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GROWTH RISES IN JUNE: PMI

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Modi silences critics on Manipur



Prime Minister Narendra Modi replies to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Rajya Sabha during ongoing Parliament session, in New Delhi, on Wednesday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday silenced his critics on the Opposition benches in the Rajya Sabha by informing the House that violence in Manipur is continuously declining, schools have reopened in most parts of the State, and efforts are being made to ensure return of complete peace.

President Droupadi Murmu's address to a joint sitting of Parliament, the Prime Minister said more than 500 people have been arrested and over 11,000 FIRs registered in Manipur. Modi said the Centre is working with the State Government and others to restore normalcy in the State. Addressing Rajya Sabha members, Modi said Manipur is also grappling with floods, prompting the Centre to dispatch two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to the flood-

hit State. Modi also promised action in the NEET paper leak case, and listed out achievements of his past two terms and priorities for the third. The Prime Minister spoke at length on the alleged irregularities in the conduct of competitive exams, and asserted that tough action will be taken against those involved in paper leaks. "We wanted there should be no politics on a sensitive issue like paper leak, but the Opposition is used to it. I assure the youth of India that

action is being taken to ensure that those who play with the future of students are handed down strict punishment," he said. On Manipur, Modi said Union Home Minister Amit Shah himself led from the front the efforts for peace by being in Manipur.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the deeply rooted social conflict in Manipur has a long history, leading to the imposition of President's rule 10 times since Independence. He also mentioned the five-year-long social conflict in Manipur from 1993 onwards. Modi emphasised that there is a need to handle the situation with wisdom and patience. He invited all the like-minded people to help him in his efforts to ensure normalcy and peace in Manipur. The Prime Minister has been facing the wrath of Opposition led by Congress which has charged that Modi is yet to speak on the floor of Parliament on the burning issue of Manipur violence and had again given a miss to the subject in his more than two-hour long speech in the Lok Sabha a day earlier. The Opposition also alleged that the Prime Minister did not address the issue of paper leaks about which Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had written to the Prime Minister requesting a discussion on NEET and NET paper leaks.

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Police personnel keep vigil outside a hospital during Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath's visit to meet the injured victims a day after the stampede that occurred during a 'satsang' (religious congregation), in Hathras district, on Wednesday

Rush for darshan led to Hathras stampede

PN ■ LUCKNOW

Chaos caused after Narayan Sakaar Hari's followers, who tried to reach near his vehicle to seek "darshan", were pushed by the godman's security and a "slippery slope" resulted in the stampede that killed 121 people in Hathras, a preliminary report of the SDM said. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday announced a judicial probe into the tragedy while not ruling out the possibility of a "conspiracy" behind the stampede. Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Sikandra Rao submitted the preliminary report on the stampede to the district magistrate (DM). The SDM, who gave permission for the "satsang" (religious congregation), was also present at the venue when the incident occurred, according to the report. "A crowd of more than 2 lakh people was present in the satsang pandal. Shri Narayan Sakaar Hari (Bhole Baba) reached the satsang pandal at

about 12.30 pm and the program went on for 1 hour.

"After this, at about 1.40 pm, Narayan Sakaar Hari (Bhole Baba) came out of the pandal to go towards Etah on National Highway-91," the preliminary report said, adding that when the godman was leaving the venue, his followers started running towards him for a 'darshan' and collect soil from around his feet. "Satsangi women/men/children etc. Started applying the dust of Baba's feet on their foreheads (while trying) to get his darshan, touch his feet and take his blessings," reads the report dated July 2. The situation worsened when more people waiting on the divider of the road ahead began running towards his vehicle, it said. "A large number of people were already standing on the dividers in the middle and on the sides of GT road, who started jumping from the dividers and started running towards Baba's vehicle to get his darshan."

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Out on bail, Hemant Soren to become Jharkhand CM again

RAJESH KUMAR ■ RANCHI/NEW DELHI

In a major development, minutes after Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren resigned as the State's Chief Minister barely 152 days after taking oath, his predecessor and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's chief, Hemant Soren who is out on bail in the money-laundering case by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) staked claim to form the next Government which he relinquished a few months ago before his arrest by the probe agency.

This is for the third time that Hemant will become the Chief Minister of Jharkhand. He will be the 13th Chief Minister of the State, which was carved out of Bihar on November 15, 2000.



"A few days ago, I was made the Chief Minister and I got the responsibility of the State. After Hemant Soren was back, our alliance took this decision and we chose Hemant Soren as our leader. I have resigned as per the decision of the JMM-led alliance. Our alliance is strong. All know what had happened with Hemant Soren... I was given the responsibility by the coalition partners. Now, the alliance has decided in favour of Hemant Soren", Champai said after coming out of Raj Bhawan.

A request was also submitted to Governor C P Radhakrishnan by Hemant to form the Government. After meeting with the Governor, Hemant told the media that all formalities to form the Government are complete.

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Kuki ailing in Manipur jail gets Supreme Court's healing touch

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Wednesday took a strong note of an undertrial prisoner lodged in a Manipur jail not being taken to a hospital for treatment just because he belonged to the minority 'Kuki' community, saying it does not "trust the State".

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan made some strong observations against the State while hearing a plea filed by Lunghongam Haokip that he was suffering from piles and tuberculosis and was not taken to hospital by jail officials despite having severe backache.

