMS) in a year, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said on Sunday. Of the total grievances, family pension grievance cases account for about 20-25 per cent, it said. A major segment of family pensioners' grievances is constituted by women pensioners, the statement said.

The majority of the grievances pertain to defence pensioners, railway pensioners and CAPFs pensioners under the Union home ministry, it said, adding that "Bank-related issues also constitute a sizeable number".

The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DOPPW), as part of its 100 days action plan will be undertaking a month-long special campaign for effective redressal of family pensioners' grievances during the period July 1-31, 2024 in which 46 ministries/departments will be participating, the statement said. This special campaign seeks a substantial reduction in the pendency of family pension grievances. Secretaries of Departments of Pension and

Pensioners Welfare, Ex-Servicemen's Welfare, Director General, Border Security Force, Controller General of Accounts, Deputy Managing Director of State Bank of India along with nodal public grievance officers of 46 ministries/departments, representatives from all pension disbursing banks and representatives of pensioners welfare associations will participate in this event, it said. The family pension-related grievances to be redressed in the special campaign have been shortlisted from the grievances registered on the CPENGRAMS portal. A total of 1,891 (as of June 15, 2024) family pension-related grievances pertaining to 46 ministries/departments/organisations have been identified for redressal during the campaign period, the statement said.

DOPPW will monitor and provide all assistance to the concerned administrative ministry/department/organisation for effective redressal of grievances on a mission-mode approach.

Navy Chief ends Bangladesh visit, eyes new avenues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Navy chief Admiral Dinesh NK Tripathi on Sunday commenced a five-day visit to Bangladesh with an aim to further consolidate the bilateral defence engagement and explore new avenues of cooperation in the maritime domain, navy said here. It is Tripathi's first official visit abroad after he took the reins of the Navy two months ago.

The visit comes more than a week after Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited India during which both sides vowed to expand the overall defence and strategic ties.

Giving details of the Navy chief's schedule, officials said he will hold wide-ranging talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart, Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, and other top officials of Bangladesh's military,

including the Army chief and Air Force chief. Tripathi will also review the passing-out parade at the Bangladesh Naval Academy (BNA) in Chittagong on July 4.

His engagements in the neighbouring country include an address at Bangladesh's National Defence College in Dhaka and visits to a few key defence facilities.

"The visit is aimed to consolidate bilateral defence relations between India and Bangladesh and to explore new avenues for naval cooperation," the Indian Navy said in a statement.

Naval cooperation between India and Bangladesh has been traditionally strong, encompassing a wide span including operational interactions, bilateral naval exercises and capacity-building programmes.

"The visit of the Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy will further strengthen the strong



bonds of friendship between the navies of both countries," the statement said.

Bangladesh has been an important partner under India's Neighbourhood First policy. It is clearly visible in both the defence and maritime domains. The maritime cooperation between the two countries has grown from strength to strength in recent years, with a

significant ramp up on joint efforts towards protection of maritime interests.

Both sides have recognised the value of such cooperation and are poised to enhance the efforts even further. More broadly, in all efforts under the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision, Dhaka has been a natural partner and source of support for New Delhi.

The visit of the Navy chief is an affirmation of the positive trajectory of the naval relationship as well as an indication that both sides will significantly enhance their bilateral efforts at sea.

By working together against shared and common challenges, the two navies would enhance regional security and growth in line with the SAGAR vision as well as set an example of how cooperative efforts can deliver concrete outcomes.

A military official said the cooperation between the two navies has regularly catalysed positive change in the Indian Ocean region.

A few years ago, when Bangladesh held the chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), the two countries had collaborated to organise the maiden IONS maritime exercise, he said. This exercise has continued to grow in size and scope ever since, and become a source of formalised standard operating procedures (SOPs), sharing of best practices and a means to enhance collective trust and interoperability, the official added.

In 2025, the Indian Navy would take over the chairmanship of the IONS and take the lead in establishing higher levels of maritime safety and security within the Indian Ocean, he said.

UP to promote Buddhist pilgrimage tourism

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh rich cultural tapestry includes not just the revered sites associated with Lord Ram but also key locations integral to the life and teachings of Lord Buddha. To cash in on these Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the State, the UP Government recently launched the "Bodhi Yatra 2024" program to attract pilgrims and tourists from across India and the world, drawn by their historical and spiritual importance.

At an event held here in the national capital, the UP Tourism Department announced a slew of initiatives to attract domestic and international pilgrims and tourists to the renowned Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the state. It is home to many places once visited by the Buddha and sacred Buddhist stupas, monasteries, shrines and stupas, some of which date back to the days of the Buddha himself. He spent much of his life in the region with the spots of his first and last sermons located in the state.

The State boasts of six major Buddhist sites: Sankisa, Sarnath, Shravasti, Kapilvastu, Kaushambi, and Kushinagar. Uttar Pradesh's Tourism Minister, Jaiveer Singh, explained that the objective of this journey is to showcase the memories of Lord Buddha's ordinary life journey through the heritage sites of Buddhism in the state.

"Throughout the year, this journey aims to familiarize people across India with the significant messages of Buddha," said the Minister as he announced that through various artistic presentations,



the Tourism Department will highlight Uttar Pradesh's contributions to Buddhist art, culture, and the importance and connection of Lord Buddha. Furthermore, an interactive cultural session was also organized during the Bodhi Yatra program, inviting guests from various countries. The program will now be organized periodically in various cities across the country, which will enhance the reach of the pilgrimage, said the Principal Secretary of Tourism and Culture Mukesh Kumar Meshram. The conclave featured Ambassadors and other diplomats from Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Bhutan, Japan, Indonesia, Argentina, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

Union Minister of Tourism and Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat echoed similar sentiments, appreciating Uttar Pradesh for spearheading the Buddha Circuit, a visionary project to connect pilgrims with the spiritual journey of Lord Buddha, from birth to enlightenment.

Reasi terror case: NIA searches many locations in J&K



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday conducted searches at multiple locations in the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the Reasi terror attack case. The searches led to the seizure of various items showing linkages between the terrorists and overground workers (OGWs), a statement issued by the NIA said.

Terrorists had opened fire at a bus carrying 'yatri' from Shiv Khori to Katra on the evening of June 9 in the Pooni area of Reasi district, causing the bus to fall into a nearby gorge, killing nine people, including a child.

NIA, which took over the investigation on June 15 on orders from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, searched five locations linked with hybrid terrorists and OGWs, it said.

The locations were pointed out by arrested accused Hakam Khan alias Hakim Din, the NIA said. Hakam had provided safe shelter, logistics and food to the terrorists, as per the probe agency's investigations. NIA has started examining the seized material to unravel the terror conspiracy, it added.

India's rise in world of drone technology

ADITI SHARMA ■ NEW DELHI

Imagine the whir of propellers slicing through the air, a symphony of innovation taking flight. This is the sound of India's rise in the world of drone technology, and a key player in this exciting story is the Remote Pilot Training Organization (RPTO), which is a high tech boot camp for drone whizzes. Here, aspiring pilots learn the ins and outs of drones, from the core essentials of how they work to the rules of the sky. They master safety procedures, practice intricate movements and gain hands-on experience under the watchful eyes of expert instructors. Upon graduation, they receive the coveted Remote Pilot Certificate (RPC), their license

to fly drones commercially. The possibilities with drones are endless, as vast as the sky itself. From capturing stunning aerial photos to streamlining infrastructure checks, drones are revolutionizing everything from agriculture to disaster relief. But to unlock their true potential, we need a skilled workforce. That's where RPTOs come in, bridging the gap between cutting edge tech and human expertise. By providing top notch drone pilot training, they ensure a pool of qualified flyers who can navigate the complexities of drone operation and put these amazing machines to good use across various industries. Leading the charge is the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG), in collabora-



tion with EduRade, a brand owned by RC HobbyTech Solutions Pvt. Ltd. They have launched India's largest RPTO, spanning 18 acre, this state of the art facility has the capaci-

ty to operate nine medium class drones simultaneously, positioning it as a central hub for advancing drone technology and training in India.

Dr. Parameswar Krishnan Iyer, of IIT Guwahati, highlighted the importance of this initiative. Their goal is to propel drone technology in India, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India a global drone hub by 2030. The RPTO also plays a key role in the "Name Drone Didi" program, empowering women from Self Help Groups (SHGs) to use drones in agriculture. By equipping them with the skills and knowledge, this program not only boosts agricultural productivity but also empowers these women economically.

