

## OPINION 6

PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL FALLS FROM GRACE

## WORLD 8

MORE THAN HUNDRED FLIGHTS CANCELLED IN GERMANY

## MONEY 9

MARKETS EXTEND LOSSES FOR 5TH SESSION

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## J&amp;K on high alert ahead of PM visit

MOHIT KANDHARI ■  
JAMMU/NEW DELHI

The security forces have been kept in a state of high alert ahead of the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the 25th Kargil Vijay Diwas on Friday in Drass. This will be the PM's first visit to the region after recent spate of terror attacks and also a few high-level review meetings in this regard held in the national Capital with two of them chaired by Modi himself.

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi who landed in Srinagar early Thursday morning visited forward areas along the Line of Control in Kashmir valley to review the preparedness of the forces involved in counter-infiltration and counter-terror operations.

The Army Chief later flew to Kargil to supervise the arrangements. Vital security installations were also kept on high-alert along the Jammu-Patankot National Highway following the sighting of seven suspected terrorists in a village of the Pathankot district of the neighbouring State, Punjab.

Several schools at Army installations in the Jammu region and along the highway



Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi during his visit at the forward locations of Chinara Corps. Dwivedi also reviewed the security situation along the Line of Control during his visit PTI

were directed to remain closed till July 29 as a precautionary measure. Massive search operations were also launched by the Army, police, and paramilitary forces in the border areas of Kathua

(Jammu) and Pathankot to track down the suspects. During his brief stay, the Prime Minister will also carry out the first blast of the Shinkun La Tunnel Project, virtually.

## Modi meets Maha NDA partners to smoothen ties

RAJESH KUMAR ■  
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

With a lot of complications due to the breakaway factions of two important constituents — NCP and Shiv Sena — in Maharashtra, the Central leadership of BJP, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi has personally started taking stock of the situation. The State is to go to Assembly elections soon.

A day after Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar demanded nearly 90 seats for the NCP faction led by him during his meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah, the PM on Thursday met MPs of NDA allies in Maharashtra and discussed the political situation ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in the state. Among those whom the Prime Minister met included Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal, and others.

The BJP won just nine of the 28 seats it contested in the Lok Sabha polls, down from 23 it won in 2019. Besides the loss of Lok Sabha seats, BJP's vote percentage decline in the State this election has caused a huge worry. In 2024, BJP got 27.84 per cent votes which has been reduced to 26.1 per cent this time.

## Rain-ravaged Maharashtra seeks Army, Navy help

TN RAGHUNATHA ■  
MUMBAI/PUNE

At least three people were electrocuted in Pune and three others feared trapped under the debris of three collapsed villas in a hill slide at Lavasa, even as the heavy rains wreaked havoc in Pune, Mumbai and various parts of Maharashtra, prompting the Maharashtra Government to seek the assistance of the Army and Navy to deal with the monsoon-related incidents.

Many parts of Pune lay thick sheets of water as the heavy rains ravaged the city since Wednesday night, while intense rains battered Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and other surrounding areas resulting in heavy flooding in low-lying areas and disruption in train and flight operations.

As a precautionary measure, the authorities declared holidays for schools and colleges in Pune, Mumbai and Thane. Three mobile snack stall owners were electrocuted when they tried to move their hand carts to safety through the flood waters near Z bridge at around 3.30 am in Pune, while three others were feared trapped nearby Lavasa city after hill-slide buried three villas.

A Nepali boy Shiv Jidbabudur Pariyar (18) was among three persons killed in Pune, while two others killed in an

electrocution incident were identified Akash Mane (21) and Abhishek Ghanekar (25).

The State's cultural, academic



A commuter makes his way through a waterlogged road after rain in Mumbai, on Thursday PTI

situation arising out of heavy rains in Pune, Mumbai Raigad, Thane and other parts of the State. Maharashtra chief Minister Eknath Shinde said, "The units of NDRF, SDRF, Army, Navy, Police, Fire Brigade, Health System have been directed to coordinate with each other and lend help."

"These agencies need to work as a team and shift the flood affected people safely, provide them with food packets, arrange medicines and water. Instructions have been given to take the help of NDRF, Army, and Navy," Shinde said.

"Around 40,000 cusecs was discharged from the Khadakwasla Dam," Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol who is an MP from Pune, said.

"There is also heavy rain in Mumbai city and suburbs. The administration is fully alert to deal with any calamity in Mumbai and I am in touch with Pune, Raigad, Mumbai Collectors and Municipal Commissioners," Shinde said. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar also coordinated with authorities in rushing help to the people affected by rains in Pune and various parts of the State.

On a day when scores of trees were uprooted and two-wheelers and four-wheelers remained stranded in flood waters, personnel from various agencies deployed to ferry the people in the marooned areas of Pune. More than 500 people were evacuated from the low-lying areas during the day.

## SC ruling a shot in arm for States rich in minerals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The legislative power to tax mineral rights vests with the States and the royalty paid on minerals is not a tax, the Supreme Court ruled on Thursday in a landmark judgement which will give a huge revenue boost to mineral-rich States.

A nine-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, in a majority 8:1 verdict, said Parliament does not have the legislative competence to tax mineral rights under Entry 54 of List I of the Constitution which pertains to regulation of mines and mineral development by the Centre.

The pronouncement, which came as a setback to the Centre, however, said

## BJP slams Opp for abusing Modi in Parliament debate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Modi for the third consecutive term. If anybody tries to insult the verdict of the people, they will be punished in the elections," Rijiju said at a Press conference. His remarks came a day after the Opposition claimed the Union Budget was "discriminatory" against non-NDA-ruled States and accused the Prime Minister of running a "shaky and vulnerable" coalition Government.

During the general discussion on the budget for 2024-25 in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, various Opposition members accused the government of doling out sops to key allies JD(U) and TDP, which rule Bihar and Andhra Pradesh respectively, to ensure that the government faces no hurdles from its coalition partners.

Rijiju said elections were over and now the focus should be to work towards a developed India (Viksit Bharat) and hold constructive discussion on the Union Budget. "The Prime Minister has said that elections were over and now was the time to rise above political lines and work together for the nation," Rijiju said.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the manner in which some Opposition leaders made their speeches amounted to insulting the House and lowering the dignity of the Budget Session. "Let us respect the mandate of the people. They have given the mandate to Prime Minister

# Punjab CM announces boycott of NITI Aayog meeting, Slams Centre's neglect

PNS ■  
JALANDHAR/CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday announced that his government will boycott the NITI Aayog meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 27 in New Delhi. The dramatic decision, aimed squarely at the heart of the Central Government, comes in response to what Mann decried as a blatant disregard for Punjab's significant contributions to the nation, dubbing the Union Budget of being a "Kursi Bachao Budget" that sidelines non-BJP ruled states.

In solidarity with the INDI Alliance (INDIA), the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led State Government joined the boycott of NITI Aayog meeting. The decision aligned with the stance taken by other non-NDA states, including Himachal Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. These states have also expressed similar grievances regarding the Union Budget's perceived neglect of non-BJP ruled states.

The boycott follows announcements by Congress and DMK to also abstain from the meeting. The INDI Alliance has collectively criticized the central budget for ignoring the needs of states not governed by the NDA.

Up until the Chief Minister's announcement on Thursday, preparations for the NITI Aayog meeting were underway in the Chief Minister's office, including drafting Mann's speech. The Chief Minister had planned to address the Central Government regarding the outstanding Rs 10,000 crore, emphasizing the need for funds

allocated to rural development and mandi development funds.

Justifying his decision, Mann criticized the Union Budget for failing to give Punjab "special" preference despite its significant contributions to the nation. "If Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh receive special status, why can't Punjab? We are also a landlocked state," he asserted.

Mann, interacting with media in Jalandhar on Thursday, expressed deep disappointment with the Union Budget, accusing the Central Government of political vendetta against non-BJP ruled states, including Punjab. Mann highlighted that despite Punjab's significant contributions to the nation's food security and economy, the state was conspicuously ignored in the recent budget allocations.

"The Union Budget has failed to allocate necessary funds to Punjab, which is a main and major grain-producing state. The Finance Minister's announcement of providing ration to 80 crore people did not mention Punjab, which is an outright neglect of our farmers' contributions," said Mann.

Emphasizing Punjab's pivotal role in the nation's security and economy, Mann said: "With a 532-kilometer international border, Punjab has always been at the forefront of national interest." He recalled his efforts to waive off Rs 7.5 crore charge imposed by the Union Government for sending military forces during the Dinanagar and Pathankot attacks, highlighting the financial burdens placed on the State.

Mann assured that his government would seek alternative financial resources to make Punjab economically viable and demanded a special status for the State. He underlined Punjab's historical contributions to the freedom struggle and its vital role as the food bowl of India, arguing that these contributions warrant better treatment from the central government.

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday vehemently condemned Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's decision to boycott the upcoming Niti Aayog meeting, calling it "Suicidal" for Punjab.

Senior SAD leader Daljit Singh Cheema criticized the move, emphasizing that the Niti Aayog meeting is a crucial platform for states to present their specific needs and influence central policies.

"This forum allows states to advocate for tailored schemes and counter the one-size-fits-all approach of central programs," Cheema stated.

Cheema accused Mann of prioritizing politics over Punjab's welfare by aligning with the Congress-led boycott. He highlighted the lack of consultation with the Vidhan Sabha and other political parties before making this decision.

He urged the Chief Minister to reconsider and attend the meeting, stressing the importance of presenting Punjab's case effectively to the Niti Aayog. "Boycotting the meeting forfeits an essential opportunity to hold the Union Government accountable for its neglect of Punjab in the Union Budget 2024," Cheema asserted, calling for Mann to fulfill his constitutional duties and protect Punjab's interests.

## AAP gears up for Punjab's 4 bypolls: Appoints in-charges, co-incharges

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Booyed by the recent win in the Jalandhar West assembly bypoll, the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has swung into action, preparing for the upcoming by-elections in Punjab's four more segments by appointing in-charges and co-incharges.

Punjab is staring at byelections in Dera Baba Nanak, Gidderbaha, Chabbewal, and Barnala after the sitting MLAs — Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Dr Raj Kumar Chhabewal, and Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer, respectively — were elected as Lok Sabha members, leaving their seats vacant.