"We do not trust the State...The accused was not taken to hospital because he is from the Kuki community. So sad! We direct him to be examined now. If the medical report reveals something serious, we will take you to task," the bench said.

The counsel for Haokip claimed the jail officials did not pay heed to persistent requests for medical help. The bench perused an order of the Manipur High Court and found that the



undertrial prisoner was not taken to hospital since he was from Kuki community and "shifting him to a hospital will be hazardous taking into account the law and order situation". Manipur has been in the grip of an ethnic conflict between the minority Kuki and majority Meitei communities. The bench directed the jail superintendent and the State authorities "to make necessary arrangements for his transportation to the Gauhati Medical College and get him examined therein. The medical exam shall be as regards piles, TB, tonsillitis, abdominal pain as well as problems in lower lumbar spine".

It sought a detailed medical report on or before July 15 and asked the State to bear all the expenses including the treatment cost. Manipur descended into chaos and violence in May last year over a high court order directing the State Government to consider including the non-tribal Meitei community in the list of Scheduled Tribes. More than 170 people have been killed and several hundred others injured since ethnic violence first broke out in the state on May 3 last year when a "Tribal Solidarity March" was organised in hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for ST status.

Seventh bridge collapse in 15 days alarms Bihar

ARCHANA JYOTI ■
PATNA/NEW DELHI

Even as a high-level panel of the Bihar Government has launched a probe into the recent spate of bridge collapses across the State, yet another incident on Wednesday involving a bridge over the Gandak river in Siwan district of the State has raised serious concern about the quality of infrastructure and public safety.

The latest bridge collapse marks the seventh such incident in a span of just 15 days in the State and second in Siwan district in the last 11 days.

Mercifully, however, despite the severity of these collapses, there have been no casualties thus far. With the State's rivers swelling due to continuous heavy rain, the possibility of more such incidents occurring in the coming days cannot be discounted, members of the Bihar Engineering Services Association (BESA) have warned.

The troubling series of incidents began on June 19 with the collapse of an under-construction bridge in Araria, followed by collapses in Siwan on June 22, East Champaran on June 23, and Kishanganj on June 24. The collapse of the bridge over the Gandaki river in Deoria Block in Siwan district on



A view of the collapsed bridge amid heavy rain in Bihar's Siwan district on Wednesday

Wednesday has severed essential connections between several villages and Maharaiganj, leaving the locals at the receiving end.

Deputy Development Commissioner Mukesh Kumar said the exact cause is under investigation. Senior officials from the block have already reached the site, he added.

"A portion of a bridge in Deoria block collapsed this morning. The exact cause is being investigated," he added. "The incident took place around 5 am. As per initial information, the bridge was constructed in 1982-83. Repair work was going on the bridge for the last few days,"

Kumar added. Villagers suggested that heavy rainfall over the preceding days may have contributed to the collapse, with a surge in Gandaki river potentially weakening the bridge's structure.

This incident follows closely on the heels of another bridge collapse in the district just 11 days ago. On June 22, a portion of a bridge collapsed in Darouanda area, prompting the Bihar Government to set up a high-level committee to investigate these occurrences. The cave-in was also reported from the Bheja police station area of Madhubani district, situated in the State's northern extreme, along the borders

with Nepal. The bridge that collapsed in Bihar's Thakurganj was built in 2007-08, and had been rendered unusable after it developed a crack and sank by a foot.

Similarly, a bridge in Thakurganj block succumbed to rising water levels in the Bund River following heavy rains, causing it to sink by a foot and crack, rendering it too dangerous for use. The bridge, located in Khoshi Dangi village of Patharia panchayat, was constructed in 2007-2008 with funds from the MP budget of the then MP Md Tasleemuddin of Thakurganj and was connecting several

panchayats. This incident follows the collapse of an under-construction bridge in the Madhubani region on June 28 which was being built by the Rural Works Department of the Bihar government at a cost of ₹3 crore since 2021.

Following the collapses, the blame game has already begun, intensifying concerns about accountability and oversight in Bihar's infrastructure management. Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge took a swipe at the bridge cave-in in the State while Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi smelled a possible conspiracy behind the incidents, implying a deliberate attempt to defame the BJP-led State Government. "Why has the State suddenly started witnessing incidents of bridge collapse? Why is it happening after the Lok Sabha polls? Why were such incidents not taking place a month before? I suspect some conspiracy behind it. Authorities concerned must look into this aspect," Manjhi said. He also acknowledged the use of sub-standard materials by contractors as a contributing factor and assured that the State Government is taking action against those responsible.

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Twitters of Koo set to fall silent

ASAD ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian dream of having an alternative to Twitter (now X) has been shattered as the 'desi' social media platform launched in 2020 with much fanfare, and with many top Indian politicians and Government departments joining in, is to shut down.

The world came to know about the yellow bird, Koo, stopping to chirp when its co-founders penned a touching note on Wednesday about the tough decision to bid adieu. The disheartening news has been received with anguish by many Koo users. Die-hard Koo fan Vinit Goenka, former Governing Council Member of CRIS, Ministry of Railways, is upset with the news. "This shutdown will be a significant setback for those who believe in the democratic values of social media, as it highlights the unending

dominance of Western media and their colonisation of the social media app space," he said.