IIT Guwahati's RPTO has a special focus on providing high quality drone training to the youth in North East India, a region often facing educational and infrastructural hurdles. Graduates of the drone pilot training program at IIT Guwahati have a wide range of career options across various sectors, including agriculture, infrastructure, media, environmental conservation, public safety, and more. The institute also plans to offer advanced programs and certifications in drone technology, further enhancing career prospects for its students. Further, IIT Guwahati is also making strides in modernizing defense operations with tailored training programs for defense personnel.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Grit and glory

India's T20 World Cup win after a 13-year hiatus is a story of resilience, brilliance and sheer determination

Modi's tumultuous new innings

Like a cricket team facing tough opponents, Team Modi relies on aggressive posturing and self-confidence to maintain its stance



DEEPAK SINHA

The performance of the Modi team in its new innings can be best described using a cricketing analogy.

The new team is woefully short of bench strength and faces a serious quality issue, with some members lacking commitment and motivation to the cause. Despite this, they have come out, much like the Aussies always do in any competition, riding their luck on abrasive aggression, hype and self-belief. It is certainly a technique that has worked well for them against most oppositions, forcing them on the back foot from which they seldom recover. But as we have just witnessed in the ongoing T-20 World Championships with their unexpected departure, bluster doesn't cut much ice with teams that are determined to win and unafraid of battle. Perhaps Team Modi would do well to keep this in mind. The truth is Team Modi is on a very sticky wicket, not unlike those in the Caribbean, with uneven bounce and unpredictable turns. Not surprisingly, they are already three down with not much to show on the board. Amit Shah opened the innings but was LBW on the second ball he faced, the Kashmiri looser, followed by the Manipuri yorker that beat him all up.

On a more serious note, while issues of terror attacks in Kashmir can and will be tackled with relative ease, Manipur is at the opposite end of the spectrum. Not since the Punjab and Kashmir insurgencies initially erupted, with terrible consequences, has the Indian State been found so wanting. The tragedy is that responsibility for this state of affairs rests squarely with Modi 2.0 and its rather incongruous decision not to interfere as things went from bad to worse with the Chief Minister having been rendered hors de combat. Manipur today has fallen off the cliff and is in need of urgent surgery. If we are to save this patient, and the integrity and health of the North East hinges on that, then the Army has to be pulled out of the cold storage where it sits and



allowed to do its job, once again. The second wicket to have fallen was to a railway googly, that of the relatively experienced and administratively skilled Ashwini Vaishnav. Sadly, for him, he's got out to a very similar delivery in his last innings as well and just hasn't been able to discern the googly. One can feel sorry for him because it is a tough position that he plays, with stress levels that can only be described as gargantuan. That is also the term that one describes our railways as well, and despite whatever the opposition may say, it is in the ICU and needs urgent attention. Not unlike the Air India story, substantive change is unlikely under the umbrella of one ginormous government-controlled public entity. Before 1950, we had around 55 companies operating railways over 55000kms of track until they were all amalgamated into the Indian Railways. At present with over double that kilometrage of track to expect one single entity to manage operations, nominally in six divisions, is a herculean task that will lead to repeated systems or human



THE TRAGEDY IS THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS RESTS SQUARELY WITH MODI AND ITS RATHER INCONGRUOUS DECISION NOT TO INTERFERE AS THINGS WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE WITH THE CHIEF MINISTER HAVING BEEN RENDERED HORS DE COMBAT

failure with dire consequences. Change is inevitable, the sooner the better if lives matter as all politicians insist, be it complete privatisation or a mix of synchronised public and private enterprise. The third wicket down, that of Dharmendra Pradhan, to a vicious NEET bouncer, has been the most devastating for him and the team as well. He's taken a nasty blow on his helmet that seems to have incapacitated him and has the team teetering on the edge of disaster. Whether he can continue to find a place in the playing eleven or if the team can recover and succeed only time will tell. Whatever the result in the long term, there is no getting away from the fact that the NEET scandal has been a body blow to Team Modi and its emphasis on loyalty to the cause above all else. The fact of the matter is that the problem of leaked question papers has been around forever and rumours are doing the rounds of how influential persons have been able to help their children succeed in such centralised exams, such as the CLAT, through means that

were perceived to be unfair. The numbers involved tended to be insignificant, but all that changed with the centralisation of admissions under the NTA, leading to cheating at an industrial scale, for want of a better word. The damage this has caused to the body politic, especially the upcoming generations, is enormously difficult to fully comprehend. The winners and losers are not divided by ideology, ethnicity, religion or any such measure but by those who have the money and those who don't, and in this game of snakes and ladders the don'ts have no ladders to climb. The impact of what all of this means for the ruling coalition, which cannot avoid responsibility, is not difficult to gauge and we may well see some of that fallout in the forthcoming state elections, which can then only further add to Mr. Modi's troubles. (The columnist, a military veteran and former para-trooper, is presently a Senior Visiting Fellow with the Peninsula Foundation, Chennai; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A WAKE-UP CALL

Madam — India has been witnessing a series of tragic infrastructural failures, the most recent being the collapse of the roof at Terminal 1 in Delhi, which resulted in one death and injured five others. Such incidents are unfortunately common, with the country experiencing multiple train accidents and bridge collapses. Data from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways reveals that 32 bridges have collapsed nationwide between 2020 and 2023. Despite substantial investment in construction, the problem persists. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) reported a record expenditure of ₹2,07,000 crore on national highway construction for the fiscal year 2023-24, marking a 20% increase from ₹1,73,000 crore in 2022-23 and ₹1,72,000 crore in 2021-22.

These figures point to a worrying trend of inadequate construction standards and corruption, leading to significant losses and the need for repeated investments. It is imperative that the government implements stringent measures to tackle these issues, ensuring accountability among contractors and relevant authorities to prevent corruption and guarantee the safety and durability of infrastructure.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

IMPROVE BASIC CIVIC AMENITIES

Madam — The citizens of Delhi recently endured severe heat, followed by heavy monsoon rains that resulted in significant damage and chaos. On June 28, the canopy over the forecourt at Terminal 1 of the Indra Gandhi International Airport collapsed on parked vehicles, leading to one death and six injuries. The intense weather changes left Delhiites in a difficult situation, highlighting the need for better infrastructure and planning. This issue is not isolated to Delhi; cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and others have also suffered during the rainy sea-

Bridge gender inequality



In response to the news report "25% of new hires are married women, nearly 70% of the workforce are women: Foxconn," published on

June 28, I would like to express my views. As India strives to replace China in the global supply chain, incidents like the alleged discrimination against married women at Foxconn's manufacturing plant are highly concerning. Although Foxconn has denied these allegations and stated that 70% of its workforce comprises women, a thorough and impartial investigation is necessary to dispel any doubts. There is a significant disparity in the ratio of men to women in the workforce, and companies like Foxconn can set a positive example by employing more women. This should be encouraged as we work to close this gap. Apple has consistently enforced strict policies with its manufacturing suppliers, and Foxconn should not be an exception. Ensuring gender equality in the workforce is crucial for our progress and competitiveness on the global stage.

Bal Govind | Noida

son due to poor planning and inadequate drainage systems. While substantial funds are often spent on constructing statues and other non-essential projects, basic civic amenities remain neglected. It is crucial for the authorities to prioritize improving these facilities to safeguard the well-being of citizens.

Nagendra K Vempally |Hydernagar

GOVT HOSPITALS IN A DISARRAY

Madam — The 'Indian Public Health Standard' report, produced by the National Health Mission (NHM), reveals a concerning state of government hospitals in India. According to the report, 80 percent of these hospitals lack even basic facilities. This alarming assessment comes from a survey conducted by the government itself, highlighting a severe scarcity of doctors, nurses, and essential equipment in these institutions. The report sheds light on the conditions of government hospitals under the 'National Health Mission' (NHM), a critical initiative encompassing district

hospitals, community health centers, primary health centers, and Ayushman health facilities across the country. The 'Indian Public Health Standard' (IPHS) is a digital platform developed by the government to collect hospital statistics. Among the 40,451 hospitals that participated in the survey, only 8,089 met the IPHS criteria. This indicates that 42% of hospitals scored less than 50% on the IPHS scale, while 15,172 hospitals received ratings ranging from 50% to 80%. The report aims to identify and address the deficiencies in these hospitals, with the central government planning to establish 70,000 government hospitals meeting the IPHS standards within 100 days of the new administration's inception. The goal is to ensure that all government hospitals are equipped with basic infrastructure, equipment, and medical staff, thereby improving patient care.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

PICTALK



Devotees wade through a waterlogged area at Dharm Path in Ayodhya

PTI

Trespassing in the lives of others: The uninvited interference



SANJAY CHANDRA

Human curiosity often leads us into the lives of others, crossing boundaries and delving into matters that are not our own

We have an insatiable appetite to interfere in the lives of others. The desire to take a bite of even the tiniest morsel from another's life also makes us, trespass on conversations of strangers at best, more often gossip about others, and make inappropriate remarks at the worst. We were a batch of seven railway officials from across the globe on training in Japan in 1991. Our program was coordinated by a young Japanese lady, maybe a couple of years older than me.