Of the four seats, three were won by Congress. However, Dr Chabbewal later went on to join AAP and was elected MP from Hoshiarpur.

As per the orders issued by AAP, senior leaders — four Cabinet Ministers, sitting MP, and three legislators — have been appointed as in-charges or co-incharges.

For Dera Baba Nanak, NRI Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal has been appointed as in-charge, with Batala MLA Amansher Singh Shery Kalsi as co-charge. Notably, Shery Kalsi had contested Lok Sabha elections from Gurdaspur, of which Dera Baba Nanak is a part, and finished third with 25.72 percent vote share.

Two-time MLA and Employment Minister Aman Arora will serve as in-charge for Gidderbaha, assisted by Dharamkot MLA Davinder Singh Laddi Dhos as co-charge. Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains has been named in-charge for Chabbewal assembly segment, with Dasuya MLA Karmbir Singh Ghuman as co-charge.

For Barnala, former Minister, and Sangrur MP Meet Hayer will be the in-charge, supported by Horticulture Minister Chetan Singh Jodamraja as co-charge. Notably, Meet Hayer has been representing Barnala assembly segment for past two

terms. The segment, which fall vacant after his election to Lok Sabha, also falls under the parliamentary constituency he currently represents.

AAP's swift and strategic appointments reflected its determination to maintain momentum and secure victories in the by-elections. Despite failing to secure impressive seats and vote share during Lok Sabha elections, AAP's recent success in Jalandhar West has bolstered its confidence, demonstrating that it can effectively mobilize support and win over voters.

By appointing experienced and trusted leaders to spearhead the campaign in these constituencies, AAP aimed to replicate its success across the State.

As of now, in the 117-member House, AAP has 91 MLAs — one less from the seats it won in 2022 state assembly polls after Meet Hayer's left Barnala seat vacant.

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## HRY CM APPROVES PURCHASE OF 186 WALKIE-TALKIE SETS FOR ENHANCED PRISON SECURITY

**Chandigarh:** To enhance the communication capabilities of prison staff, ensuring the safety and security of inmates and prison personnel, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday approved the purchase of 186 walkie-talkie sets at the cost of around Rs 56.7 lakh for various prisons in Haryana. In a statement, the Director General of Prisons, Haryana, highlighted the critical need for robust communication systems among prison staff, including those stationed at watchtowers. Effective communication is paramount for maintaining order and addressing any security concerns promptly, he added.

## HIMACHAL PRADESH ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OFFICERS CALL ON CM

**Shimla:** A delegation of Himachal Pradesh Administrative Services Officers led by its President Shravan Manta called on Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Thursday. The Chief Minister said that the State Government was doing reforms in various government sectors to provide quality services to the people of the State and HPAS officers could play a very instrumental role in these initiatives. He said that the Education and Health sectors were the main focus areas of the State Government and there was a lot of scope to revamp the system in the interest of the common man. He asked HPAS officers to work diligently and dedicatedly to come up to the expectations of the people of the State. HPAS Association assured full cooperation to the Chief Minister for implementation of policies and programmes of the State Government in a letter and spirit.

## HIMACHAL STATE AIDS CONTROL SOCIETY ORGANIZES TRAINING PROGRAM

**Shimla:** Project Director, Himachal Pradesh State AIDS Control Society Rajiv Kumar on Thursday said that a training workshop was organized for the participants of Police, ITBP, NCC, Home Guard and SSB Medical Center. The main objective of this workshop is to provide training to the participants as master trainers regarding HIV/AIDS, so that all the master trainers can provide information about various training programs on HIV/AIDS in the respective training institutes. He said that 30 to 40 master trainers were being trained every year by the AIDS Control Society. In the training program, all the jawans of Police, ITBP, NCC, Home Guard and SSB would be trained as master trainers by providing them detailed information about HIV/AIDS, so that they could further spread awareness. Project Director said that the District AIDS Control Program Officers of the Society also organize workshops in all the Police Training Centers of the state.

## SONG DEDICATED TO LEGENDARY SINGER SURINDER CHHINDA TO BE RELEASED ON HIS FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

**Chandigarh:** The song, "Khite Tur Giya Yara..." will be released to pay tribute to the iconic Punjabi singer Surinder Chhinda on his first death anniversary. The event, scheduled for July 26, will take place at the Punjab Kala Bhawan in Chandigarh. Cabinet Minister Dr. Baljit Kaur will grace the occasion as the chief guest, accompanied by a host of veteran artists from the Punjabi film industry. Renowned lyricist Babu Singh Maan Marara wala, Padma Shri awardee Hansraj Hans, Gurpreet Singh Ghuggi, Gugu Gill, Karanpreet Anmol, Pali Detwalia, Yuvraj Hans, and former MP Mohammad Sadiq will be among the distinguished guests. The ceremony will also be attended by prominent film personalities, including Harpreet Sekhon, producer Taljinder Singh Nagra, Bobby Bajwa, and many others. The song "Khite Tur Giyan Yara..." is a heartfelt tribute to Surinder Chhinda, who enthralled audiences with his soulful voice in hits like "Jatt Jiuna Mor", "Put Jattan De", and "Truck Bally". This event is a testament to the enduring legacy of Surinder Chhinda and his contribution to Punjabi music and culture.

## FINAL PUBLICATION OF ELECTORAL ROLL ON AUGUST 27: HRY CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

**Chandigarh:** Haryana Chief Electoral Officer Pankaj Agarwal on Thursday said that changes have been made to the special summary revision program of the voter list. According to the guidelines of the Election Commission, new voters will now be registered considering July 1, 2024 as the qualifying date. Providing detailed information in this regard, the Chief Electoral Officer mentioned that the draft voter list will be published on August 2. He mentioned that the revised schedule of June 25 has now been extended to August 1. Agarwal informed that claims and objections can be filed from August 2-16. The resolution of claims and objections will be carried out by August 26. Special dates of August 3, 4, 10 and 11 will be issued for the BLOs to be present at the polling stations by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. He also urged the representatives of political parties to instruct their booth level agents to contact the BLOs on these dates and be present at the polling stations. No voter can cast their vote without their name on the voter list. The final publication of the voter list will be on August 27, he added.

## Powers of Councillors within Municipal Corporations enhanced in Hry: CM Saini

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

**Minister also announced the formation of a committee led by the Minister of State for Urban Local Bodies Subhash Sudha, to increase the honorarium for Municipal Body representatives. This committee will soon present its report after consulting with all stakeholders.**

**He announced that councilors of Nagar Palikas will now receive a meeting allowance of Rs. 1600 for attending quarterly meetings. Similarly, councilors of Nagar Parishes will receive Rs. 2400, and councilors of Nagar Nigams, Nagar Palikas, and Nagar Parishads will receive Rs. 3000.**

**Besides, he also announced the introduction of a meeting allowance for these representatives. The Chief Minister said that until Ward Committees are formally established, the Councillors of the respective wards will be granted full authority to ensure the acceleration of development work within their wards. In addition, if a Secretary is not appointed to the Ward Committee or is absent from a meeting for any reason, the councillor will have the authority to provide a remuneration of Rs. 1000 per meeting to a graduate for preparing the meeting's proceedings. Councillors will also receive a meeting allowance for serving as chairpersons at each quarterly meeting of the ward committee.**

**Saini said that all municipal councillors will monitor various tasks within their respective wards. These tasks include budgeting for development works and any change, managing cleanliness, land development or CLU and zoning plan work, maintaining playgrounds, roads, and street lights, monitoring health center activities, ensuring water supply, managing education and health services, and arranging basic services for the urban poor.**

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## Doctors go on indefinite strike in Hry; Medical services hit in Govt Hospitals

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In support of their pending demands, the Government doctors in Haryana went on an indefinite strike on Thursday, adversely affecting medical services in state-run hospitals. The Strike was called by the Haryana Civil Medical Services Association. The doctors' demands include the formation of a specialist cadre for them and a career progression scheme that ensures parity with their central government peers. The association called for a shutdown of health services in the government hospitals as a mark of protest.

Following the protest, patients were seen in long queues outside OPDs in various hospitals of the State and they complained that they were being treated by interns or retired doctors. To resolve the issue, government representatives are holding talks with the

doctors' body which began on Thursday afternoon.

A day ahead of the strike call, the State Government had urged the doctors' association to consider the impact of the strike on the patients. "Doctors of various government health institutions have proceeded on an indefinite strike across the state," Association President Dr Rajesh Khylia said while talking to reporters. He recalled his efforts to waive off Rs 7.5 crore charge imposed by the Union Government for sending military forces during the Dinanagar and Pathankot attacks, highlighting the financial burdens placed on the State.

On Wednesday, four association members, including Khylia, had also started an indefinite hunger strike in front of the office of the Health Services director general in Panchkula. The other demands of the doctors include no direct recruitment of senior medical officers and a reduction in the bond amount for postgraduate courses. On the government's invitation for talks on Thursday, Khylia said, "We will attend the meeting but if there is no outcome, then our strike will continue indefinitely."

Long queues of patients were seen in outpatient departments (OPDs) of district hospitals, sub-district hospitals, community and primary health centers, he said. Khylia said that OPD, emergency and post-mortem examinations have also been impacted. Nearly 3,000 doctors across the state were expected to take part in the strike before it began.

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On July 15, the government doctors observed a two-hour strike to press for their demands. The strike had affected OPD services in government health care institutions across the state. According to the association, the doctors have to submit two bonds of Rs 1 crore each for admission to post-graduate courses. It demands that the amount should be considerably reduced. On the direct recruitment of senior medical officers, the association has said it will block the growth of hundreds of medical officers awaiting promotion to the post after completion of 20 years of service.

In its meeting held here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, the

## Himachal assembly's Monsoon Session from August 27

PNS ■ SHIMLA

**T**he Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Thursday recommended the governor to convene the Monsoon Session of the state assembly from August 27 to September 9 at Shimla. It also decided to close 99 government schools with zero enrolments and approved the merger of GPS and GMS with five or less students within two and three kilometer radius.

There are 287 GPS with less than five students located within a radius of two kilometers while the number of such GMS in three-kilometer radius was 46.