In an emotion-filled post on LinkedIn, co-founders Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka shared their frustrating journey and insurmountable challenges, writing, "We explored partnerships with multiple larger internet companies, conglomerates, and media houses, but these talks didn't yield the outcome we desired." They expressed their regret, saying, "While we would have loved to keep the app running, the high cost of technology and services to maintain a social media platform has forced us to take this tough

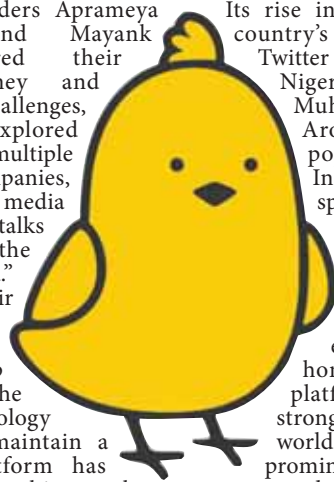
decision." Founded in India, Koo soared to great heights, spreading its wings to Kenya and Brazil while in its prime.

Its rise in Kenya followed the country's indefinite ban on Twitter for deleting a tweet by Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. Around 2021, Koo's popularity surged in India amid a contentious spat between the Indian Government and Twitter. This conflict prompted calls to expand the ecosystem of homegrown digital platforms, echoing strongly across the virtual world and propelling Koo to prominence. For a while, it seemed that this homegrown

platform would significantly challenge and perhaps even surpass Twitter's popularity in India.

However, this anticipated turn of event never came to pass as Twitter managed to smoothen its relationship with the Government. Koo experienced a rollercoaster ride in its short existence. At its peak, this indigenous platform boasted around 2.1 million daily active users, approximately 10 million monthly active users, and over 9,000 VIPs, including some of the most prominent personalities from various fields.

"We were just months away from beating Twitter in India in 2022 and could have doubled down on that short-term goal with capital behind us," they said. "Unfortunately for us, the mood of the market and the fund crunch got the better of us," the note mentioned as the founders signed off.



Sensex breaches 80,000 mark for first time

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex breached the historic 80,000 level intraday for the first time while Nifty raced more than 162 points to close at a fresh lifetime high on Wednesday following heavy buying in banking and FMCG shares amid firm global market trends. The 30-share Sensex hit the historic 80,000 mark for the first time earlier in the day. It surged 632.85 points or 0.79 per cent to a record intraday high of 80,074.30.

The index later closed near the 80,000 level at 79,986.80, up by 545.35 points or 0.69 per cent over the last close. As



many as 24 Sensex shares closed with gains and six declined. The BSE Sensex breached the 78,000 level on June 25 and 79,000 for the first time on June 27. The Nifty climbed 162.65 points or 0.67 per cent to end at an all-time high of 24,286.50. During the day, it zoomed 183.4 points or 0.76 per cent to hit a fresh intraday record peak of 24,307.25. As many as 40 Nifty shares advanced, nine declined and one closed unchanged. Among the Sensex pack, Adani Ports rose the most by 2.49 per cent.

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Army Chief visits areas along LoC in Poonch

MOHIT KANDHAR ■ JAMMU

Army Chief General Uday Shankar Dwivedi on Wednesday visited the forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch district of Jammu during his maiden visit to Jammu and Kashmir after assuming charge as the 30th Chief of the Indian Army on June 30.

During his day-long visit, General Dwivedi also reviewed the overall security situation against the backdrop of the ongoing Amarnath yatra and the operational preparedness of the troops deployed in the region.

General Dwivedi, as the Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command Lt Gen Sushindra Kumar, and General Dwivedi, as the Commanding Officer of Jammu-based White Knight Corps Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva accompanied the Chief of



Army Staff along with other senior officers.

In Poonch, the Army Chief chaired a meeting of field commanders before taking an aerial review of forward areas. The Indian Army in a post on X said, "General Uday Shankar Dwivedi COAS, along with Army Commander Northern Command, visited the forward locations of White Knight Corps & reviewed the security situation along the Line of Control LOC. COAS was briefed on the operational preparedness by the

carrying out intensive anti-terrorist operations in the areas south of Pir Panjal to flush out the foreign terrorists who may have carved out fresh hideouts deep inside the thickly forested jungles and the natural caves to dodge the security forces.

According to official sources, between October 2021 and May 4, 2024, the Indian Army suffered huge collateral damage in these ambushes orchestrated in the areas South of Pir Panjal to spread the 'arc of terror' across the Jammu region. The standoff between the Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh also impacted the security scenario with the shifting of a large number of troops to beef up Indian defenses in the cold desert region. Statistics revealed a total number of 35 Army personnel were 'killed in action' in different targeted strikes across Jammu and Kashmir during the same period. In contrast, only five terrorists were neutralized in these operations.

Interestingly, the foreign terrorists adopted the same modus operandi in these 'audacious' strikes. The Chief of Army staff also interacted with some ex-servicemen at 93 Infantry Brigade.

According to an ADGPI post on X, "General Dwivedi also interacted with the parents of Bravehearts of the Poonch region who laid down their lives in the service of the Nation. COAS also met the Veterans & assured them of unwavering support from the Indian Army. He also interacted with officials of Jammu and Kashmir police & prominent Civil dignitaries and appreciated their synergy & cooperation with the Indian Army in maintaining peace & harmony in the region.