A few weeks together had made the eight of us share an easy relationship — easy enough for me to ask the lady one day if she was married. She had been married for almost a decade. I was already the father of two little daughters; thus, my next query if she had any children was probably not entirely baseless. I should have stopped once she had replied in the negative. My thirst to trespass into the private life of another individual kicked in as I asked her the reason. She was quiet for so long, a myriad of emotions flitting across her face, that I was afraid that this one time I had



crossed the line. As I was about to apologise for my impertinence, she responded, "Thank you for an insightful query, which set me thinking. The reason is that both I and my husband are so busy in our daily lives, that we barely spend our waking hours together. There is just no time for making a baby!" It was a lesson learnt about the price of progress on human relations in the more developed countries. We were yet to witness this back home, at least in smaller cities and towns. I also witness incidents in the lives of others in public places. I am certain even others may be looking at my daily life under the microscope. We don't need to be celebrities for

our lives to be trespassed upon. This also sometimes leads to overbearing interesting snatches of conversations. Recently, waiting at the airport for my flight, I observed a father handing over cash to his young daughter to get tea for the family, even before she had had time to put down the bags. The girl good-naturedly asked him to wait. I smiled and commented with an attempt at humour, "All fathers are like that." The family was not amused. I was in a cabin in the COVID ward of a hospital. The cabin was shared by two more patients. One morning, I overheard the lady on the adjoining bed talking to her husband on the phone rather loudly, "I am much better. You

must see the uncle on the next bed. He does not do any exercises, just lying there all the time." The shoe pinched. I was not amused at this blatant trespassing in my life. I have observed that the supposedly well-meaning interference is more prominent during a visit to a convalescing acquaintance and dispensing advice from own morbid experiences. We cannot forget one such well-meaning advice from a neighbour who did not hesitate to tell us that his father had passed away at my age due to a similar affliction that had kept me bedridden for a rather long time. He may have only been trying to caution us to be more careful. We love to dissect the lives of our friends, and even acquaintances, particularly when they are not around. We usually try to pass off the blatant gossip as honest criticism or well-meaning advice. If only we keep in mind what Wentworth Dillon said, "Words spoken can never be recalled." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

OLDER EMPLOYEES THRIVE UNDER WORK PRESSURE

Younger employees cow down to work pressure while elders manage well



SAKSHI SETHI

As per recent research and studies, younger employees are reporting more struggles at work while older ones are doing better. Also, around 85% of the working parents in the creative, marketing and related industries feel pressure to prioritize work over parenting duties while a greater proportion also feels they must sacrifice family life to achieve their career goals. An individual at the workplace often comes across situations where they have too many tasks that need to be completed within a limited timeframe without adequate breaks or rest periods. Moreover, not receiving sufficient recognition or rewards for hard work or perceived unfair treatment or favoritism creates a stressful and demoralizing work environment making it difficult to make decisions and remember tasks which can lead to anxiety and cause stress due to a variety of psychological, physiological and situational factors. When an individual experiences work pressure, it triggers the body's stress response, known as the fight or flight response which releases stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, which prepare the body to deal with perceived threats. While this response can be beneficial in short bursts, prolonged activation can have negative effects on both physical and mental health resulting in increased heart rates, headaches and fatigue. Also, constant pressure can impair cognitive functions, making it difficult to concentrate, make decisions and remember tasks, which further increases stress.

There is no denying the fact that work pressure is a natural part of most jobs and can sometimes act as a motivator (such as when prompting a student to study before an important exam), helping individuals stay focused and productive but when the pressure becomes excessive or prolonged, it leads to stress, strain, nervous tension or anxiety. Maintaining a healthy balance between pressure and stress at the workplace is crucial for both productivity as well as employee well-being. Organizations must work towards setting clear communication and expectations by ensuring that job roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated; an environment where managers are approachable and available to support their teams are well created and the distribution of the



tasks and responsibilities are even to avoid overburdening of any single employee. Introducing wellness programs such as yoga, meditation or fitness classes along with access to counseling and support services for employees dealing with stress, regularly acknowledging and rewarding employees for their hard work and contributions, and promoting teamwork and collaboration to create a supportive and cohesive work environment, creating a feedback loop where employees can voice concerns about their workload and suggest improvements, implementing strict anti-harassment policies and ensure they are enforced are a few strategies that can help organizations create a work environment where pressure serves as a motivator rather than a stressor.

Apart from organizations working towards employee well-being, it becomes crucial for the individual working at any level to maintain a balance between work pressure and family stress as it can be challenging to maintain overall well-being. Prioritizing what is most important both at work and at home, defining clear boundaries between work and family time focusing on high-priority tasks and letting go of less critical ones, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, engaging in hobbies and activities that are outside of work and staying updated on stress management techniques are a few strategies that can help an individual build resilience and manage work stress more effectively. Remember, when stressed, individuals have a more difficult time creating short-term memories and turning those short-term memories into long-term memories. By understanding the causes of work pressure and implementing effective strategies to manage it, individuals and organizations can reduce stress and create a healthier, more productive work environment.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Venkaiah Garu: Life in service of Bharat



NARENDRA MODI

From his early days in politics to his tenure as Vice-President, Venkaiah Garu's career exemplifies his ability to navigate the complexities with ease and humility



Today, India's former Vice-President and respected statesman M Venkaiah Naidu Garu turns 75. I wish him a long and healthy life and also extend my greetings to all his well-wishers and supporters. This is an occasion to celebrate a leader whose life journey showcases dedication, adaptability and an unwavering commitment to public service. From his early days in the political arena to his tenure as Vice-President, Venkaiah Garu's career exemplifies his unique ability to navigate the complexities of Indian politics with ease and humility. His eloquence, wit and steadfast focus on developmental issues have earned him respect across party lines.

Venkaiah Garu and I have been associated for decades. We have worked together and I have learnt a lot from him. If there is one thing that has remained common in his life, it is the love for people. His brush with activism and politics began in Andhra Pradesh with student politics as a student leader. Considering his talent, oratory and organisational skills, he would have been welcomed in any political party but he preferred to work with the Sangh Parivar. He was associated with the RSS, ABVP and then strengthened the Jana Sangh and the BJP. Almost 50 years ago, a young Venkaiah Garu immersed himself in the anti-Emergency movement. He was imprisoned and, that too, for inviting Loknayak JP to Andhra Pradesh. This commitment to democracy would be seen time and again in his political career. In the mid-1980s, when the great NTR's Government was unceremoniously dismissed by the Congress, he was again at the forefront of the movement to protect democratic principles. Venkaiah Garu has always been comfortable swimming even against the most formidable tides. In 1978, Andhra Pradesh voted for the Congress but he beat the trend and was elected as a young MLA. Five years later, when the NTR



ALL THOSE WHO HAVE HEARD VENKAI AH GARU SPEAK WILL VOUCH FOR HIS ORATORY SKILLS. HE IS CERTAINLY A WORDSMITH BUT HE IS AS MUCH A WORKSMITH

tsunami swept the State, he got elected as a BJP MLA, thus paving the way for the BJP's growth across the State. All those who have heard Venkaiah Garu speak will vouch for his oratory skills. He is certainly a wordsmith but he is as much a worksmith. Since his days as a young MLA, he began to be respected for the rigour he put into legislative affairs and speaking for people of his constituency. No less than a stalwart like NTR noted his talent and even wanted him to join his party but Venkaiah Garu refused to deviate from his core ideology. He went on to play a big role in strengthening the BJP in Andhra Pradesh and even became the AP BJP president. It was in the 1990s that the BJP central leadership took note of Venkaiah Garu's efforts and thus in 1993 began his stint in national politics when he was appointed the party's all-India general secretary. It was truly a remarkable moment for a man, who as a teenager would go around announcing the visits of Atal Ji and Advani Ji, to be working directly with them. As the general secretary, he was focused on how to bring our party to power and ensure that the nation get their first ever BJP Prime Minister. After the move to Delhi, there was no looking back and he rose to become the party's national president. In 2000, when Atal Ji was keen to induct Venkaiah Garu in the Government, Venkaiah Garu instantly conveyed his preference for the Rural Development Ministry. This left everyone, including Atal Ji, puzzled. After all, here was a leader who was

being asked which portfolio he wanted and his first choice was Rural Development. But Venkaiah Garu was clear - he was a Kisan Putra. As Minister, he was closely associated with the conception and rolling out of the 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana'. Years later, when the NDA Government of 2014 assumed office, he handled the crucial portfolios of Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. It was during his tenure that we launched the important Swachh Bharat Mission and important urban development-related schemes. Perhaps, he is one of the only leaders to have worked for both rural and urban development for such an extensive period. When I came to Delhi in 2014, I was an outsider to the national Capital, having worked in Gujarat for the previous decade and a half. In such times, Venkaiah Garu's insights were very handy. He was an effective Parliamentary Affairs Minister - he knew the essence of bipartisanship but at the same time he drew a line when it came to parliamentary norms and rules. In 2017, our alliance nominated him as our vice-presidential candidate. I can never forget one of the speeches he gave when he resigned as Minister and MP. He could not control his tears when he recalled his association with the party and efforts to build it. It gave a glimpse of his deep-rooted commitment and passion. Upon becoming the Vice-President, he undertook various steps that also enhanced the dignity of the office. He was an outstanding Chairperson of the