The enrolments in government primary schools had dropped from 1,30,466 in 2002-2003 to 49,295 in 2023-24. Moreover, the Cabinet mandated that all schools hold a morning assembly with the national anthem and high and senior secondary schools unfurl the national flag daily and conduct physical education classes daily and make it compulsory.

The Cabinet also decided to create a Police District Dehra and a Public Works Department Circle at Dehra, the assembly constituency Kamlesh Thakur. Similarly, under the target of opening a hospital in every district, a 200-bed hospital is being constructed in Sector-9 at a cost of Rs 45 crore. A 100-bed seven-story hospital is also being constructed in Tohana at a cost of Rs 138 crore. The government has also opened many new institutions to make this district a leader in the field of education.

He said the government has worked to increase its connectivity to accelerate the development of this area. The Mandi-Dabwali-Sirs-Fatehabad-Delhi National Highway is passing through here. Similarly, with the construction of Hansi-Maham-Rohtak railway line, the people of this area have got more rail connectivity to Delhi. Maharaja Agrasen Airport being built in Hissar is just 35 km from here. In this way, this area has also got air connectivity, the chief minister added.

The Chief Minister said in the last 10 years, the government has laid a network of 4-6 lane highways in the state. Bypasses, flyovers and railway overbridges and underbridges have been built to facilitate traffic. A new era is being ushered in the field of education by the establishment of high-quality educational institutions. Today, the government has worked to increase its connectivity to accelerate the development of this area. The Mandi-Dabwali-Sirs-Fatehabad-Delhi National Highway is passing through here. Similarly, with the construction of Hansi-Maham-Rohtak railway line, the people of this area have got more rail connectivity to Delhi. Maharaja Agrasen Airport being built in Hissar is just 35 km from here. In this way, this area has also got air connectivity, the chief minister added.

used to do brokerage in getting government jobs or getting government work done for people. We have made the state a developed state by freeing it from fear, corruption, nepotism and regionalism," he said.

Taking a dig at the Opposition, the Chief Minister said those who are demanding an account of the 10-year tenure of the current state government should look into their own conscience. Their government used to work in commission mode, while our government works in mission mode. Corruption was at its peak during their rule, only those who had recommendations and money used to get government jobs whereas the present government worked to change the system in the state and gave government jobs to the youth on merit. "Our government has closed the shops of such middlemen who

and compensation is going directly is giving the government's report. The elderly are also giving the government's report as they do not have to run around offices to get their pension. Their pension is being given while they are sitting in their homes. Under the previous government, the elderly had to run around offices for 6-6 months to get their pension. Saini said that during the reign of the Congress, the condition of Fatehabad city was like a remote village. The roads were broken, the drinking water system was in a shambles and there was shortage of electricity. Waterlogging used to happen during rain. In the last 10 years, the government has constantly accelerated the wheel of development here. Development works worth crores of rupees have been completed and works worth crores of rupees are in progress, he said.

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Govt. of Haryana



# Mhara Haryana Non-Stop Haryana

## We Haryanvis

**Get drinking water from  
taps in every household**

Clean drinking water from tap delivered to  
every rural household in the state

5164 tube wells and 1557 boosting pumps were  
installed at a cost of ₹1664 crore

24,177 km long drinking water pipelines were  
laid at a cost of ₹4149 crore

Various development works of ₹7569 crore have been completed

Clean and pure water is being  
continuously supplied to the citizens









## Reaching out

Netanyahu seeks support for Gaza war during US Congress speech, despite many senators skipping it

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for US solidarity in his address to Congress, despite declining popularity and increasing opposition in his own country. In an address to the United States Congress, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to rally American lawmakers behind Israel's ongoing military operations in Gaza. The speech, delivered amidst a backdrop of escalating violence and rising civilian casualties, underscored Netanyahu's determination to secure unwavering support from Israel's most powerful ally. He emphasised the existential threats faced by Israel from militant groups operating in Gaza, particularly Hamas. The Prime Minister framed the military actions as a necessary response to ongoing rocket attacks and acts of terrorism that have plagued Israeli communities. However, Netanyahu's speech did not address the mounting international concerns regarding human rights violations in the Palestinian territories. Reports from various human rights organizations, including

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have highlighted a range of human rights violations. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has been further exacerbated by a blockade that severely restricts the movement of people and goods, leading to shortages of essential supplies such as food, water, and medical care. The present Gaza offensive, which has gone over 250 days, has left a spree of death and destruction. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, at least 34,000 people have been killed, and more than 77,000 have been wounded in Israeli attacks. About 72 per cent of those killed are women and children. United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk has gone on record saying that a child in Gaza is killed or wounded 'every 10 minutes.'

Israel's actions violate international law and constitute collective punishment, disproportionately affecting innocent civilians and deepening the humanitarian crisis. The United States, as Israel's primary ally, plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This support has also placed the US under scrutiny, with calls for it to leverage its influence to promote peace and uphold human rights. The very weaponry provided by the US is being used by Israel against the civilian population in Palestine which is undergoing a horrendous time. There is growing advocacy within the US, both among the public and some members of Congress, for a more balanced approach. The US is urged to take a firm stand against human rights violations and to support diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a sustainable and just resolution to the conflict. A sustainable peace can only be achieved through a comprehensive and inclusive approach that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties. The US has a moral and strategic responsibility to advocate for human rights and justice in the region. The US can play a pivotal role in paving the lasting peace in the region by telling Netanyahu to comply with the UN directives on Gaza and stop bombing the civilian targets to minimise civilian casualties.

## PIC TALK



Members of the State Disaster Management Authority perform rescue operation during a mock drill, in Prayagraj

PTI

## Union budget 2024: A major thrust on agriculture

The budget's focus on sustainable agriculture and innovation highlights the Government's commitment to support the farmers and ensuring food security

**U**nion budget 2024- a thrust on agriculture for a visit bharatBiju DharmapalanIn the Union Budget 2024 presented by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, great emphasis has been placed on agriculture and space. Both are essential pillars for transforming our country into a developed nation.

The latter is futuristic, and the former is the lifeline of the present generation. No nation can survive without the farming community, and they are the 'Annadata'. In the changing global climate and environmental conditions, the traditional farming sector would not be sufficient to feed the population. The government has allocated Rs.1,51,851 crores for the agricultural and allied sectors. Stress has been given to agricultural research to increase productivity and release 109 new high-yielding and climate-resilient varieties of 32 field and horticulture crops. Climate-resilient crops have become essential under the prevailing global climatic conditions. During the past few years, we have noticed changes in the climate in



various parts of the country. We had severe summers even in high altitudes of the Himalayas and a deficit in rain during the monsoons. This has badly affected the agricultural sector, where most of our crop cultivation is based on climatic patterns. Farmers are forced to grow temperate plants like apples and grapes in plains. People are even trying to grow rain-fed crops like paddy in garden pots. Change in agricultural patterns is inevitable. Climate change affects agriculture in numerous ways. Heat stress triggers alterations in respiration and photosynthesis, resulting in a reduced life cycle and decreased plant yield. Additionally, higher temperatures can lead to increased evapotranspiration, necessitating more water for crops when water resources



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

are scarcer. Experiencing drought-like situations in several parts of the country due to climate changes has badly affected the soil health, making the farmland unhealthy for future farming. Moreover, the frequency and severity of droughts are expected to rise, particularly in regions that are already water-stressed. Drought conditions reduce crop yields and affect soil health, making it more difficult for future crops to grow. On the other hand, excessive rainfall and flooding, becoming more common, can destroy crops, erode soil, and wash away essential nutrients. Extreme weather patterns will not only affect crop productivity and microbial biodiversity, which keeps our planet healthy. In addition, it will expedite the emergence of new pests and diseases that may affect crop growth and productivity. The emergence of new diseases may even lead to a pandemic affecting several crop species across the globe. This may jeopardise our food security. Developing resilient crops for the next century is a challenging task. It requires significant investment in research and development.

*(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)*

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

# Pushpa Kamal Dahal falls from grace



K S TOMAR

The new coalition, dominated by the pro-India Nepali Congress, will now be led by the communist leader Oli who will have a daunting task of ensuring political stability

**P**oliticians have been grabbing the power by following Machiavillian principle of showing complete disrespect to means, the morality and values. This is true of Pushpa Kamal Dahal who fell from the grace after facing humiliating defeat while seeking trust vote in Nepal parliament. While seeking trust vote in Nepal parliament, Prachanda faced the worst type of humiliating defeat as he got 63 votes (Rashtriya Swatantra Party-21, CPN(US)-10 and his party-32) as against 194 votes of new coalition combination of Nepali Congress (89 MPs) and Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (78 MPs) which also got support from other smaller parties like Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Janata Samajwadi Party (Upendra faction) etc. in the house of 275 where majority mark was 138 only. Oli has staked claim after president Ram Chandra Poedel invited the political parties having strength to form the government.

In a positive move, Dr. Rajan Bhattarai, the Foreign Affairs Department chief and a Standing Committee member of the CPN-UML emphasized that CPN-UML believes that Nepal's progress or the welfare of its people can be achieved only by adopting a Pro-India stance. He made it clear that the party's chairman, KP Sharma Oli, is keen on taking Nepal-India relations to new heights thereby aligning with the requirement and urgency of the modern era.

Due to fragile nature of democracy in Nepal, unabated and persistent instability has been trademark of the government which is evident from 16 time change of guards in the span of 13 years thereby hitting the interests of the common people in the country besides pushing the country into financial crisis and debt liabilities especially huge loans advanced by China.

In a midnight swoop and a dramatic turn of events on July 9, a secret deal was clinched between two former Prime ministers viz. Sher Bahadur Deuba of Nepali and K.P.S. Oli of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) which sealed the fate of current PM, Pushpa



Kamal Dahal, Prachanda. In this manner, yet another coalition of Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and Nepali Congress came into existence today following the humiliating defeat of Prachanda, a diehard loyalist of China on the floor of house. New regime will be headed by Ex PM, Oli which had preceded withdrawal of the support to current PM, on July 3, 2024 thereby reducing it into minority. The Janata Samajwadi party led by Ashok Rai having 7 PMs also withdrew the support and recalled three ministers from Prachanda government. The coalition government will be dominated by Pro India, Nepali Congress, though a die-hard communist leader, former PM, Oli will be heading it for a term of one half year which will be followed by a takeover by former PM, Deuba of Nepali congress as agreed by two coalition partners.