TDF to promote self-reliance in defence production

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of enhancing self-reliance in defence manufacturing, the Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme is encouraging the participation of public and private industries, especially start-ups and MSMEs.

Till date, a total of 77 projects, with a commitment of over Rs 300 crore, have been sanctioned to various industries, and 27 defence technologies have been successfully realised under the scheme, defence ministry said here on Wednesday.

The TDF scheme is a flagship programme of Ministry of Defence executed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under the 'Make in India' initiative. Citing some examples,

officials said Combat Robotics, the Pune-based start-up, has successfully developed an Innovative Simulator for Unmanned Vehicles. It is a multi-domain simulator that supports Unmanned Ground Vehicles (UGVs), Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs), Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USVs), and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), serving as an excellent development tool for agencies working on developing autonomous systems.

The simulator provides Comprehensive Environmental Modelling, Scenario and Vehicle Modelling and Intuitive Control Systems with Developer Documentation. It is designed to cater to the demands of testing, and validate the autonomous behaviours of unmanned vehicles across multiple domains. It has been developed under the aegis of Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR), a Bengaluru-based laboratory of DRDO.

Similarly, virtual sensors for Aero Gas Turbine Engine Health Monitoring project involves development of a comprehensive diagnostic system of various parts of Aero Gas Turbine Engine (AGTE), leading to increased operational reliability and longevity of the engine.

The system is built on stronger foundations of modern Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) technologies. It efficiently handles large-scale data, and conducts operational assessments rapidly with a high degree of accuracy.

Not hungry for posts: Bengal PCC chief Adhir

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A Congress high command is looking for a new Mamata Banerjee-compatible face to lead the party's Bengal unit. The present Pradesh Congress President Adhir Chowdhury has made it clear that he is not hungry for posts and that he will quit his post whenever he is called upon by the central leadership to do so.

"Let my party workers and the people of Bengal know that I am not hungry for any post ... I have been in politics and worked for my party because I have loved to do so ... I never craved for any post ... nor I do crave for one now ... nor will I yearn for it in future," Chowdhury the former Congress leader in Lok Sabha said.

Inside reports say that post elections and his defeat in Behrampur some kind of



coldness have entered in the relationship between Chowdhury and his bosses in Delhi.

The uncrowned king of Behrampur, Chowdhury who won the parliamentary seat for five consecutive times faced a shocking defeat at the hands of TMC candidate and former India cricketer Yusuf Pathan in the recently concluded general elections.

When asked earlier as to whether he was quitting as the PCC president he said he

high command. Till then Chowdhury will continue to function as the PCC president.

A fierce bete noire of the Bengal Chief Minister whom the TMC supremo have repeatedly accused for spiking a Congress-TMC alliance Chowdhury holds Mamata Banerjee responsible for his party's sagging fortunes in the State. He has often gone on record saying that "Mamata Banerjee has literally killed the Congress in Bengal first by breaking the party in 1998 and then by engineering defections, implicating our workers in false cases and forcing them to join the TMC."

Chowdhury is of the view that if the Congress still goes back to TMC for national compulsions then there would be no Congress left in Bengal.

This is the reason his close aides say why he opted for the Left and not the TMC as an alliance partner.

SFI-linked students threaten college principal

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

In a bizarre incident of its kind, students belonging to the SFI (the student wing of the CPI-M) at Gurudeva College of Advanced Studies, Kozhikode, have issued a death threat to Sunil Bhaskar, the principal of the college. Bhaskar is known as a stickler for discipline and decorum and the SFI's complaint against him arises for his refusal of permission to them to open a help desk outside his cabin in the college.

On Monday, when the college reopened for the new academic year and the four-year degree course was launched, the SFI had arranged a welcome party to the new comers as part of the student organization's bid to establish its monopoly among the freshers. But the Principal requested them to have the merry making and other activities outside the college premises. This provoked the SFI chieftains who barged int

his cabin shouting slogans and threatening him with dire consequences," a member of the teaching faculty told The Pioneer.

Enraged by the Principal's stance, the SFI leaders reportedly slapped and kicked him. But one of the SFI leaders accuse the principal of slapping him and he had to take recourse in the government hospital for treatment. "Our young comrade B R Abhinav is in a serious condition as a fall out of the Principal's brutality. We will not allow the principal to enter the college if he continues with the tirade against the SFI leaders," said Navtej Mohan, area secretary of the SFI.

He also alleged that Abhinav is one of the strongest leaders in the region. "We will decide whether the Principal would be able to walk on his two legs. This is a statement being made by the SFI. When SFI makes a statement, we would have done it and we do things about which we say," said

Mohan.

B P Bipeesh, leader of the DYFI, warned the principal that if the latter refuses to mend his ways, they would nit hesitate to burn him alive. The SFI is the most dreaded student wing in the State after the Islamic outfits like Popular Front of India, SIMI and SDPI.