Rajya Sabha, ensuring that young MPs, women MPs and first-time MPs get the opportunity to speak. When the decision to remove Articles 370 and 35(A) were placed before the Rajya Sabha, Venkaiah Garu was in the Chair. I am sure it was such an emotional moment for him - the young boy who was drawn to Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's dream of a united India! Apart from work and politics, Venkaiah Garu is a voracious reader and writer. For the people in Delhi, he is known as the person who brought the glorious Telugu culture to the city. His Ugadi and Sankranti programmes are clearly among the most cherished gatherings in town. I have always known Venkaiah Garu as someone who loves food and also hosting people. But, of late, his self-control has also been visible to everyone. His commitment to fitness is seen in how he still plays badminton and enjoys his brisk walk. Even after the vice-presidency, Venkaiah Garu has led an active public life. On the issues that he is passionate about, he calls me and asks me about them. I met him most recently when our Government returned to office for the third term. He was delighted and conveyed his best wishes to me and our team. I wish him again on this milestone. I hope young karyakartas, elected representatives and all those who have a passion to serve, learn from his life and imbibe those values. It is people like him who make our nation better and more vibrant.

(The writer is the Prime Minister of India.)

A reflective moment on India's democratic values and political integrity

From displays of loyalty to controversial gestures, this year's oath-taking ceremony reveals a transformed landscape in Indian politics

Newly elected members of the Lok Sabha taking oath to adhere to the Constitution of India is a solemn occasion. "I, X, having been elected a member of the House of the People do swear in the name of God (solemnly affirm) that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established, that I will uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India and that I will faithfully discharge the duty upon which I am about to enter", is what they have to tell while taking the oath. It is not known what is the role of the presidents of the parties under whose label they enter the precincts of the House. Agreed, these members were either hand-picked by the bosses of their parties, or they themselves could have kept a



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

gun on the forehead of the proprietors of the parties demanding the latter to nominate them as candidates for the Lok Sabha election. While watching some of these newly elected members taking the oath of office, one was flabbergasted by the fall in the quality of politics and the standard of our parliamentary system. Previously we had titans as members of political and social life but now, the only titans that

we come across are the wrist-watches and clocks made by the House of Tatas. The Dravidian politicians from Tamil Nadu were the butt of jokes as they took the oath of office. After taking the customary oath specified in the Third Schedule of the Constitution, the DMK members sang paeans to their Gods in Chennai. All DMK members except T R Balu raised slogans eulogizing the DMK supreme and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, the future chief minister Udhayanidhi (son of Stalin) and late M Karunanidhi (former chief minister and one of the founders of the DMK) seeking their blessings to serve Tamil Nadu! Sycophancy and servility were at their peak while they were

swearing in as members. There has been criticism against members of the DMK and the AIADMK for their servile nature and lassitude to their leaders which make them laughing stocks. Most DMK members wore Vibhuti and holy Kumkum on their foreheads. It is not uncommon to see MPs and MLAs belonging to the DMK and the AIADMK doing Danda Namaskar, an obeisance to the presiding deity of the party. Though they do not believe in pilgrimage to temples, politicians have made it a point to fall down on the floor once they come face to face with the party head. But whether the sycophancy they exhibit in public is real or not is a major question. One of the elected MPs from Tamil Nadu



who took the oath of office last day was going around astrologers and sorcerers in Kerala to ascertain whether the Karunanidhi clan had performed black magic either on him or his family members. Since his father is a bigwig in the party hierarchy, it was the mother who accompanied the son to liberate him from the evil spirits. That is the rationalism and atheism practised by the followers of Ramasamy

Naicker. While the DMK MPs were happily extolling the K-Clan members, there were reservations in the minds of a section of people about what Thol Thirumavalavan of the VCK, whose antipathy for north Indians is infamous, would do. He is the one who frequently declares that north Indians are not welcome to stay in Tamil Nadu though he has demanded that Rohingya refugees

should be given a place of residence in the State. Thank God Thirumavalavan did not raise the slogan Jai Prabhakaran. Many DMK politicians in Chennai were heard asking why the newly elected MPs did not say Jai to Inbanidhi and Tanmaya (Udhayanidhi's son and daughter). The most disgusting of the lot was made by AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi who shouted "Jai Palestine" while taking oath as a member of the House. This is a cardinal sin capable of throwing shadow over India-Israel ties. People like Owaisi are a blot on this nation as he had the audacity to describe the infamous criminal Mukhtar Ansari as a Shaheed. Owaisi is a living example that one could not

have civility by attending Lincoln's Inn. The day is not far when he or others of his ilk would shout "Jai Pakistan" from the temple of Indian democracy. Organizations like Hamas have no place in the comity of nations and the civilized world. What happened in October 2023 should be condemned in the strongest of words. India has given enough support to the Palestinians and what it got back was just brickbats. The general public should know the truth. Shouting slogans in support of the party president's wife and children from the Speaker's podium while taking the oath of office is not secularism or pluralism. *(The writer is a special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)*

Indian economy set for stable high growth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Indian economy is poised for potentially a stable high growth phase and it is also in a strong position in the context of significant risks that are also facing us," he told PTI. The current official estimate of GDP growth in 2023-24 is 8.2 per cent, accelerating from 7 per cent in the preceding year. Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India pegged the GDP growth rate for FY25 at 7.2 per cent. Bhide noted that the monsoon rainfall, which is expected to be normal this year, is a significant positive factor for growth as well as bringing down food inflation. While noting that



improvement in global demand conditions are necessary to spur external demand for goods and services, he said. Sizable capital inflows supporting investment, reflect both the supply side efficiencies and high growth potential of the economy both in terms of domestic demand as well as India's exports. Responding to a question on inflation, Bhide said the concerns are mainly in terms of the impact of risks from any adverse weather and climate events, disruptions in global supply chains due to international conflicts and the slow recovery of the global economy from the recent high inflation period. "Our own overall CPI

inflation is marked by high levels of food inflation and a decline in this component of the overall inflation is crucial going forward," he opined. Bhide said while food inflation is at a high level, averaging about 8 per cent during Jan-May 2024, the overall CPI-based inflation has moderated to below 5 per cent during March-May 2024. "The prevailing policy rate combined with the gradual decline in inflation rate does mean higher real interest rates, but continued focus on keeping the inflation aligned with the target in a sustained way is important at this point to support growth as well," he said. In its latest bi-monthly

Aviation market big enough for Akasa Air to succeed: CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
As Akasa Air spreads its wings on domestic and international routes, the less-than-two-year-old airline's chief Vinay Dube has said he does not think about competition in encouraging or discouraging terms, as the aviation market is "big enough for us to succeed". The carrier, which took to the skies in August 2022, currently has a fleet of 24 Boeing 737 MAX planes and operates more than 900 flights weekly. While emphasising that the focus is on service excellence and cost leadership, Dube said the airline is looking for network and international expansion. "I don't think about competition and certainly don't think about it in encouraging or discouraging terms. If we focus on ourselves, the market is big enough for us to succeed," he told PTI in a recent interview.

FPIs invest ₹26,565 crore in Indian equities in June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
After two months of net outflow, foreign investors turned buyers in June, infusing Rs 26,565 crore in Indian equities, driven by political stability and a sharp rebound in markets. Looking ahead, attention will gradually shift towards the budget and Q1 FY25 earnings, which could determine the sustainability of FPI flows, Vipul Bhowar, Director, Listed Investments, Waterfield Advisors, said. According to the data with the depositories, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have made a net infusion of Rs 26,565 crore in equities this month. This came following a net outflow of Rs 25,586 crore in May on poll jitters and over Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields.

Bhowar said. They are favouring the financial, auto, capital goods, real estate, and select consumer sectors. "With government stability assured, impressive GDP performance and forecasts, stable consumer price index, ample forex reserves, and robust banking sector health, I anticipate a steady and substantial FPI inflow," Kishay Upadhyay, smallcase Manager & Founder Fidelfolio, said. Additionally, FPIs invested Rs 14,955 crore in the debt market in June. With this, FPIs' investment in the debt market reached Rs 68,624 crore in 2024 so far. India's inclusion in the JP Morgan Bond Index is positive. In the long term, this will reduce the cost of borrowing for the government and the cost of capital for corporates. This is positive for the economy and therefore, for the equity and debt market.