Foreign policy experts say that

major factors responsible for

the collapse of collation of

Prachanda-Oli, duo, included

Power Struggle, style of function-

ing of prime minister,

Policy Differences, Coalition

Dynamics and Coalition

Dynamics which may lead to

more stable dispensation com-

prising of Nepali Congress,

Nepal (Unified Marxist-

Leninist) and Janata

Samajwadi party.

Amidst the toppling game,



OLI AND DEUBA  
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CHINA WHICH HAVE  
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AND  
STRATEGIC  
INTERESTS IN THE  
AFFAIRS OF NEPAL

midnight power sharing agreement between two former Prime ministers, viz. Sher Bahadur Deuba, and Nepali Congress and K.P.S. Oli chairman of Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) was signed on July 5, 2024 thereby leading to a sudden change of regime in Nepal. New coalition government of Oli and Deuba is bound to face multiple challenges which will be key to success otherwise its fallout could be midterm polls. The fragile nature of the new government consisting of the communists (Pro China) and Nepali Congress (Pro India) having opposing ideologies could pose a major challenge to keep them in unison and amalgamated.

Oli and Deuba combine will be under compulsion to keep equi-distance with two regional powers viz. India and China which have got geo-political and strategic interests in the affairs of Nepal. Oli's previous stint as PM was marked by his extreme Anti India action of

redrawing the map which had

shown Indian territories

including Lipulekh,

Limpiyadhura and Kalapani as

part of Nepal. It had exasperated

India which rejected this

misadventure thereby terming

it as baseless besides being an

attempt to spoil ties. Now, as

dominant partner in the coalition, the onus of checking this tendency will lie on Deuba to come

out of Anti-India mentality and protect age-old relations between two nations.

The communists regimes led by Prachanda always gave clear indications about the commitment to China which will expect new government to go ahead with Belt and Road (BRI) initiative especially when outgoing PM has approved the proposal which had been signed between two countries on May 12, 2017.

It will be an uphill task for Oli to stick to his predecessors' resolve to toe China's line about BRI as Nepali congress is totally opposed to it hence chances of any progress seem to be remote. It will be a test of the new government to deal with India's Agnipath scheme which is one of the major irritants so far. Nepal's border issues with India, including disputes over territories require a multifaceted approach.

Strengthening the Nepal-India Joint Boundary Commission to expedite the resolution of boundary issues through technical and diplomatic means may yield positive results. The survival of the coalition will depend solely on mutual trust of partners and balanced diplomatic strategy and refrain from offending two regional giants which had been lacking in the past.

*(Writer is a senior journalist and a political analyst; views are personal)*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Tragedy at Tribhuvan International Airport



private airline company Saurya Airlines, skidded off the runway and crashed. It seems that the aviation industry in Nepal has fallen short of both standards and expectations, failing to keep pace with other countries in terms of modernization and sophistication. It is a pity that Nepal has not learned any lessons from past incidents, leading to a continuing series of plane crashes.

The aviation sector is crucial for Nepal's tourism and businesses. It is high time that the government of Nepal, along with private airline owners, collaborate to revamp the deteriorating aviation sector. They must pay due attention to improving passenger safety, modernizing logistics and infrastructure, and introducing new jets to avoid future accidents. Path-breaking reforms are essential. Janga Bahadur Sunuwar, Bagrakote

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagrakote

### CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS

Madam — The Telangana-cadre IAS officer Smita Sabharwal is being criticized for questioning the need for a disability quota in civil services. She asked the 'rights activists' to examine why the policy was yet to be implemented in police services, foreign services, and the defense sector. By raising such questions, she violated the code of conduct for civil servants and is punishable under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 and other relevant laws. Prominent coach and mentor of civil services aspirants in Hyderabad, Bala Latha Mallavarapu, challenged Smita to sit for the UPSC examination again and beat her score. The Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of Pankaj Kumar Srivastava, a 100 percent visually impaired candidate who cleared the Civil Services Examination in 2009 but was denied an appointment. This ruling marks a significant milestone in the fight for disability rights in India. inappropriate remarks.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

Madam — Joe Biden Withdraws from Presidential Race

Madam — Accepting the views of prominent Democratic leaders, including former President Barack Obama, President Joe Biden has announced his withdrawal from the presidential race. Age is not on his side, and Donald Trump, after surviving an assassination attempt, has gained momentum. Vice President Kamala Harris is likely to take on the aging Donald Trump. In India, Kamala Harris' presumptive nomination elicited only lukewarm enthusiasm. During the 2019 election campaign, she criticised Prime Minister Modi's policies on Kashmir, saying, "We have to remind Kashmiris that they are not alone in the world." The possibility of tension in relations between the two countries, despite statements of warm friendship, cannot be ignored.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### BUDGET BALANCES FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND EMPLOYMENT

Union budget takes definitive steps to create jobs for India's youth



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The eleventh full-term budget under Modi 3.0 walks the fiscal discipline path, despite being a coalition government, he is heading. The surprise results from June 4th, which threw in a coalition government for Prime Minister Modi, perhaps for the first time in his career, did not stop his budget proposals, political with sound economics in the background. In the run-up to the budget, many had expected, that the Finance Act would be populist keeping in mind the state elections of Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand scheduled later this year. However what came out from Nirmala Sitharaman's tab, was a document that chose to focus on core areas of long-term growth and decent infrastructure spending, without giving in to populist demands. The key theme as highlighted by Government is Employment.

Questions have been raised in post-budget analysis regarding the feasibility of the schemes announced for creating lakhs of jobs for the youth of the country. The apprentice scheme promising a government stipend for lakhs of youth per year, in some of the largest companies of India, may only be a game changer if these young interns are attentively skilled to be formally absorbed into jobs, once their tenure is over. There are serious concerns regarding the abundant availability of a relatively unskilled workforce, hanging around in large offices, without learning any meaningful skills.

Similar questions have been raised regarding the EPFO-linked new job incentivisation scheme, which has various blindsides, possibly pushing a well-thought-out policy push into a dark corner. It may be said that the policy push is primarily to bring more youth employed in the informal sector within a formal standard workforce and instil a financial literacy discipline in them early on. However, this financial literacy falls flat when one looks at the changes made in the tax structures for any investor putting in the speculative equities market. The increased rate of capital gains tax and a general push to the new income tax regime, seem to be at cross purposes of the financial literacy programme, the government wants youth to undertake to avail of full benefits of INR 15,000, as a first month's salary subsidy. The earlier tax regimes instilled a sense



of financial responsibility for any youth entering the formal job sector, with several choosing at least one product, as a means to save and claim tax rebates in the future. This set them off for a long financial discipline path during their tenure as working professionals, which now seems to be slowly being eased out. The counter-argument the government may have is, that they want the consumer economy to grow first, led by the youth, who may be more willing to spend on food items, entertainment etc, with the monthly salaries they would be drawing in their new jobs. However, it prevents them from getting a habit of savings, which are useful during rainy days or Covid type crises. Yes, the government, did well to maintain the fiscal discipline glide path, buoyed by a better than expected GDP growth, and lumpy dividend payouts from the central bank. Overall inflations, except for food are also within tolerable levels, giving the government, a cushion for spending on welfare projects, it feels are essential. Union budget 24-25 is an attempt woo back disgruntled voters.

The lesson BJP appears to have taken from the June 4 results is, that the youth are excited about huge temples, few smart glitzy trains, and cheap mobile data in their 'Made in India' phones, but they are increasingly getting anxious to earn money, have an engaging occupation, which feeds into their aspirational upwardly mobile lifestyle. Then there are pulls and pressures of coalition politics, with NDA's two partners TDP and JD(U) having their wish lists for catering to their core constituencies. A long-term dice has been rolled, perhaps NDA 3.0 with this budget has achieved the goldilocks balance.

(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)



RAHUL KAMBLE

Visitors to Drass, a town situated at an altitude of 10,760 feet (3,279 metres) in India-administered Kashmir, are greeted with a signboard that says at -60 degrees Celsius on January 9, 1995, it was the second-coldest inhabited place on the planet. Drass, located in Kargil district, has an additional claim to fame. In the summer of 1999, it was on its western edge with rocky and barren Himalayan peaks that India and Pakistan fought their last war. That year, Pakistan's military and Kashmiri rebels occupied strategic positions on the Indian side of the de facto border between them (known as the Line of Control or LoC), prompting a counter-offensive by India. While

Pakistan had named its move to take over the control of Indian posts along the LoC as 'Operation Badr', India called its offensive 'Operation Vijay'. It was a war fought in the era of satellite news channels. The battles were broadcast directly to homes in both countries, making Drass and Kargil as a whole, a symbol of India's nationalism, inspiring a raft of jingoistic Bollywood movies. This July 26 is the 25th Kargil Vijay Divas. On this day we paid

for it in blood and tears. We lost 527 of our brave soldiers; 1363 came back wounded. The Indian army has marked July 26 – the day the Kargil war ended – as "Vijay Diwas" (Victory Day). Every year for the past 25 years, the whole nation celebrates proudly on this day. Army also undertakes commemorative treks on the icy features, where our Braves became invincibles. What seemed an impossible task to the world, was accomplished in a mere 50 days, with all the features lost, back under our control.