The SFI is hand in glove with these organizations as the members of the banned Islamic outfits operate through the students wing of the CPI(M). In 2018, the SFI activists had staged a symbolic burial for Dr T N Sarasu, former principal of Government Victoria College, Palakkad, on the day of her retirement from service. They made a mock grave in front of the college and fixed a hoarding "Thanks for your great service". Sarasu had been fielded as a BJP candidate from the Alathur constituency in the recent Lok Sabha election. "It really hurt me because this is what I got in return for my services to the student community. The complaint against me was that I tried to save the decency and dignity of the girl students in the college," Sarasu had told this newspaper some time ago. SFI leaders who figure in mark list scams go around the State demanding that only persons acceptable to them should be appointed as principals. Many instances of students failing in degree examinations getting admitted to post graduate courses have come out in the open thanks to the good work being done by whistleblowers like R Sasikumar of the Save University Campaign.

R Bindu, minister for higher education, says that Kerala is the only State offering top quality higher education to the Students. But Saji Cherian, minister for culture says that students passing out of matriculation in Kerala are incapable of writing their names either in Malayalam or English. Both Bindu and Cherian are veteran CPI(M) leaders.

HC adjourns hearing on libel suit against Didi

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court has adjourned till Thursday the hearing of the defamation suit filed by Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

After hearing the petition the Court directed the advocate of the petitioner to re-register the case on certain technical issues. In an unprecedented development in the history of post Independence Bengal a Governor had filed a defamation suit against a Chief Minister. Bose had earlier sued Banerjee over her alleged comments against him.

In an apparent reference to the "inordinate delay" being made by the Raj Bhavan in organising the oath-taking formalities of two newly elected TMC MLAs, Banerjee had reportedly said that she had been told by some women leaders that they were afraid of going to the Governor's House because of some activities taking place there. Bose had immediately retorted saying that such statements should not have come from a Chief Minister.

Boat carrying 15 journalists overturns at Bhandara

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

A boat carrying around 15 media persons overturned in the Wainganga River here at Bhandara in eastern Maharashtra after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde inaugurated a mega-water tourism project. However, no one was injured. The local police that the boat, which was filled to capacity, turned turtle, when some of the media persons moved to the other side of the vessel tilting its balance, resulting in several of the journalists falling into the water.

Before long, a team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel that had been stationed at a nearby place rushed to the scene rescued those in water and put them back in the boat which had by then regained its balance. Earlier, Shinde had launched the first phase of a Rs 102 crore tourism water project at the Wainganga River in the presence of Bhandara district Collector Yogesh Kumbhakar, local MLA Narendra Bhonekar, Maharashtra Tourism Development

Rush for darshan...

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"Then Baba's personal security personnel (Black Commandos) and sevadars started pushing and shoving the crowd themselves to stop the crowd, due to which some people fell down," the report states, adding this led to a panic and the crowd went out of control.

"Due to which the crowd ran towards the open field in front of the venue to get relief, on the other side of the road, where most of the people slipped and fell due to the wet slope while descending from the road towards the field," the report said.

Those who fell could not get up again and were run over by those coming from behind, it said.

"After this, they could not get up again and the crowd started running here and there over them," the report mentioned. "Mukhya sevadar" Devprakash Madhukar and other organisers have been named in the first information report (FIR) filed at the Sikandar Rau police station late on Tuesday, a senior officer told.

Yogi met those injured in the incident at the venue of the religious congregation here and obtained information from the eyewitnesses about the course of events preceding the tragedy. Asserting the Government will ensure that such incidents do not recur, the Chief Minister said a standard operating procedure might be put in place for religious congregations. "A judicial probe by a retired high court judge will be conducted into the incident," he said. "If this is not an accident, then whose conspiracy is this? All of these will be probed. Retired officials of the police and civic administration will be part of the judicial inquiry and action will be taken against those found responsible."

Yogi said the Government had formed a Special Investigation Team led by the additional director general (ADG) of police, Agra, which has given its preliminary report.

Sensex breaches...

From Page 1

Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India, Power Grid, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors and Larsen & Toubro were the laggards.

"A broad-based rally was witnessed in the Indian market, boosted by large caps, with financials taking centre stage. With the drop in Indian banks' GNPA to a 12-year low, the sector is anticipated to outperform in the near term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

On the global front, the US Federal Reserve chief's commentary on inflation cooling down to 2 per cent by the end of CY25 was sentimentally positive. FOMC minutes later in the day might give hints on the start of the rate-cut cycle, Nair added.

"Markets edged higher, gaining over half a per cent, driven by favourable cues. Upbeat global markets and strength in banking majors led to a strong start, followed by a range-bound movement until the close," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Seventh bridge collapse in 15 days...

From Page 1

"It is happening because of the sub-standard material being used by contractors. The state government is taking action against such contractors. The state authorities are probing the matter as well. I also request them to probe the conspiracy angle," he added.

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav took a sarcastic jibe at the Nitish Kumar-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Bihar. In a post on X, he wrote, "Congratulations! The double power of the double engine government has led to only five bridges collapsing in just nine days."

GNDU gets new Director Research

PNS ■ AMRITSAR

Dr Maninder Lal Singh, Professor, Department of Electronics Technology joined as Director Research, Guru Nanak Dev University. On the occasion of his joining, Dr KS Kahlon, Registrar, Dr Shalini Behl, Professor Incharge (Examination), Dr Ravinder Kumar, Head, Department of Electronics Technology, Dr Ravinder S Sawhney, Professor, Department of Electronics Technology and other Colleagues and Staff members were present.