EPFO gross new members addition dips 4 per cent in 2023-24: MoSPI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Retirement fund body EPFO's gross new subscribers addition declined by over 4 per cent to 1.09 crore in 2023-24 compared to a year ago, as per a report by Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI). According to the report 'Payroll Reporting in India: An Employment Perspective - January to April, 2024', the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) recorded 1,09,93,119 gross addition of new members in 2023-24 compared to 1,14,98,453 in 2022-23. The gross addition of new members was affected due to the pandemic and declined from 1,10,40,683 in 2019-20 to 85,48,898 in 2020-21. It bounced back to 1,08,65,063 in 2021-22. The Centre as well as states had imposed lockdown restriction in 2020 and 2021 to curb the spread of deadly coronavirus in the country, which had hit economic



activities as well as employment. The data shows that in the last five fiscal years till 2023-24, the gross new members addition by EPFO had not recovered to pre-covid level of 2018-19. The gross addition of new members was 1,39,44,349 in 2018-19. Since April 2018, the ministry has been bringing out the employment related statistics in the formal sector covering the period September 2017 onwards, using information on the number of subscribers who have subscribed under three major schemes, namely Employees' Provident Fund

Urja Ganga gas pipeline completion delayed to March 2025, says GAIL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The construction of the Rs 12,940-crore 'Urja Ganga' gas pipeline, India's most ambitious project taking environment-friendly fuel to eastern parts of the country, has been delayed by nine months and will now be completed by March 2025, state-owned GAIL (India) Ltd said. The 3,306-kilometre Jagdishpur-Haldia-Bokaro-Dhamra pipeline was originally targeted for completion by June 2024. But due to "delay in right of use (RoU) availability", the completion schedule has been revised "from June 2024 to March 2025", GAIL said in a stock exchange filing. The bulk of the pipeline has already been constructed, and gas has started to flow in most cities along the route. Traditionally, natural gas was available for use as fuel to generate electricity, make fertiliser or turn into CNG and cooking gas only in the western and northern parts of the country, as pipelines taking the fuel from source to users were limited to these parts. In October 2016, work on laying a pipeline from Jagdishpur in Uttar Pradesh to Haldia in West Bengal, Bokaro in Jharkhand and Dhamra in Odisha began. The line was extended to Guwahati in Assam from Barauni in Bihar, a length of 726 km, to take the fuel to hereto-unconnected states in the eastern region. The Jagdishpur-Haldia-Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline (JHBDPL), popularly called the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga pipeline, is to supply gas to the eastern states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. GAIL, the firm executing the pipeline, said its board of directors in a meeting on June



Mcap of nine of top 10 most valued firms jumps ₹2.89 lakh cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Nine of the top-10 most valued firms together added Rs 2,89,699.42 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer, in line with a rally in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,822.83 points or 2.36 per cent. The BSE Sensex recorded the best monthly gain in June by climbing 7.14 per cent. The Sensex breached the historic



79,000 mark on Thursday. While Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and ITC were the gainers, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) emerged as the laggard. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 1,52,264.63 crore to Rs 21,18,951.20 crore. TCS added Rs 34,733.64 crore taking its valuation to Rs 14,12,845.09 crore. The mcap of ICICI Bank soared Rs 30,286.99 crore to Rs 8,44,201.88 crore and that of Bharti Airtel surged Rs 18,267.7 crore to Rs 8,22,530.35 crore. The market valuation of Infosys climbed Rs 14,656.3 crore to Rs 6,50,602.10 crore and that of HDFC Bank zoomed Rs 13,808.74 crore to Rs 12,80,865.43 crore. State Bank of India's valuation rallied Rs 11,111.14 crore to Rs 7,57,565.68 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever went up by Rs 7,953.37 crore to Rs 5,81,570.83 crore and that of ITC climbed Rs 6,616.91 crore to Rs 5,30,475.82 crore. However, the valuation of LIC tumbled Rs 22,042.61 crore to Rs 6,25,573.90 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Domestic macroeconomic data, global trends to drive markets this week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Domestic macroeconomic data announcements, global trends and trading activity of foreign investors would guide market sentiments this week, analysts said. After a record rally, markets may face volatile trends this week amid elevated valuations and investors would also keep a track of global oil benchmark Brent crude and rupee-dollar movement for further cues. "Potential volatility in the stock market is anticipated this week. Elevated valuations remain a concern, with investors now focusing on monsoon progress and its impact on the rural economy. The upcoming Union Budget in July has become the next focal point, with high expectations for growth-oriented policies," said Praveesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst, Swastika Investment Ltd. Market sentiment will be gauged by closely monitoring foreign and domestic institutional investors' activity (FII and DII) and crude oil prices, he said. On the global front, the US market has experienced some profit-taking from higher levels. Key economic data, such as the US job openings report, will be released on July 2, 2024, followed by the US ISM Services PMI data on July 3,



2024, he noted. "Additionally, the US Federal Reserve Chairperson Powell's speech is scheduled for July 2, 2024, and the US FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) minutes will be released on July 3, 2024. The movement of dollar index and US bond yields will also be crucial factors to watch," Gour added. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,822.83 points or 2.36 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 509.5 points or 2.16 per cent. The Sensex recorded the best monthly gain in June by climbing 7.14 per cent. The Sensex breached the historic 79,000 mark on Thursday, and the Nifty hit the 24,000 level for the first time in intra-day trade. "The upside for the market will be guided by major domestic and global economic data such as HSBC India Manufacturing PMI, HSBC India Services PMI, S&P Global Manufacturing PMI, Fed speech, initial jobless

Sattva Group targets 85 per cent growth in housing sales: MD Bijay

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Realty firm Sattva Group is bullish on India's housing market and will launch many projects to achieve 85 per cent growth in sales of residential properties to around Rs 6,500 crore this fiscal, a top company official said. In the 2023-24, Bengaluru-based Sattva Group achieved sales bookings of Rs 3,500 crore. "We are very bullish on housing demand. We are targeting to achieve sales of Rs 6,000-6,500 crore this financial year," Sattva Group MD Bijay Agarwal said. He said the company would invest Rs 12,000-14,000 crore over the next three years to build housing, office and hotel projects. The bulk of the investments would be to develop housing projects and office complexes. Sattva Group is one of the leading real estate developers in India with a significant presence in South India. It has completed 140 projects comprising 80 million square feet area in the last 30 years. Around 23 million square feet are under construction, and 65 million square feet are in the pipeline. Agarwal noted that the demand for the residential segment has been very strong



half of FY2024-25 of approx 1.3 million sq ft," said Shivam. Furthermore, the company is looking to acquire land parcels for another 1.5 million sq ft in Mumbai. The company's MD highlighted that the group's co-working and co-living joint ventures — Simpliwork Offices and Colive — have been performing well and expanding. "We plan to list our co-working and co-living businesses on stock exchanges in the next 2-3 years by launching public issues," Agarwal said. Sattva Group has more than 50 per cent stake in Simpliwork and Colive. When asked about its plan to launch Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), Bijay said, "We are in the early stage of discussion with Blackstone". He did not give any timeline for the launch of the public issue of REIT to monetise the commercial assets developed jointly by Sattva Group and global investment firm Blackstone. Sattva Group and Blackstone have a joint portfolio of around 32 million square feet, of which 18 million square feet are already completed.



Celebrating Doctor's Day Honouring Dedication and Empathy

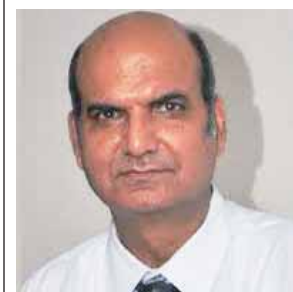
The First Doctor's Day was celebrated in India on July 1, 1991 which happened to be the birth and death anniversary of the most famous physician of India - Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy. It is hence a tribute to his contributions to the health domain in the country. This year's theme, "Celebrating Resilience and Healing Hands," highlights the doctor's exceptional dedication, especially during challenging times like the Covid-19 pandemic. Doctor's Day serves as a poignant reminder of the invaluable contributions of doctors worldwide. It is a day to express gratitude, reflect on their profound impact, and reaffirm our commitment to supporting their noble mission of healing and caring for others.

The celebration of Doctor's Day is not merely a formality but a heartfelt expression of gratitude. It acknowledges the sacrifices doctors make—long hours, emotional strain, and personal sacrifices—to ensure the well-being of their patients. Their dedication goes beyond medical expertise; it encompasses compassion, understanding, and a deep sense of responsibility towards those under their care. As we celebrate Doctor's Day, let us pause to acknowledge the significance of their vocation. Their selflessness, expertise, and compassion touch countless lives, leaving an indelible mark on society. Whether in times of crisis or routine care, doctors exemplify the highest ideals of service and humanity.