The '50 Day War' as it is fondly called, was a record in itself. Whenever the story of Kargil is told, it shall be incomplete without paying homage to the steely resolve and cold

courage of these young men who went to fight for their nation knowing that they might never return. Barely out of the academy, they fought against all odds, with single-minded devotion, and set new benchmarks in heroism. Their spirit and daring will be difficult to replicate. The war will always be remembered for its strategic and tac-

tical surprise, the self-imposed national strategy of restraint in keeping the war limited to the Kargil-Siachen sector, military strategy and planning, and the dedication, determination and daring junior leadership at the tactical level. In fiercely fought combat actions, on the most difficult terrain that gave immense advantage to the enemy, we were able to evict Pakistani troops from most of their surreptitiously occupied positions. The Pakistani leadership was forced to sue for a ceasefire and seek the withdrawal of its troops from the remaining areas. Operation Vijay – the Indian codename for the war – was a blend of strong and determined political, military and diplomatic actions, which enabled us to transform an

adverse situation into a military and diplomatic victory. As two prime ministers of Pakistan later acknowledged, 'Kargil war was Pakistan's biggest blunder and disaster.' A reflection on the Kargil War can never be complete without a mention of the brilliant junior leadership that we witnessed during battles. Such acts by young officers and men can never be forgotten. They make us proud. Commanding officers of many infantry battalions displayed steely resilience and single-minded devotion to duty. There were actions by young artillery forward observation officers and battery commanders who took over infantry companies when their company commander colleagues were killed. A victory in war is

achieved when battles are won. Battles are won when soldiers put duty before themselves. Soldiers who put their lives at stake in wars and war-like situations and expect nothing in return. But what the nation owes to them is recognition and gratitude. For every single brave deed noticed and recognized, many went unnoticed in the fog of war. These legendary tales deserve mention not only in our military history books but also in school textbooks to serve as inspiration for young people. This success shall not be taken for granted. With heights averaging 15000 feet, bone-chilling temperatures and a dominating hostility, the Kargil war in itself is a global legend.

(The author is freelance writer; views are personal)

# Budget 2024: A blueprint for long-term growth

The Union Budget 2024-25 reaffirms the Govt's dedication to long-term growth. India is well-positioned to harness its immense potential for rapid development



DEEPAK SOOD



In a pivotal move aimed at strengthening India's economic prowess, the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 has made significant strides in assuring continuity of progressive reforms. There is cheer in the MSME, E-commerce and start-up worlds, which have been extended additional support as the country progresses on the road towards a Viksit Bharat. The Finance Minister made various announcements to empower the Garib, Mahila, Yuva and Kissan. The announcements made under this budget are timely and set to propel the Indian economy to new heights during the Amrit Kaal, enhancing its resilience in an ever-evolving global landscape.

**A booster for MSMEs**  
The budget rightfully supports the bottom of the industrial pyramid by offering much-needed ease of credit for the MSME segment. India has 633.9 lakh MSMEs, where over 99% of them qualify as micro-enterprises that make up 630.5 lakh enterprises. One of the critical reasons why micro enterprises (with investments up to INR 10 million) do not graduate to being small or medium enterprises is the lack of access to formal credit. By doubling the MUDRA loan amounts and setting up new SIDBI branches, credit will now be more accessible to these organizations. Other steps (mandatory Trade Receivables Discounting System) have improved liquidity, while Industrial parks will provide the much-needed digital support that MSMEs usually cannot afford for growth. Additionally, the new credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs offers term loans without collateral or third-party guarantees, significantly easing the financial burden on small business owners and fos-

tering entrepreneurship. Such positive support for this crucial sector is bound to give it the confidence to shed its risk-averse nature and grow with ambition on the road to 2047.

**Skilling and Job Creation**  
With this budget, the Government has responded positively to the need for job opportunities and skill development among youth in our country. The continued emphasis on skilling will allow training institutions and large corporations to participate in creating a pool of professionally trained manpower that would be readily absorbed by them and the larger MSME ecosystem, which is often strained for funds for training purposes. Meticulous implementation will, however, be key to setting the ball rolling in the right direction of creating jobs. Rural Economy

**The rural economy**  
continued to receive support from the government, as strengthening this segment will be crucial for the sustained economic growth of the country. Budget 2024 had some big announcements for them that would increase productivity and food security in grains and oilseeds. Such measures will go a long way in creating new economic clusters that will support sustained growth.

With 1 crore farmers to be trained in natural farming, marketing, certification, and brand-

ing, organic farming is all set to receive a big stimulus. The focus on addressing the impact of climate on our food basket showcases the government's long-term vision towards building resilience in the ecosystem.'

**Start-ups and E-Commerce**  
There is general cheer in the start-up ecosystem across India over the abolition of the angle tax, proposed in the budget. Angel tax, introduced in 2012, was imposed on the capital raised by unlisted companies through the issue of shares to Indian investors if the share price exceeded the fair market value (FMV) of the company. Traders and artisans using e-commerce sites got a lift up in this budget when TDS was not just reduced but TDS delays were decriminalized.

E-commerce exports, \$2 billion now, are expected to be \$350 billion by 2030. With revised custom duties, the Government hopes to give the required fillip to these artisans/traders who sell their wares using websites, in line with its Make in India strategy.

**Energy security**  
India is a fast-developing economy and our energy needs are rising rapidly. By encouraging private investment in setting up small nuclear energy reactors and encouraging R&D into newer forms of nuclear energy, the budget aims to achieve India's goals of energy security. With regular energy audits across

clusters, larger commercial thermal plants and a pumped storage policy, the budget aims to help India cope with the rising demand without missing a step. However, our green economy targets are very ambitious and much more needs to be done to ensure our transition to green fuels.

#### Digitization of Land Records

This one step is perhaps the most impactful step the budget has outlined for the growth of India's economy. Vast tracts of our land, especially in rural India, are often embroiled in disputes with no proper documentation. This is a key hurdle in land acquisition for major projects. By digitising these records across India, the Government will end middlemen and reduce the number of land cases in the legal system. Overall, the Union Budget 2024-25 reinforces the Government's commitment to sustained long-term growth.

With strategic investments and forward-looking policies, India is poised to navigate global challenges while harnessing its immense potential for socio-economic development. The road towards Viksit Bharat could have its set of challenges, especially given the global dynamics, but the sustained vision and progressive policy support will help realise the dream of a Viksit Bharat.

(The writer is secretary general of ASSOCHEM; views expressed are personal)

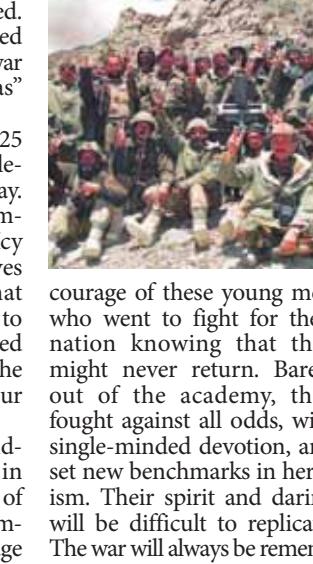
## Commemorating 25 years of Kargil victory: A tribute to India's bravehearts

As we remember the 527 soldiers who laid down their lives, we celebrate the enduring legacy of their heroism and dedication to the nation



RAHUL KAMBLE

Pakistan had named its move to take over the control of Indian posts along the LoC as 'Operation Badr', India called its offensive 'Operation Vijay'. It was a war fought in the era of satellite news channels. The battles were broadcast directly to homes in both countries, making Drass and Kargil as a whole, a symbol of India's nationalism, inspiring a raft of jingoistic Bollywood movies. This July 26 is the 25th Kargil Vijay Divas. On this day we paid



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courage of these young men who went to fight for their nation knowing that they might never return. Barely out of the academy, they fought against all odds, with single-minded devotion, and set new benchmarks in heroism. Their spirit and daring will be difficult to replicate. The war will always be remembered for its strategic and tac-

tical surprise, the self-imposed national strategy of restraint in keeping the war limited to the Kargil-Siachen sector, military strategy and planning, and the dedication, determination and daring junior leadership at the tactical level.

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# Court sets aside physical remand of Pak ex-PM Imran in 12 cases

MAY 9 RIOTS



what kind of evidence the probing team want to get from the suspect (Khan).

The court asked the Punjab prosecutor general to read out the transcript of Khan under which police have registered multiple cases against for inciting the public to attack the state and military installations.

"Physical remand is a serious matter. It is not acceptable if you say a girl is not a girl but a boy," Justice Pannu remarked and further noted "judges are being given more threats these days."

The court official further said the LHC observed that if Imran Khan was not leading the violent protest no case could be instituted against him. On this the prosecutor general argued that Khan incited the public," the court official said.

After hearing the arguments of the prosecutor general and Khan's counsel, the LHC set aside the anti-terrorism court's decision to grant his physical remand noting that he will remain in judicial custody in these cases. Khan is facing over 200 cases mostly of which he is on bail. He has been in jail since August last year.

The PTI believes he is being arrested in more cases on the behest of the powerful military establishment to make sure that he does not come out of jail. Separately, Khan filed a petition against his potential handover to military custody in connection with the May 9 riot cases, arguing that detainees involved in the events should remain

## EC notifies 39 successful MPs as PTI lawmakers

**Islamabad (PTI):** Pakistan's Election Commission has notified 39 successful MPs as lawmakers of Imran Khan's party after the Supreme Court ordered the top electoral body to do so in its verdict on the reserved seats case, a media report said on Thursday.

The notification for the 39 MNAs (Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan) was issued on Wednesday, the Dawn newspaper reported. On July 12, the Supreme Court declared jailed former prime minister Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) eligible to receive reserved seats for women and non-Muslims in the national and provincial assemblies, giving the party a new lease on life in the legislature by declaring it to be a parliamentary party.

under the jurisdiction of civilian courts.

The petition was submitted by Khan's lawyer, Uzair Karamat, to the Lahore High Court. The federal government and the Inspector Generals (IGs) of all four provinces have been made respondents in the case, the Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Khan said that a false narrative had been constructed, accusing him of inciting protests at the General Headquarters (GHQ). He described the May 9 incident as a "false flag operation," asserting that those who stole the CCTV footage of the events were the true culprits.

He criticised the comparison of the May 9 incident to the US Capitol protests on January 6, 2021, highlighting that a thorough and transparent investigation was conducted in the case, leading to the punishment of only the involved individuals, without implicating the entire Republican Party of Donald Trump.

The former premier urged the court to order that custody in the May 9 cases remain with

civilian courts and to issue a stay

order preventing his handing over to military authorities. On Monday, the cricketer-turned-politician expressed concerns that he and his wife, Bushra Bibi, might be sent to a military jail in connection with the May 9 riot cases.

"They plan to send me to a military jail for the May 9 incidents," he said while speaking to the media during a hearing of the Al-Qadir Trust case in the Adiala Jail Rawalpindi.

He had lamented the biased treatment meted out to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers detained in military jails, suggesting a plan to also incarcerate him under similar charges.

Khan was booked on the charges of abetting in attacks on Lahore Corps Commander House known as Jinnah House, Askari Tower, and Shadman police station on May 9, 2023.