GNDU announces date for second counseling for UG courses

The GNDU is admitting the students in the various UG courses: MBA (FYIP) (with dual specialisation) / MBA (FYIP) (Finance) / MCom (FYIP) / MCA (FYIP) / Master of Hotel Management and Catering Technology (MHMCT) (FYIP) / Master of Tourism & Travel Management (MTTM) (FYIP) / MSc (Computational Statistics & Data Analytics) (FYIP) / MSc Economics (FYIP) / MSc Fashion Designing (FYIP) / MA

Journalism & Mass Communication (FYIP) / Bachelor of Business Administration (Agri Storage and Supply Chain) / BA Social Sciences (4 Years), M.Sc fashion designing etc. through UCAT - 2024.

Prof Vikram Sandhu, Co-ordinator for the test and admission counselling, told that 2nd round of counseling was fixed from 4 July. Interested candidates can check the updated schedule and list of vacant seats by visiting the website https://gnduadmissions.org. https://gnduadmissions.org.

Modi silences critics on...

From Page 1

INDIA Bloc parties, led by the Congress, staged a walkout in the Upper House after the Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was not allowed to intervene during Prime Minister's speech. Kharge wanted to intervene during Modi's reply to a discussion on the motion thanking the President for her address to the joint sitting of the Parliament. Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, however, did not concede his requests, prompting INDIA bloc MPs

to raise slogans demanding that the LoP be allowed to speak.

Modi continued his speech amid the din of sloganeering. This went on for some time with Kharge repeatedly pleading to be allowed to speak. When the permission did come through, INDIA bloc MPs staged a walkout in the House. Dhankhar condemned their action, saying this was an insult to the Constitution.

Modi, too, decried the walkout and said he is not trying to score points but is duty-bound to give an account of his government's performance.

The 264th session of Raja Sabha, which began on June

27, concluded after Prime Minister replied to the motion of thanks, and the House adopted it. Raja Sabha was adjourned sine die on Wednesday after the House adopted the Motion of Thanks on the President's address to the joint sitting of Parliament. Sources said the Monsoon Session is likely to begin shortly during which the annual Budget is to be presented by the third tenure of NDA Government led by Narendra Modi.

Modi listed out achievements of his previous terms, ranging from raising of the minimum support price for crops to giving the poor access to the banking system and loans, and driving India's rise to

become the fifth largest economy in the world. Rejecting the charge that the Government was misusing probe agencies, Modi cited statements made by Opposition leaders like late Mulayam Singh Yadav who had accused the UPA Government of using ED and CBI against them. He also accused the Opposition of selective outrage on atrocities against women, saying none of them said a word on public beating of a woman in West Bengal.

Modi accused the Grand Old Party of being "the biggest opponent of the Constitution" and of running a "fake narrative" to mislead the public.

Modi takes a dig at Congress for defending AAP after Kejriwal arrest

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday took a dig at the Congress for defending the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was sent to jail on accusations of corruption, underlining that Congress leaders in Delhi had accused AAP of the liquor scam. Modi attacked the Congress for what he called "save corrupt agitation" while attacking the AAP for alleged corruption including in the now-scrapped 2021-22 Delhi excise policy. He listed the alleged scams involving AAP including the excise policy case.

"The AAP does corruption, the AAP commits liquor scam, the AAP commits corruption, the AAP commits scam in building classrooms for children, the AAP even commits water scam... The Congress complains against the AAP. The Congress drags the AAP to court and when they are sent to jail, then they abuses Modi. Congress leaders addressed press conferences making corruption charges on AAP. Can they tell us today - was the evidence they showed correct or



false? They are duplicitous," Modi said, replying to the Motion of Thanks on the President's address. Modi said the Congress had presented so many proofs of AAP's scams before the country in a press conference. Now that the Congress and AAP are partners, was all the evidence presented a lie? "The Congress should now answer whether those proofs were true or false, he said.

He accused the Congress and AAP of double standards. "Those who are now accusing the Central government of misusing investigative agencies such as CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] and ED [Enforcement Directorate]

once appealed to the government to use them against the corrupt," said Modi. He said the AAP once urged the ED to arrest the then Congress chief minister of Chhattisgarh Bhupesh Baghel. "How has the same ED and CBI become corrupt?"

The prime minister asserted that taking action against corruption is a mission for the NDA government and not a matter of electoral gains. "I want to state without hesitation and also tell the countrymen that I have given full freedom to the agencies to take the strongest action against the corrupt and corruption. The government will not interfere anywhere," the prime minister

said.

"Yes, they (probe agencies) should work honestly for honesty. No person embroiled in corruption will be able to escape the law. This is Modi's guarantee," the prime minister said. Referring to the opposition members' charge that the government is misusing the probe agencies, Modi cited statements made by opposition leaders like late Mulayam Singh Yadav who had accused the UPA government of using the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against them. He also said even the Supreme Court had termed the CBI as a "caged parrot". "Allegations have been made against the central investigative agencies. It has been said that the central government is misusing the investigative agencies.

Modi asserted that he had vowed in 2014, when the BJP came into power at the Centre, that the government will work for the welfare of the poor and also take actions against corruption and black money. "Action against corruption is a mission for us. It is not a matter of victory or defeat in elections for us," he added.

Security at Rahul's residence stepped up



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has stepped up security outside Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's residence here following an intelligence input of disturbance by right wing groups, sources said on Wednesday. Rahul Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party had created ruckus in the Lok Sabha on Monday. One platoon of paramilitary, including the local police personnel, has been deployed around Gandhi's residence, sources said.