Happy Doctor's Day!

DOCTORSPEAK

On eve of Doctor's Day, we spoke to medical professionals whose insights underscore the significance of this occasion:



Dr. Rajinder Dhamija, Director, Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Services (IHBAS), Delhi: The Day gives me an opportunity to focus on one of my priority areas. Brain health issues in India, like stroke, epilepsy, headache disorders, Parkinson's disease, and dementia, pose significant challenges due to disparities in healthcare access and infrastructure, especially in rural areas. Limited awareness, delayed diagnosis, and social stigma worsen the burden on affected individuals and families. Addressing these challenges requires enhanced healthcare resources, improved public awareness, and measures to combat socioeconomic barriers to care.



Dr. Ashwini Anil Kumar Sirapanasetty, Obstetrics & Gynaecologist Surgeon: The medical field stands as a crucial pillar of society, much like the legislative, judiciary, and executive branches of government, and the media. Doctors shape society by playing a vital role in every phase of our lives, from childbirth onwards. An assurance from a doctor boosts the morale of a patient to live a longer life and also to heal from an grave injury



Dr. Prashant Mehta, Senior Consultant and Program Director (Lymphoid Neoplasms and Cellular therapy) Department of Medical Oncology Amrita Institute of Medical sciences, Faridabad: My desire for our nation is improved access to healthcare for everyone, high-quality indigenous research/drug development, optimized communication, transparency, and teamwork between medical teams and patients and their families. Doctors aren't infallible gods but compassionate humans dedicated to easing human sufferings.



Dr. Jyoti Kapoor, Founder / Director, Manasthali Wellness: Doctors are healers of hope. Consulting a mental health expert is crucial when facing mental health issues as they possess the specialized knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective support and treatment.



INDIA'S TELESURGERY MILESTONES

Driven by robotic technology, this cutting-edge system is all set to transform global surgery by enabling remote interventions that improve access to specialised care and boost international collaboration. Recently, the national capital witnessed the launch of a historic moment in the sector, reports ARCHANA JYOTI

On June 10, 2024, a historic moment unfolded at the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre (RGCIRC) in Delhi. Led by Dr Sudhir Rawal, a pioneering figure in robotic surgery, the team at RGCIRC performed India's first telesurgery in cancer care. The procedure, a Radical Cysto-Prostatectomy with Bilateral Lymph Nodes Removal, was conducted using the SSI Mantra Robot developed by SS Innovations, a developer of India's first indigenous surgical robotic system.



Dr Sudhir Rawal conducting telesurgery

The surgery was executed from the SSI Office in Gurugram, while the patient remained at RGCIRC in Delhi. Despite the distance, the surgical team completed the complex procedure in one hour and forty-five minutes, marking a significant advancement in telesurgery capabilities. The successful telesurgery at RGCIRC highlighted the potential of advanced robotic technologies to enhance precision and quality in surgical interventions. Telesurgery not only overcomes geographical constraints but also reduces the need for patients to travel long distances for specialized medical care, Dr Rawal elaborated. This approach promises to democratize access to high-quality surgical procedures, particularly benefiting patients in remote areas with limited healthcare infrastructure, said Dr Sudhir Srivastava, founder, Chairman and CEO, of SS Innovations. Pioneer in in

robotic cardiac surgery and the brain behind the SSI Mantra System, Srivastava is popularly known as the Father of Surgical Robotics in India. SS Innovations further advanced the field with the launch of SSI Mantra 3, the latest iteration of its indigenous surgical robotic system. Equipped with 5 slimmer robotic arms and an immersive 3D HD headset, it offers surgeons unparalleled precision and control during procedures. The system's cost-effectiveness aims to make advanced robotic surgery accessible to healthcare institutions across India and beyond, aligning with the 'Make in India' initiative. Alongside, it has achieved a historic feat in Indian medical science by completing the nation's maiden human trial in telesurgery, signifying a monumental leap in surgical robotics.

Dr. Fredric Moll, Father of Surgical Robotics as Board Member and Vice Chairman said at an event held here to launch the innovation, "SSI Mantra 3 integrates cutting-edge advancements in robotic surgery, offering surgeons unparalleled precision and control for improved patient outcomes. It reinforces India's position as a hub for technological innovation in healthcare." Moll has been a pivotal force in advancing robotic surgery and contributed significantly to the development of robots. Recently, SSI reached Nepal too, deploying India-made Robots to its healthcare system. Dr. Mylswamy Annaduari, Ex-Director of ISRO Satellite Centre also known as 'Moon Man of India' said: "The system represents the convergence of medical science in India and extends Indian innovation to surgeons worldwide. It is an affordable innovation, precisely what India needed. India is racing ahead in medical science, and it is also racing to assist the entire world."

Dr Naresh Trehan, Chairman and Managing Director of Medanta, The Medcity, was equally vocal in appreciating the technology as he said: "I

would like to take this opportunity to commend Dr Srivastava for his dedication in achieving the rapid development of the third version of the SSI Mantra 3. This remarkable accomplishment is a testament to his commitment and vision. We are eagerly looking forward to incorporating the Mantra 3 system in our hospitals, enhancing our medical capabilities and patient care."

Addressing the launch of SSI Mantra and the breakthrough in telesurgery, Prof. Dr. Somashekhar SP, Chairman-Medical Advisory Board, Aster DM Healthcare- GCC & India, echoed similar views. "SSI has created the best technology robot at an affordable rate for the global market, all made in India. It is for the benefit of all. Any technology that doesn't evolve with time will perish, and this is why we have version after version." For those who are not yet aware of this breakthrough technology, SSI Mantra 3 allows for smaller fingertip-sized incisions, leading to less pain, minimal blood loss, reduced scarring, faster recovery, and shorter hospital stays. This most advanced surgical robotic system with its cost-effectiveness will make advanced robotic surgery more accessible to hospitals, doctors, and the ultimate beneficiary, patients. The SSI Mantra 3 ensures unparalleled precision and efficiency across a wide range of multispecialty and the full spectrum of robotic cardiac surgery procedure, say experts. The minimally invasive approach aim to

ensure reduced trauma to patients, resulting in less pain, less blood loss, and faster recovery times. Despite these advancements, challenges such as latency in global networking, regulatory considerations, and initial costs of robotic systems continue to influence the adoption of telesurgery. However, ongoing developments in networking

BENEFITS OF TELESURGERY

- Accessibility:** Enables remote or underserved areas to access specialized surgical care.
- Expertise:** Allows surgical expertise to be delivered globally, benefiting patients without local specialists.
- Cost Efficiency:** Reduces travel costs and time for patients, making care more accessible.
- Precision and Safety:** Offers precise control and high-definition imaging, improving surgical outcomes.
- Collaborative Care:** Facilitates real-time collaboration among surgeons and healthcare professionals worldwide.
- Infection Control:** Reduces physical contact, lowering the risk of infectious disease transmission.
- Education:** Enhances surgical training and education globally.
- Global Reach:** Overcomes geographical barriers, expanding access to specialized procedures.

CHALLENGES OF TELESURGERY

- Technical Issues:** Relies heavily on internet connectivity and robotic systems, vulnerable to disruptions.
- Latency:** Delay in signal transmission can impact surgical precision.
- Security:** Raises concerns about cybersecurity and patient data protection.
- Regulatory Complexity:** Varies across countries, affecting licensing and legal frameworks.
- Cost:** Implementation and maintenance can be expensive, limiting access in some regions.
- Training:** Requires specialized training for effective use, resource-intensive.
- Patient Acceptance:** Some patients may be hesitant due to the lack of physical presence.
- Ethical Considerations:** Informed consent, patient autonomy, and maintaining patient-centered care are critical.
- Limited Applications:** Not all procedures are suitable, depending on complexity and technical feasibility.

technologies, including trials of 5G networks to minimize latency, hold promise for overcoming these barriers. Navigating these challenges requires ongoing technological advancement, regulatory alignment, robust cybersecurity measures, comprehensive training programs, and a commitment to patient-centered care and ethical standards

Monsoon Mayhem? Health Hacks to Stay Safe

As we were gasping for fresh air amid intense heat waves, torrential rains descended upon us, bringing a mix of relief and new challenges including health issues due to increased humidity, stagnant water, and the proliferation of vectors and pathogens. In a conversation with health experts, ARCHANA JYOTI gathered essential tips to help keep health problems at bay during monsoon season

Stay Water-Wise
Waterborne wobbles like typhoid and cholera love a good monsoon bash. Avoid their party by:

- **Boiling it up:** Always boil your drinking water or stick to bottled brands.
- **Ditching the street treats:** Roadside foods like chaat may look tempting but it's best to play it safe with home-cooked meals.
- **Washing up:** Clean your fruits and veggies like they owe you money!
- **Stagnant Water? Not on My Watch!** Mosquitoes aren't just annoying; they're like mini-monsters bringing malaria and dengue to the block

party.