He clarified that he had called for peaceful protests outside the army's General Headquarters (GHQ) if arrested but never authorised any violent actions.

Khan accused Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of stealing CCTV footage related to the May 9 events.

Publisher Jimmy Lai will testify in his defence at HK national security trial

**Hong Kong (AP):** A defence lawyer said on Thursday that prominent publisher Jimmy Lai will testify in his defence in the landmark national security trial brought under a Beijing-imposed law that has all but wiped out public dissent. Lai, the 76-year-old founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily newspaper, was arrested in 2020 during a crackdown on the mass pro-democracy protests that rocked Hong Kong in 2019. He was charged with colluding with foreign forces to endanger national security and conspiring with others to put out seditious publications. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison.

On Wednesday, Lai's lawyer Robert Pang argued his client had no case to answer because the prosecutors' evidence was insufficient. Pang said the prosecution had failed to prove Lai's intent after the introduction of the 2020 law and stressed the importance of freedom of speech.

But judges Esther Toh, Susana D'Almada Remedios and Alex Lee ruled against him on Thursday. "Having considered all the submissions, we ruled that the first defendant has a case to answer on all charges," Toh said, without elaborating. Pang later said in court that Lai would testify in his defense, but when he would do so was not immediately settled.

Observers said Lai's high-profile case, which has already stretched over 90 days, is a trial of press freedom and a test for judicial independence in the Asian financial hub.

When Britain handed back Hong Kong to China in 1997, the city was promised to have its Western-style civil liberties kept intact for 50 years. However, the freedoms that once set Hong Kong apart from mainland China, including freedoms of press and assembly, have drastically shrunk since the enactment of the 2020 security law.

Beijing and Hong Kong governments insist that the law brought back stability to the city following the social unrest.

# More than hundred flights cancelled in Germany

## Environmental activists target airports across Europe

AP ■ FRANKFURT



Emergency vehicles from the police, fire department and airport security are parked on the apron at Frankfurt Airport, where a few activists have taped themselves up, in Frankfurt, Germany, on Thursday.

AP/PTI

demonstration, said six protesters cut holes in the perimeter fence and headed toward the runways on foot, bicycles and skateboards.

It was the second time in as many days that a protest by Last Generation caused disruption at other locations as part of an "intelligence-led" operation, the Metropolitan Police Service said in a statement.

One of those arrested in London was Sean Callaghan, 29, who described himself as an environmental educator.

"I'm taking action at airports this summer because it is impossible for me to see a way in which we can inspire and enthuse students about the future of our planet," Callaghan said in a video posted on social media.

Last week, the German Cabinet approved legislation that would impose tougher penalties on people who break through airport perimeters.

The bill, which still requires approval by lawmakers, foresees punishment ranging up to a two-year prison sentence for people who intentionally intrude on airside areas of airports such as taxiways or runways, endanger civil aviation, or enable someone else to. Currently such intrusions only draw a fine.

# China past in terms of investments in Pak, US future, says official

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Days of China investing in Pakistan is now a thing of the past, a senior administration official has told the lawmakers noting that the United States is the future.

"China is the past in terms of investments in Pakistan, we are the future," Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Donald Lu told lawmakers during a Congressional hearing on Tuesday.

Lu was responding to questions from the Congressmen, who expressed concerns over the Chinese investment in Pakistan and other countries in South and Central Asia, including Sri Lanka and Maldives.

"I would argue the Chinese plan is to have a military base in every country and every infrastructure project is made with high interest Chinese loans and low paid Chinese workers. We just see this model all throughout the region," he said. The Chinese bring in their own workers.

They don't actually train local workers to do their enterprises. They extract minerals, literally take gold and copper from the ground and just ship it back for processing in China.

"They don't spend any money in local communities. This is going to have a boomerang effect for Chinese businesses and their interests. We talked about Pakistan and the investments there, USD26 billion.

They put a huge amount of money in Pakistan. I actually don't see them putting a dime in there right now because they're really worried about whether they're going to get their money back there," he said.

"Their really terrible investment strategy is biting them in the ass and we have an opportunity to do a better job to make sure countries know there are options and they don't have to be beholden to one," Lu said.

Congressman Rich McCormick said China has vastly outspent the United States throughout the entire

region, especially in Pakistan since 2012. They are making solid progress in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor known as CPEC.

This gives China a significant leverage over Pakistan, he noted.

"I'm really worried about the future as we invest, how do we leverage our position with Pakistan, our historic relationship given also our relationship with India and that's developing very quickly. How do we balance that and keep that in our advantage?" he asked.

Lu said the US is facing ongoing challenges and opportunities in Pakistan.

"The president's budget requests a straight lining of our USD101 million Pakistan budget. That money will be used to strengthen democracy and civil society, fight terrorism and extremism and to support economic reforms and debt management to help to stabilize Pakistan's economy and prevent further overreliance on China," he said.

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## Putin meets Syrian Prez in Kremlin

**Moscow (AP):** Russian President Vladimir Putin met President Bashar Assad of Syria in the Kremlin, video distributed by the Kremlin press service on Thursday showed. "I am very interested in your opinion on how the situation in the region as a whole is developing," Putin said to Assad. "Unfortunately, there is a tendency towards escalation, we can see that. This also applies directly to Syria."

The Kremlin said Putin and Assad's meeting took place Wednesday. Putin and Assad last met in March 2023 in the Kremlin on the anniversary of Syria's 12-year uprising-turned-civil war. At that meeting, Putin emphasized the Russian military's role in stabilizing the country. Russia has waged a military campaign in Syria since September 2015, teaming up with Iran to allow Assad's government to fight armed opposition groups and reclaim control over most of the country. While Russia now concentrates the bulk of its military resources in Syria, it has maintained a military foothold in Bangladesh and keeps troops at its bases there.

# Possibility of 'growing' Chinese presence in Bangladesh concerns United States

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States is concerned about the possibility of growing Chinese presence in Bangladesh, a senior administration official has told the lawmakers.

"We are concerned about the possibility of a growing Chinese presence in Bangladesh. But I would say the Bangladeshi have been pretty careful about not overextending quickly," Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia told the lawmakers during a Congressional hearing on Tuesday.

"In terms of Russia, Chinese influence in Bangladesh is that area, have you seen any uh things that are concerning in that regard as well?" Congressman Bill Keating asked.

"I would say the most influential country in Bangladesh is actually not Russia or China, it's India. And we have a really active dialogue with India about our policies in Bangladesh and

throughout the wider region," Lu said in response to the question.

Congresswoman Young Kim said the Chinese Communist Party is a top trading partner for Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan, which is around America's strategic partner India.

"The PLA's presence is also intensifying both along the Indian border and in the Indian Ocean. Aid and cooperation play a pivotal role not only in advancing US interests in South Asia, but also in enhancing their prosperity and keeping the region free and open," she said.

Responding to another question from Congressman Andy Kim, Lu said that the recently held elections in Bangladesh had less violence than the previous two.

"We believe that these elections were less violent than the last two in Bangladesh, in part due to both government and opposition taking a step back because of the threat of sanctions," he said.

Lu told the lawmakers that the United States has been following very closely this past week the violence in Bangladesh. Congresswoman Young Kim said the Chinese Communist Party is a top trading partner for Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan, which is around America's strategic partner India.

"It's a very tense moment in Bangladesh between protesters and the government. We hope that calm is restored. I have been in touch with senior leaders in Bangladesh. We remain in touch with them now to try to encourage them to find a peaceful way to resolve this crisis," said the Assistant Secretary of State.

That's what I heard. So we have condemned from the spokesperson of the State Department the shoot on sight order and ask them to roll that back," Lu said.

"We've condemned that violence we've called on the government to respect freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. We've called upon the government to restore internet to the country, which has been off now for several days," he said.

"You will be aware that there is a curfew that has been put in place by the government as a response to some of the violence that's happened. Some in police have said there's a shoot on sight

order for anyone involved in that," Lu said in response to the question.

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# Japan's population falls for 15th year in row

Tokyo (AP): Japan's total population marked the 15th straight year of decline, according to government data released Wednesday, dropping by more than a half-million people as the population ages and births remain low. Births in Japan hit a record low of 730,000 last year. The 1.58 million deaths last year were also a record high. Japan's population was 124.9 million as of January 1.

The data released by the Internal Affairs Ministry also showed that the 11% increase in foreign residents helped their population surpass 3 million for the first time. They now make up nearly 3% of the total population and are mostly of working age from 15 to 64.

Surveys show that younger Japanese are increasingly reticent

## Romania says more Russian drone debris from Ukraine war has landed on its territory

**Bucharest (AP):** Debris from what is believed to be a Russian drone landed in a rural area of Romania, the country's Defense Ministry said on Thursday, in the latest apparent incident of drone wreckage from the war in neighboring Ukraine falling onto the NATO member's soil.

Since the war started in February 2022, Romania has confirmed drone fragments on its territory. The debris of what the Defense Ministry called a "Russia origin" drone were found following Ukraine's port infrastructure near the border. The fragments were discovered by a team of specialists in an uninhabited area near the village of Plauru in Tulcea county.

## Oil tanker sinks in Manila Bay

AP ■ MANILA

A Philippine oil tanker sank in Manila Bay early on Thursday after encountering huge waves, and the coast guard was working to determine whether the vessel was leaking oil — in what could be a major spill — after it rescued 16 of 17 crew members in a nighttime operation, officials said.

The tanker Terra Nova left Bataan province en route to the central province of Iloilo with about 1.4 million liters (370,000 gallons) of industrial fuel oil stored in watertight tanks when it got buffeted by huge waves and took on water. The crew struggled to steer the tanker back to port but it eventually sank shortly after midnight, coast guard spokesperson Rear Admiral Armando Balilo said, citing statements from surviving crew members.

The sinking followed days of monsoon rains, exacerbated by a passing offshore typhoon, that caused landslides and flooding across the archipelago, leaving at least 22 people dead and displacing more than half a million people.

An aerial survey spotted an oil spill about 3.7 kilometers (2.3 miles) long near the rough seas where the tanker sank but that may have come from the fuel intended to power the tanker's engine, not the much greater amount of fuel the Terra Nova was carrying as cargo, Balilo said.