They said an input regarding disturbance by right wing group members was received on Tuesday after which the security has been increased around the Congress leader's residence in central Delhi. The police have suspected the people may gather with placard or hoardings outside his residence. The local police has

been asked to increase the vigil for 24 hours around his residence, sources said. Rahul Gandhi enjoys Z plus security with L (advanced security liaison) category under the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) personnel.

On Wednesday, the Delhi BJP leaders and workers staged a protest here over his remarks against the saffron party and sought an apology from him. The protesters assembled near Jaisalmer House and tried to move towards the Congress headquarters on Akbar Road, raising slogans against Gandhi and his party. On Wednesday, the Delhi BJP leaders and workers staged a protest here over his remarks against the saffron party and sought an apology from him. The protesters assembled near Jaisalmer House and tried to move towards the Congress headquarters on Akbar Road, raising slogans against Gandhi and his party. On June 27, a group of men pasted posters outside the residence of AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi in central Delhi, demanding his suspension from the Lok Sabha, for his remark during oath ceremony in the Lok Sabha. The Delhi Police has registered an FIR in connection with the matter.

BJP leaders protest against Rahul's remarks against party

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leaders and workers on Wednesday staged a protest here over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party and sought an apology from him. The protesters assembled near Jaisalmer House and tried to move towards the Congress headquarters on Akbar Road, raising slogans against Gandhi and his party.

Addressing the protesters, BJP Yuva Morcha's national president Tejasvi Surya said it was not the time to deliver speeches but to "vigorously protest against the insult of Hindu society". "The way Rahul Gandhi accused the entire Hindu society of being violent, is an unpardonable offence. The Congress and Rahul Gandhi are repeat offenders and in the past, they tried to create a fake narrative of saffron terrorism," he charged. BJP MPs Manoj Tiwari and Bansuri Swaraj, and other senior leaders of the party were present during the protest. "Those who insult Hindus



Ranjana Dimri

need to be given a befitting reply. He said Hindu society is violent. He may even say Hindus should be shot," Tiwari said targeting Rahul Gandhi. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said if Hindus were violent, the temple in Mathura have been built by now. "Unless Rahul Gandhi, a poll-time Hindu, apologises, we will continue to protest," he said. In his first speech as the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Gandhi had launched a no-holds-barred attack on the BJP, accusing it of practising violence and spreading hate, drawing massive protests from the treasury benches, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Kejriwal moves HC seeking bail in liquor policy scam case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP convener and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday moved the Delhi High Court seeking bail in a CBI case related to the alleged liquor policy scam. The counsel for Kejriwal mentioned the matter for urgent listing before a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela which said it would be heard on Friday.

Notably, Kejriwal has directly approached the High Court for seeking bail without approaching the trial court. According to AAP legal team, there is no bar in going directly to the High Court for bail under Section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). Advocate Rajat Bhardwaj, appearing for Kejriwal, asserted that the applicant was taken into illegal custody without following the due procedure of law and he has filed a bail plea. As the counsel insisted on fixing the plea for hearing on Thursday, Justice Manmohan said, "Let the learned judge go through the papers. We will have it day after."

In his petition, Kejriwal alleged the CBI was continuously haranguing and harassing him in the garb of the ongoing investigations in the liquor policy case, and called it a matter of grave dismay and concern. The Chief Minister also alleged he rendered all due cooperation and assistance to



two meetings with his lawyers in a week. The Delhi Chief Minister's plea challenging his arrest by the CBI and the trial court order remanding him to the agency's custody is also pending before the High Court. The court had issued notice and asked the CBI to file its reply while listing it for arguments on July 17. The AAP convener was arrested by the CBI on June 26 from Tihar Jail, where he is still lodged in judicial custody in a connected money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Kejriwal, who was arrested by the ED on March 21, was granted bail by the trial court in the money laundering case on June 20. However, the trial court's order was stayed by the high court. The excise policy was scrapped in 2022 after the Delhi lieutenant governor ordered a CBI probe into alleged irregularities and corruption involving its formulation and execution. According to the CBI and ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours extended to the licence holders.

While a Rouse Avenue Court has extended till July 12 the judicial custody of Kejriwal in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam. Kejriwal appeared before the court of Special Judge Kavari Baweja through video conference. He is currently allowed

two meetings with his lawyers in a week.

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100 per cent humidity makes city weather suffocating for residents

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As a cloud cover enveloped the national Capital as parts of the city received rain on Wednesday, weather remained muggy and suffocating for Delhiites due to 100 per cent humidity level recorded in the city. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the humidity level stood at 75 per cent at 8:30 am and 100 per cent at 5:30 pm. Parts of the city and the adjoining region of Delhi received light to moderate rain accompanied by thunderstorms, with wind speeds of 40 to 60 kmph, and lightning. The sky remained cloudy throughout the day. Safdarjung, the city's primary weather station, recorded the maximum temperature at 34.1 degrees Celsius, three notches below the normal. The minimum temperature settled at 29 degrees Celsius, a notch above the normal.