- **Dry it up:** Kick those old tires and flower pots that collect water.
- **Repel the party crashers:** Mosquito repellent is your new best friend—apply it generously.
- **Sleep safe:** Mosquito nets might not be the latest fashion, but they're the best bedfellows during the monsoon.

Keep Skin Dry
Fungal infections thrive on moisture.

- **Stay dry:** Change out of wet clothes as soon as possible and keep your skin dry.
- **Powder power:** Use

antifungal powders to keep the baddies at bay.

- **Bye-bye barefoot:** Flip-flops might be cool, but closed shoes keep you safe from leptospirosis lurking in those puddles.

Boost Your Immunity
Fight off those sniffles and sneezes with a diet as colorful as a rainbow.

- **Eat the rainbow:** Fill up on fruits and veggies—think greens, reds, and yellows.
- **Supplement sense:** If your diet's missing something, a vitamin supplement can be your rainy-day insurance.
- **Soup it up:** Hot soups and broths are perfect for staying warm and healthy.



Long Sleeves Are In!
When mosquitoes are strutting around, less skin is more.

- **Cover up:** Long sleeves

and pants aren't just for fashion—they're for fending off bites.

- **Stick to light colors:** Mosquitoes are like little

fashion critics—they prefer dark colors. So, go light and bright!

- **Stay in the Loop with the Latest Buzz:** Knowledge is power when it comes to staying healthy.
- **Weather watch:** Keep an eye on weather reports and health advisories.
- **App happy:** Download apps that track mosquito activity and rain patterns.
- **Ventilate to Victory!** A stuffy room is a playground for mold and respiratory irritants.
- **Let the air flow:** Keep windows open when it's not pouring to let fresh air in.
- **Dehumidify your digs:**

Use a dehumidifier to keep moisture levels down.

- **Say No to Stagnation:** Don't let the rain keep you on the couch.
- **Indoor exercises:** Yoga, pilates, and home workouts are your go-to for staying fit.
- **Dance it out:** When in doubt, have a mini dance party!
- **The Wet Weather Wizard's Toolkit** Keep these essentials at hand to navigate the monsoon madness like a pro:
- **Umbrella and raincoat:** Your best shields against the downpour.
- **First-aid kit:** Stock it with

antiseptics, bandages, and meds for common ailments.

- **Water purifier:** A compact one for those unexpected water quality issues.
- **Laugh in the Face of the Monsoon!** Remember, a good sense of humor is the best medicine.
- **Keep it light:** Share a joke, enjoy a comedy, and keep your spirits high.
- **Stay positive:** A little rain can't stop your parade! By following these tips, you'll be able to enjoy the monsoon season without the health hiccups. So grab your raincoat, and a hot cup of tea, and let the monsoon magic begin!

FROM DHONI, TENDULKAR TO GAVASKAR ALL HAIL INDIA'S T20 WORLD CUP TRIUMPH

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The who's who of Indian cricket fraternity, including Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Sachin Tendulkar and Sunil Gavaskar, hailed the title triumph in the T20 World Cup, saying it will inspire the country's "starry-eyed children to move one step closer to their dreams".

India's first T20 world champion skipper Dhoni led the chorus of former and current cricketers, hailing Rohit Sharma's men for regaining the trophy after 17 long years after beating South Africa by seven runs in a pulsating final in Barbados on Saturday.

Former skipper Dhoni, who led India to their maiden title win in 2007 in South Africa, praised the team for maintaining their calm during the adverse situations in the game.

"WORLD CUP CHAMPIONS 2024. My heart rate was up, well done on being calm, having the self belief and doing what u guys did," (sic) Dhoni wrote on Instagram.

"From all the Indians back home and everywhere in the world a big thank you for bringing the World Cup Home. CONGRATULATIONS. Arre eee thanks for the priceless birthday gift," said Dhoni, who will turn 43 early next month.

The legendary Tendulkar took to social media to express his delight on India's achievement, saying the



country has now got a 'fourth star', following two 50-over World Cup wins in 1983 and 2011 as well as the historic triumph in the inaugural 2007 World T20.

"Every star added to the Team India jersey inspires our nation's starry-eyed children to move one step closer to their dreams. India gets the 4th star, our second in

T20WC," he wrote on 'X'. Tendulkar, who was a member of the Indian team which suffered a first-round exit in the 2007 50-overs World Cup, said life has come a full circle.

"Life comes full circle for Indian cricket in the West Indies. From our lows in the 2007 ODI World Cup to becoming a cricketing

powerhouse and winning the T20WC in 2024," he said.

"Very happy for my friend Rahul Dravid, who missed out on the 2011 World Cup win but his contribution to this T20 World Cup victory has been immense. I am so so happy for him."

Hailing Rohit's captaincy and the contributions of the other squad members, Tendulkar

said, "What can one say about Rohit Sharma? Superb captaincy! To put the 2023 ODI World Cup loss behind and to keep all our players motivated towards the T20 World Cup is commendable."

"Jasprit Bumrah's Player of the Tournament award as well as Virat Kohli's Player of the Match award are both well-deserved. They were just

superb when it mattered," he added.

"Along with Rahul, Paras Mhambrey and Vikram Rathour also made their international debuts in 1996. It was wonderful to see Team India excel under the guidance of this class of '96."

"A total team effort. Hearty congratulations to all the players, coaches, support

staff, and BCCI," Tendulkar continued.

Gavaskar said that winning the trophy is like finally scoring a hundred.

"It is a great win after such a long time. Earlier, I kept saying that India was getting 90s but not getting centuries because they were reaching semi-finals and finals. Now, they have got a century and what a wonderful century this is," the former India captain told PTI.

From VVS Laxman to Anil Kumble, Sourav Ganguly to Gautam Gambhir, everyone praised the stupendous achievement in unison.

"Congratulations Team India on becoming the T20 World Champions. Been the best team in the tournament remaining unbeaten throughout," VVS Laxman, current head of the National Cricket Academy wrote on X.

"Great composure and character shown by the team to win this from the situation we were in with 5 overs remaining. Every player deserves credit for giving it their all and rising to the occasion and wonderfully led by Rohit," he added.

"We are champions!" rejoiced ace spinner and 2011 World Cup winner Ravichandran Ashwin.

Former India captain and head coach Anil Kumble wrote, "Congratulations team India! Wonderful victory."

"YEH MERA INDIA. WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS. SO PROUD OF YOU GUYS. (This is my India. We are the champions, so proud of you guys.)," wrote former spinner

Harbhajan Singh. An ambassador for the T20 World Cup in the Americas, Yuvraj Singh individually praised all the key members of the side.

"You did it boys ! @hardikpandya7 your a hero ! @jaspritbunrah93 what an over to bring India back in the game ! Extremely ecstatic for @ImRo45 great captaincy under pressure ! @imVkohli #Rahul Dravid and the whole team indyavssa #ICCT20WorldCup2024," he wrote.

"Well played @akshar2026 @lamShivamDube. Koi reh to nahi gaya ! Oh @surya_14kumar what a catch under pressure," Yuvraj added, wondering if he mistakenly did not leave out anyone.

Hero of two T20 World Cup finals and India's would be coach Gautam Gambhir wrote, "CHAMPIONS!"

Having earlier explained his standout moments of the game when it was under progress, legendary Sachin Tendulkar wrote, "Chak De India!!!"

Former India captain and BCCI president Sourav Ganguly also congratulated the side.

"Heartiest congratulations to Rohit sharma and his team .. What a game to win .. May be a World Cup in 11 (13) yrs but the talent the country has ,they will win many more .." (Sic)

"Bumrah is absolutely magic .. Well done Virat,axar ,Hardik and every one .. Rahul Dravid and the support staff .. What a proud moment," (sic) Ganguly added.

Toni Kroos retirement delayed amid Germany's adventure at Euro 2024



AP ■ DORTMUND

Toni Kroos gets another game before he retires. Germany's Euro 2024 title challenge looks more real than ever.

One of the most decorated players in modern soccer with six Champions League titles and a World Cup, Kroos wasn't flashy as Germany beat Denmark 2-0 on Saturday, but he was a calm, assured presence holding the midfield together.

Kroos already won the Champions League with Real Madrid this season. Now he's three games away from one final trophy and could face his Madrid teammate, Spain's Dani Carvajal, in his next game.

Some fans already have their eyes on the final in the German capital and sang about heading to Berlin as Germany saw out the win.

Just like another Real Madrid great, Zinedine Zidane in 2006, Kroos is ending his storied career at a major tournament in Germany.