A coast guard ship, the BRP Melchor Aquino, was in the waters where the tanker sank, more than 6 kilometers (about 4 miles) from Bataan province's

coast, to search for the last missing crewman and to carry out an initial assessment of the tanker's fuel oil cargo, Balilo told an online news conference.

He added that the coast guard was bracing to contain a possible major oil spill.

"There's a big danger that Manila would be affected, its shorelines, if the fuel leaks because this happened within Manila Bay. It's part of the contingency we're preparing for," Balilo said. "The effect on the marine environment would not be good."

Balilo later said the oil tanker sank at a relatively shallow depth of 34 meters (111 feet), based on an initial assessment,

# I-T Act review attempt to make it simpler for taxpayers: CBDT chief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Budget announcement about a comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act, 1961, is an attempt to make the "bulky" law "simpler" to understand and comfortable to use for taxpayers along with aligning new technology processes with it, CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal has said.

The Act that started its journey in 1922 contains 298 sections, 23 chapters and other provisions in its current form of 1961.

Speaking to PTI during a post-budget interview on Wednesday, Agrawal said the Act has seen "redundancies" over a period of time making it "thick and bulky".

"The taxpayers also feel that the Act is not so simple, as it ought to be...It is cumbersome...So the attempt is if we can make this Act simpler, simpler to comprehend, simpler in terms of language, simpler in terms of presentation, then that hitch of the taxpayer to actually not see the Act and take the help of a tax practitioner or someone (maybe eased)..."



"We are working towards how can we make it (Income Tax Act) simple so that a taxpayer feels comfortable seeing the provisions himself or herself and that it is more user friendly," the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) head said.

It is also important to review the law as technology has become an integral part of tax administration and "we have to see where the gaps are and how we actually can align technology with the provisions of the Act," Agrawal said.

We are looking to undertake further improvements (in the law), he added.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while

presenting the Union Budget for 2024-25 on Tuesday, announced a "comprehensive" review of the Income Tax Act of 1961. "The purpose is to make the Act concise, lucid, easy to read and understand. This will reduce disputes and litigation, thereby providing tax certainty to the taxpayers. It will also bring down the demand embroiled in litigation. It is proposed to be completed in six months," she said.

Sitharaman added that a beginning was being made in the Finance Bill by simplifying the tax regime for charities, TDS rate structure, provisions for reassessment, search

provisions and capital gains taxation.

Asked about the budget proposal of granting immunity from penalty and prosecution to a "benamidar" (in whose name a benami asset is standing) under the Benami Transactions Prohibition Act, the CBDT chief said this was aimed to make the act "effective".

The minister said the move was intended to "improve conviction" under this law, which was enacted in 1988 but implemented in November 2016 by the Modi government.

A convict under this law can be sentenced to a rigorous imprisonment of up to seven years and a fine of up to 25 per cent of the fair market value of the property.

Benami properties are those in which the real beneficiary is not the one in whose name the property has been purchased.

Agrawal also said that the Income Tax Department has completed about 6.5 lakh assessment cases and about 2 lakh appeals under the faceless assessment regime that was launched by the government in 2019-20.

# Markets extend losses for 5th session

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty stayed on the back foot for the fifth straight session on Thursday as investors offloaded metal, banking and finance stocks amid a lacklustre trend in global markets.

Heavy foreign fund outflows after a hike in securities transaction tax and short-term capital gains tax also impacted markets' sentiment negatively, traders said.

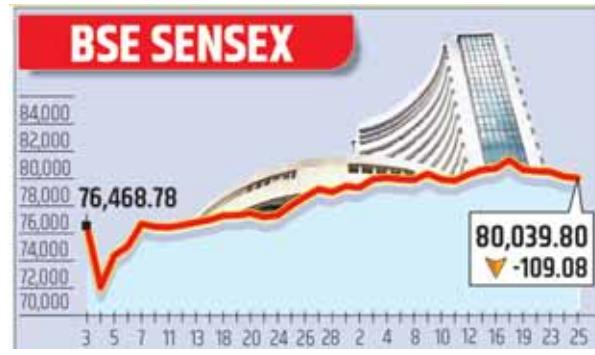
However, strong buying in oil & stocks, energy and auto shares helped the indices offset some losses they added.

After a sharp fall in intra-day trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex managed to recover some of the lost ground to settle 109.08 points or 0.14 per cent lower at 80,039.80, as a sharp rally in Tata Motors and Larsen & Toubro restricted its fall. During the day, it tacked 671 points or 0.83 per cent to 79,477.83.

Shares of Larsen & Toubro ended nearly 3 per cent higher after the company posted a 12 per cent rise in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) in the June quarter.

Tata Motors jumped nearly 6 per cent.

The NSE Nifty dipped 7.40 points or 0.03 per cent to 24,406.10. Intra-day, it tumbled 202.7 points or 0.83



per cent to 24,210.80.

In five days, the BSE benchmark has tumbled 1,303.66 points or 1.60 per cent, while the Nifty declined 394.75 points or 1.59 per cent. "Overnight slump in US equities caused a major slump in domestic markets in early trade due to heavy profit-taking in banking, IT, metals and realty stocks.

However, markets recouped most of its losses towards the end, with Sensex managing to close above the crucial 80k-mark amid buying in oil & gas and automobile stocks.

Global indices also reacted pessimistically due to the disappointing results from top US tech companies.

"However, the government's commitment to improving consumption and bridging the gap for energy transition in the budget buoyed sectoral sentiments," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit

after the company's June quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

Nestle, Titan, ICICI Bank, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, ITC, JSW Steel and State Bank of India were the other laggards.

Sun Pharma, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finance and Power Grid also ended in the positive territory.

"After a volatile session, the Indian market concluded on a flat note, influenced by lower-than-expected earnings growth from major banks.

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Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.22 per cent, and smallcap index dipped 0.14 per cent. Among the indices, metal lost 1.19 per cent, banking (1.10 per cent), realty (0.80 per cent), telecommunication (0.65 per cent) and financial services (0.60 per cent).

On the other hand, energy, healthcare, industrials, utilities, auto and oil & gas were among the gainers.

"Global stocks tumbled on Thursday after a tech-fuelled sell-off on Wall Street last night. A slew of disappointing results caused traders to panic that the artificial-intelligence frenzy that has powered the bull market this year may have been overdone," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower.

European markets were trading in the negative territory in the mid-session deals. US markets ended significantly lower on Wednesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,130.90 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.73 per cent to USD 80.31 a barrel.

## Rationalisation of duties on leather sector to help create more jobs, push exports: CLE

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rationalisation of customs duties in the Budget on leather sector will help create more jobs and push exports, CLE said on Thursday.

The Council for Leather Exports (CLE) said that the Budget announcement of support for setting up working women hostels, establishing creches and women-specific skilling programmes will further enhance the women workforce in the sector.

The employment linked incentive scheme is a major support measure for the leather and footwear sector, as this is a labour-intensive sector, CLE Chairman Rajendra Kumar Jalan said.

"Two major measures have been announced for the leather and footwear sector in the Union Budget. One is the rationalisation of export duties on leathers and the other is the inclusion of more inputs including wet blue chrome tanned leather, wet white leather, crust leather and finished leather under the Duty Free Scheme for leather garments, leather



products and footwear exporters," he said.

Jalan added on the export duty front, the levy on wet blue and crust leather has been brought down from 40 per cent to 20 per cent. This will facilitate the export of value-added processed leathers from the country as there is a huge demand for these leathers in the global market, he said.

"We hope that the government will further reduce this export duty for crust leathers from 20 per cent to nil in future, so as to achieve our objective of enhancing the export of

value-added leathers by USD 1 billion in the next 2-3 years," Jalan said. He added that allowing duty free imports of critical raw materials and inputs, including wet blue, crust and finished leathers, will help facilitate the export of value-added products from the country.

"This will be a major step in realising our ambition of achieving the exporter target of USD 13.7 billion by 2029-30 by the leather and footwear sector, from the export value of USD 4.69 billion during 2023-24," he said.

## Map war intensifies, Google announces new features to woo users in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid rising competition from homegrown challenger Ola Maps, Google on Thursday announced a slew of new features on Google Maps to woo users in India, including EV charging station information, flyover callouts and AI-driven routing capability to reduce narrow road usage for four-wheeler drivers.

It is "an exciting time in mapping", Google Maps said announcing its lineup of new features, which comes in the backdrop of a pitched battle with Ola.

Google recently decided to cut the pricing of Google Maps platform for developers by up to 70 per cent from August 1, just weeks after Ola Founder and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal openly nudged Indian developers to shun Google Maps and offered them sweeteners like one-year free access to Ola Maps.

Replying to a question on the timing of Google Maps' price cuts - coming right after an offensive from Ola - Google Maps senior executives said that while "it's tempting to think that way, but we actually do not focus on competitors".

On Thursday, the company announced six ways it is enabling more efficient and sustainable journeys on



Google Maps in India, powered by AI and local partners.

"These new features reaffirm our commitment to making digital mapping even more helpful for users, businesses, developers and society at large."

Daniel added: "...This is something our partners have been requesting of us for a while, and we've been working on it for quite some time to make sure our infrastructure, our pricing systems are localised and adapted to the needs of our partners in India."

On Thursday, the company announced six ways it is enabling more efficient and sustainable journeys on

narrow roads when driving four-wheelers.

"To address this, we've developed an AI model specifically for Indian roads that incorporates multiple signals satellite imagery, Street View and other information like road types, distance between buildings, paved sections, etc. To estimate road widths at scale, Using these road width estimates, we've fine-tuned our existing AI routing algorithms to help four-wheeler drivers avoid narrow roads whenever possible, without significantly impacting travel time or distance," the blogpost said.

This means four-wheeler drivers can enjoy a less stressful driving experience, and it also benefits bikers, pedestrians and other commuters who can now use these narrow roads more safely and confidently, it added.

Google Maps is starting to roll out this feature on Android devices this week in eight cities - Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Indore, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Guwahati, and has promised to bring the feature to iOS and more cities soon.

Another new feature on Google Maps is call-out flyovers along the recommended route. This feature helps users anticipate upcoming flyovers and prepare ahead of time to get onto the flyover.

"Starting this week, you'll see these flyover callouts in 40 cities across India for both four-wheeler and two-wheeler active navigation on Android apps and Android Auto, iOS and CarPlay support will be coming soon," it said.

Both Narrow Roads and Flyover features have been pioneered in India, tailored to the unique navigation needs of users, it said.

To ensure EV drivers have the tools they need to confidently hit the road, the company has also announced the availability of information about EV charging stations on both Google Maps and Google Search in India.

"To achieve this, we're collaborating with leading EV charging providers in India ElectricPe, Ather, Kazam, and Statiq to add authoritative information for over 8,000 charging stations, representing a significant portion of available charging stations in India," it said.

## Sugar industry body proposes bio-refinery transition plan to Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's cybersecurity market has posted a compounded annual growth rate of 25 per cent since 2019, crossing the USD 6 billion mark in 2023, and is projected to expand further with global spending touching USD 200 billion this year, Prayank Swaroop, partner at global VC fund Accel, said on Thursday.

Cybersecurity startups in the country are poised to see a steady growth on the back of higher spending in the domestic market, he said at the Accel Cybersecurity Summit 2024 in Bengaluru.

Highlighting the potential of the country's cybersecurity market, Swaroop said Indian cybersecurity startups are poised to make a global impact, and continue their growth momentum amid a sharp rise in spending for cybersecurity globally.

The Accel Cybersecurity Summit 2024, India's largest cybersecurity summit, saw participation from across the world. The gathering included prominent founders, global cybersecurity experts and CISOs (chief information security officer) of major enterprises.

ISMA Director General Deepak Ballani said the initiative would help India meet international aviation blending targets set to take effect in 2027 under CORSIA mandates while supporting the country's net-zero and

## Indian cybersecurity startups poised for strong growth amid rising global spend, says Accel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



research firms suggest that global spending in cybersecurity is expected to cross USD 200 billion in 2024.

"Indian cybersecurity startups will impact the global landscape as the market proliferates significantly," he said, adding that the country's cybersecurity market witnessed a 25 per cent CAGR since 2019 and crossed USD 6 billion in 2023.

Indian cybersecurity startups received USD 157 million funding in the past two years. Multiple reports attest to the spike in global spending for cybersecurity, with an IDC report projecting spends upwards of USD 36 billion in the Asia Pacific alone.

This spike in spending, the growing importance of security awareness, a need to foster a robust security system and looking for solutions to the rising spectre of cybersecurity threats were the crux of Swaroop's inaugural address at the summit.

Despite growing interest, data

management, and reporting, thereby allowing cybersecurity practitioners to dedicate more time to strategic initiatives and strengthening defences against cyberthreats.

The growing importance of AI in cyber defence, especially in areas such as early vulnerability detection, automated threat modelling, and real-time threat detection, was also emphasised.

According to Swaroop, generative AI has emerged as an indispensable tool in the war against cyber threats.

"In the future, AI will play an increasingly pivotal role in cyber defence. It is reshaping the industry by enhancing key areas such as early vulnerability detection, automated threat modelling, and real-time threat detection.

"Moreover, it improves vendor risk management, penetration testing, and addressing new attack surfaces created by AI technologies," he said.

The evolution of AI solidifies its status as an indispensable tool in the ongoing war against cyber threats. "We think it is important to secure the AI stack against threats like data poisoning and supply chain vulnerabilities while ensuring compliance and security," Swaroop said.

The Accel partner concluded his address by highlighting the importance of integrating AI technologies to create new opportunities and face more formidable challenges as the broader cybersecurity market expands.

## Budget proposals for marine sector to boost India's aquaculture, seafood exports: MPEDA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



reduced to 5 per cent.

Import duty for insect meal and single-cell protein has been cut down to 5 per cent.

"These announcements made in the Union Budget 2024-25 are set to significantly enhance aquaculture and seafood export sectors," the authority said.

It also said that the government has committed to providing substantial financial support to establish a network of Nucleus Breeding Centres (NBCs) for shrimp broodstocks.

"This initiative is anticipated to drastically reduce India's reliance on imported broodstock, potentially saving the industry up to Rs 150 crore annually," it said adding hatchery operators are expected to benefit significantly, with projected savings of 50 per cent on broodstock costs.

# Classifieds

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, A Chellam Am Mother Of No. 16110701p Rank L have Name Seetha Ram A Presently Residing At 161 Br Coy, 16 Engg Br Regt., P.M.C., Chandimandir Cantt. Panchkula Haryana Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Chellam To A Chellam And Also Change My Date Of Birth From 01 July 1961 To 01 Jan 1957.

I, Kavita Sati Maindoli Is Legally Wedded Spouse Of Army No: 18010703K Rank: NK Name-Mohan Prasad Presently Posted At Unit: 57 Eng Regt C/O 56 Apo Permanent Address: Vill-Gulari, Post-Gulari, Gulari, Chamoli, Uttarakhand-246435 Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Kavita Sati Maindoli To Kavita Mandoli. Vide Affidavit No: 54aa 510493, Dated: 25/07/24

I, Gurpreet Singh S/o Balwinder Singh R/o W.No. 06 Nanak Nagri Makhu Road Zira (Ferozepur) have changed my name to Gurpreet Singh Ratan.

I, Gurpreet Singh S/o Balwinder Singh R/o W.No. 06 Nanak Nagri Makhu Road Zira (Ferozepur) have changed my name to Gurpreet Singh Ratan.

I, Surender Kaur W/o Ravinder Singh R/o W.No. 06 Kartar Nagar Moga (Moga) have changed my name to Suninder Kaur.

I, Daya Wanti W/o Harpal Singh R/o Factory Road, Kotkapura (Faridkot) have changed my name to Daya Yadav.

I, Gurpreet Singh S/o Basant Singh R/o Village Dawareana (Faridkot) Declares that I am known by two names Gurpreet Singh and Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

I, Aarti Arora W/O Sunil Kumar R/O Noordi Adda Chowki Tehsil & District Taran Taran Haryana have changed my name from Aarti Arora. Vide Affidavit No: 54aa 510491, Dated: 25/07/24

I, Jasvandi Is Legally Wedded Spouse Of No. Jc 334183 Rank: Sub Name-Pawar Samadhan Shivaji Presently Posted At Unit: Ge Project Airforce, Ambala, Haryana Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Jasvandi To Jasvandi Samadhan Pawar. Vide Affidavit No: 54aa 510491, Dated: 25/07/24

I, Bindu W/O No 4002063a Hav Ravinder Kumar Resident Of Village- Tathpal, Post-Tathpal Teh: Palampur Dist: Kangra (H.P) Have Changed My Name From Bindu To Bindu Devi Vide Affidavit/Self Declaration On Dated 25/7/24

I, No Jc 334183m Rank: Sub Name-Pawar Samadhan Shivaji Presently Posted At Unit: Ge Project Airforce, Ambala, Haryana Declare That I Have Changed My Son's Name From Utkarsh To Utkarsh Samadhan Pawar. Vide Affidavit No: 54aa 510492, Dated: 25/07/24

I, Jaliffan Begam Am Mother Of Army No-18020993a Hav Ravinder Kumar R/o H.No. 3/Urban Estate, Phase 1, Patiala (Pb.) have changed my name to Jaliffan Singh.

I, Poonam Rani W/o Ravinder Kumar R/o V.P.O. Garhi Birbal, Tehsil Indri, Distt Karnal have changed my name from Poonam to Poonam Rani.

I, Ravinder Kumar S/o Shyam Murari R/o 16, Panchkula, Haryana have changed my name from Ravinder to Ravinder Kumar.

I, Pooja Sethi W/o Mr. Ajay Sethi R/o H. No. 203/13 Extension Urban Estate, Karnal I have changed my name from Pooja Prothia to Pooja Sethi.

I, Raj Kaur W/o Late Gulzar Singh R/o H. No. 270, Village Dabbi, Distt. Karnal, I Declare that I have changed the name of my minor Granddaughter Gursirat to Gursirat Kaur.

I, Himani Bansal W/o Ravish Goyal R/o #108 Pooja Enclave-1 Patiala have changed my name to Himani Goyal.

I, Isha W/o Ravish Goyal R/o #110-A Sant Nagar Patiala have changed my name to Isha Goyal.

I, Monika Rani W/o Ajay Goyal R/o #8 Narula Colony Lower Mall Patiala have changed my name to Monika Goyal.

I, Harvinderpal Singh S/O Harjinder Singh R/O Vill Attari, Post Mahamal, Ferozepur, Have Changed My Name Harvinderpal Singh Thind.

I, Pardeep Kumar S/o Sagan Lal R/o Inder Nagri Jalandhar West Tehsil Jalandhar Distt Fazilka Have Changed My Name From Pardeep Chugh To Pardeep Kumar.

I, Gurjeet Kaur Dhillion W/o Jagannander Singh Dhillion R/o P.B. Bhuttiwala District Sri Muktsar Sahib Have Changed My Name To Gurpreet Kaur Dhillion.

I, Balvir Singh S/o Darshan Singh R/o Vill: Ghaispur Teh Mukerian (Hoshiarpur) have changed my name from Balbir Singh to Balvir Singh.

I, Amit Sharma & Co-Officer: Ch. No. 270, First Floor, Sector 1, Distt. Court Panchkula, Haryana. Mob: 92160-87146, 87084-94855 Email ID: amitsharmaadv@ymail.com & aslegal23@gmail.com

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Govt. of Haryana



www.haryanasports.gov.in

“खेल में कोई लूजर नहीं होता,  
सिर्फ विनर और लर्नर होते हैं।  
हमारी सरकार हर स्तर पर खेल  
को बढ़ावा देने के लिए पूरी  
प्रतिबद्धता से काम कर रही है।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी



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## #Cheer4Bharat



Among Qualified 117 National Players  
for Paris Olympics-2024

Haryana's  
**25**  
2% population - 22% players

**Best of Luck**  
to every participating player  
from 140 crore Indians

Prize money given by Haryana Government  
to Olympic medal winners



**Gold**  
₹6  
Crore



**Silver**  
₹4  
Crore



**Bronze**  
₹2.5  
Crore

Amount of  
**₹15 Lakh**  
to all  
the participating  
players