He came out of international retirement in February for one last tournament. Each game Germany plays in the knockout stage could be the last of his career.

Germany weathered a thunderstorm, hail and stubborn Danish resistance Saturday to ensure the 34-year-old midfielder will play again. Germany faces either Spain or Georgia in the quarterfinals July 5.

Zidane reached the 2006 World Cup final with France, only to headbutt an opponent, get a red card and lose to Italy. Kroos and Germany can still dream of a win on home soil and a first major trophy since Kroos and his teammates lifted the 2014 World Cup.

Until the Denmark game, Germany had not won a major tournament knockout game since Euro 2016. The win continues the sense that Germany is finally turning things around under coach Julian Nagelsmann after years of disappointment.

He took over last year with a mission to deliver a host-nation success story at Euro 2024, and has already signed an extension for the 2026 World Cup.

For now, it stings, just gut-wrenching: SA skipper Markram on World Cup heartbreak

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN

Devastated South African skipper Aiden Markram is hopeful that at some point he would be able to see the good in his team's T20 World Cup campaign but for now, all he feels is a "sting" which, he hopes, will ensure a "fire in the belly for next time".

South Africa needed 30 off 30 balls in a chase of 176 against India but fell short by seven runs despite Heinrich Klaasen's awe-inspiring 27-ball 52 in the see-saw summit clash here on Saturday.

India had Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya's death bowling and a blinder of a catch by Suryakumar Yadav to thank for the close win after the peerless Virat Kohli set up the match for them with a brilliant 76-run knock.

"It's not the first game of cricket that's been lost with a team needing 30 of 30 - it's more that India was allowed to bowl well, they're allowed to field well, they're allowed to go from that position to a position of strength," the 29-year-old Markram said in the post-match press conference.

"...Right now to pinpoint something is quite tough but we'll reflect over the next few days, over the next few weeks, try and find areas that we could have maybe improved in during today's game, but also to highlight the things that went really well for us," he added.

The pain aside, Markram is proud of his teammates, who



managed to get rid of the chokers' tag to an extent by making their first World Cup final.

"I think one thing that I will definitely say is how proud we are. Not just of today, the game itself, but the competition as a whole, the build-up to get here. "So, in hindsight, the things will still feel really good about this competition. But like I mentioned, just for the time being, it stings a bit, but it's good for it to sting. It gives you that little bit of fire in the belly

for next time that you're here," he said.

Markram admitted that Klaasen will find it tough to make peace with the result after such a "special effort".

"We've seen him do it many, many times around the world and to deliver it in a stage like this is a really special effort. So, it's going to be tough for him, that's what I say when I mean we reflect back.

"There's going to be lots of things to be happy about," he said.

While the Indian players had happy tears in their eyes, the Proteas broke down in the realisation that another major title had slipped through their hands, only this time at the final hurdle.

"It's just gut wrenching, that's really what it is. Each player has been on a different individual journey to get to this first final. Ultimately you become really tight as a group and you want good things to happen to this group because you know they're great people," he said.

"...When you get really close like that, especially the nature of how the game went, obviously adds to the emotions and it's one of those things but yeah, we can channel it moving forward but I think next couple of days you let it be.

"...You let yourself feel the way you want to feel and then really start reflecting in a positive manner."

Despite the disappointment and heartbreak, Markram did not forget to applaud India's brilliance and composure in the final.

"It's tournament cricket, it's tough cricket, it's not easy to win trophies and you've got to take your hats off to a team like India for lifting the trophy. A lot of hard work goes into it.

"But yeah, we'd like to think we're one step closer and hopefully moving forward we can get that first win and it can be a snowball effect of quite a few to come," he said.

Told crowd to behave because Hardik is big-stage player: Sanjay Manjrekar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



When Sanjay Manjrekar schooled the Wankhede crowd to "behave" after they booed the newly-appointed Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya, all he wanted the public to realise that their boorish behaviour targeting a "big stage player", was unfair.

Pandya was jeered at every venue after he was handed captaincy by MI, signalling a controversial end to the successful and popular Rohit Sharma's tenure at the helm.

The whole episode had a deep-level impact on Pandya. Manjrekar, while conducting the toss at the Wankhede during a home match of MI, did interject but it only led to a meme-fest by the insensitive social media trolls.

Pandya played a major part in India's second T20 World Cup trophy with 144 runs and 11 wickets, and Manjrekar now stands vindicated.

"What a turnaround for Hardik Pandya. In IPL, there were people jeering him and booing him and I told them to behave because this is a big-stage player," Manjrekar told 'ESPNCricinfo'.

The former India player and noted pundit always knew that Pandya would hold his nerve in pressure situations as he brought his team back in the game with the wicket of the dangerous Heinrich Klaasen and then closed out

the game with a mindblowing final over. "We have seen that umpteen times, wickets of Heinrich Klaasen, David Miller and right at the end, Rabada, so he was a champion and no surprise, to see him flourish on the big stage," Manjrekar said.

Manjrekar reminded Indian fans that even in their humiliating defeat against England in Adelaide, back in the 2022 edition, the colourful Baroda man was a face-saver and a calm presence under pressure.

"Even in that semifinal against England, he came in and gave India some hope with 60 off 33. So that's what he is all about.

"You felt safe when he came to bowl in the last over, he was not going to lose his nerves, he was going to bowl sensibly," he concluded.

Sindhu focussed on perfecting her skills to bag third Olympic medal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic medalist P V Sindhu is physically and mentally in best shape but realises she needs to be "much more smarter" in her pursuit of a third medal at the Games.

Sindhu had claimed a silver and bronze medal at the last two Olympics at Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo and will be heading into Paris with the aim of becoming the first Indian to win three Olympic medals.

"It is challenging, it's not easy but, at the same time, it's not impossible," Sindhu said during an interaction conducted by Sports Authority of India, the Indian Olympic Association and the Badminton Association of India.

"Going into the third Olympics, I need to be smarter. I have a lot of

experience on my side and I need to be much more smarter and I hope I can change the colour, and of course, get another medal for the country."

Sindhu is currently training at the Hermann-Neuberger Sportschule in Saarbrücken, Germany after her proposal was cleared by the sports ministry. She will be heading to Paris directly from there when the Games begin on July 26.

"... Physically and mentally I am right there, I just have to be smarter and my coach Agus (Dwi Santoso) has been taking care of that, my trainer has been taking care of my physical part.

"I am working on all the strokes, whether it is defense, or attack or netplay, it is important to be perfect in all things.

"So I'm not focussing on just one stroke or technique,

because you never know what it is going to be, there are players who are smart enough to change and move to plan B. "So you need to be prepared for it and I am focusing on practicing each and everything to make everything perfect -- each stroke, all techniques."

Asked why she picked Germany as her training base ahead of the Games, Sindhu said: "Prakash (Padukone) sir, and we all discussed and thought, it will be a good place, it is near to Paris, it is in between nowhere, so I am much more focussed.

"I have taken few sparring partners and have a team and currently training here has been very peaceful. I can focus even more before the Olympics."

Sindhu has spent most time on the court in the run-up to the Olympics but she hasn't been consistent enough or



beating the top players. The Indian, though, did manage a runner-up finish at Malaysia Masters super 500.

"It took me some time to come back (from injury) and I feel that now I'm doing well. Coming to the finals is not an

easy thing. And, finishing matches, not finishing matches, it depends on how we play.

"Sometimes nothing might work out," she said referring to the loss in Malaysian Masters final.

"I feel that there's been a lot of improvement and I know that I can do much better and I'm confident that I'm getting there. I need to keep believing in myself and keep working much harder.

"I feel the Olympics is

something where it will be very different. I don't want to compare with others but looking at my form, I'm in great shape and it's just that you have to play very differently with every player.

"It's a different style of play. I think the strategy will be very different whether it is Chen Yu Fei or An Seyoung. It also depends on the draws, with whom I play. Looking forward to going to the Olympics. So, yeah, hoping for the best."

Sindhu, who trained under Pullela Gopichand for many years, moved from Hyderabad to Bengaluru after trying out four different coaches in 12 months.

The ace shuttler feels the level of competition now is very high. "I've played two Olympics and this will be my third and every time the game keeps changing, every Olympics there are different players. "So it is going to be

very challenging and really hard because one is we know each other's game and two is the game has completely changed and I think there are a lot of players who would be looking at your game, how you're playing, what are they doing, what needs to be done.

"So there are a lot of tactics and techniques which will go into this and also physically and mentally you need to be much more stronger, much smarter." Talking about her mentor Padukone, Sindhu said he has been helping her out by pointing out flaws.

"Prakash sir has been seeing my matches and he's been telling me a few things if I'm making mistakes. He observes a lot.

"When he sat behind me in the last All England and French Open, his inputs were quite simple. He just always told me that you know just play freely and just give your best."