Researchers suggest that these humid and hot conditions, largely driven by global warming, during monsoons are a significant challenge to the health and well-being of the people of India, especially to physical labour. Prolonged exposure to such conditions can result in potentially fatal health hazards. They also drew attention to the immediate need to revise



outdoor working hours, especially in the regions experiencing extreme moist heat conditions during monsoon season, as humid heat can severely impact labour productivity.

"For instance, a 3 degrees Celsius increase in global warming can reduce labour productivity by 7 per cent and contribute to at least 4 per cent reduction of GDP in India, which leads to inflation in crop prices," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Earth's Future. Therefore, with work performance projected to decline in the country by 30-40 per cent by the end of the century, the rising moist heat during monsoon can be devastating in the future, they said.

Further, there was no warning for heavy rain in Delhi by the met department after days of failed prediction by the IMD about heavy rain in the city. The IMD stated that their predictions analyse models

and other measurements, which sometimes do not align. For instance, due to the shifting of the rainfall belt, heavy rain did not occur in Delhi as forecast last time.

The IMD advised the public to be cautious of slippers roads, low visibility, disruption in traffic and localised water logging in low lying areas which was caused due to the rain spell. On Friday, there was a flood like situation in the city after Delhi received heavy rain. "Avoid going to areas that face water logging problems often, check for traffic congestion on your route and be updated with weather warning," the IMD advised the public. In order to address the issue of water logging on National Highways during the monsoon season, NHAI has taken various measures for flood preparedness and provide emergency response on the National Highways across the country.

Panel members reject Maliwal's claim of AAP dismantling DCW

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal accused her party's government here of "systematically dismantling" the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW), two members of the panel on Wednesday dismissed her allegations as "malicious" and "fictitious". In their letters to Maliwal, DCW members Firdos Khan and Kiran Negi also urged the MP not to use her "personal political gains" the struggle of more than 700 women employed by the commission and under grant programmes who have not got their salaries since November last year.

Maliwal on Tuesday wrote to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, accusing his government of "systematically dismantling" the commission after she resigned as its chief. There was no immediate reaction from Maliwal on the letters of Khan and Negi, the subject lines of which read: "Request to stop using struggle of 700+ women for personal political gains". Maliwal had resigned as the DCW's chairperson following her nomination to the Rajya Sabha by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

"Over 700 women who have been employed in the commission and various grant programmes across the city have been left without any salary since November 2023 but you



have made the struggle of these women only about yourself and have made statements that the attack on DCW started after your resignation," the letters read. Negi and Khan in their letters, the content of which was the same, stressed that Kejriwal and his government have stood with the DCW in the face of the attack on the commission. "Ma'am, the attack on the commission from the vested interest of the system has been ongoing since 2016 and the Hon'ble chief minister and the elected government have always stood with the commission as a strong shield," they said. "I humbly request you to kindly desist from attacking the elected government and instead, expose the Hon'ble LG (Delhi lieutenant governor) and the actual perpetrators of this attack on the commission, like you have done for all these years till two months back," they said in their letters.

Sukesh threatens legal action over his biopic

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Conman Sukesh Chandrashekar, who is accused in a Rs 200 crore cheating case involving the wife of a former Fortis Healthcare promoter, has threatened to pursue legal action against individuals involved in creating a film or biopic based on his life and personality.

"It has come to Our Client's attention that numerous individuals are infringing upon his Personality/Publicity/Celebrity //biopic/life rights, by falsely asserting and misrepresenting their authorization to create a film or biopic based on his life and personality whether directly or indirectly," his lawyer stated.

He also threatened to press charges against anyone involved in doing so. "Please be informed that legal action, both civil and criminal, will be pursued against anyone found guilty of infringing upon Mr. Sukesh Chander Shekhar's rights, particularly regarding his personality, literary works, and biopic rights. Such infringements can lead to



severe legal consequences," he said.

He added that Sukesh is a man of repute and enjoys goodwill in the Indian Film Industry, various business houses and Political Circles and holds goodwill and reputation both nationally and at a global level.

Further, he informed that Sukesh "has already licensed, assigned and/or otherwise dealt with all his rights in relation to, inter alia, his personality, attributes and life story and events to a third party and public at large is warned and cautioned to refrain from exploiting our client's personality and his life story, events, incidents, whether directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever."

HC rejects plea seeking disqualification of Modi, suggests medical help for litigant

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday rejected a plea seeking disqualification of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from contesting elections and said that person who filed the plea appeared to be suffering from mental health issues. A Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela asked the local Station House Officer (SHO), Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and the District Judge to keep a watch on the petitioner, Captain Deepak Kumar and exercise their powers under the Mental Healthcare Act, if necessary.

The bench said they were in agreement with the single judge, who had earlier rejected the plea, that the petition and the appeal are replete with "unsubstantiated, disjointed, scandalous and preposterous allegations." "Are you well?" an exasperated bench asked the appellant, adding he needs "medical help". The plea had alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was hatching a conspiracy and was involved in an act of terrorism. The plea further alleged that

Modi and his accomplices attempted to destabilise national security by planning a fatal crash of an Air India flight in 2018 which the petitioner commanded as a pilot. He alleged that Modi "made a false oath or affirmation which otherwise must be made after the nomination paper has been submitted to RO (returning officer)".

While dismissing the plea, the bench said, "All the allegations in the present appeal are a figment of imagination of the appellant and bereft of any material particulars." "During the hearing, the bench said, "Are you well? Your application is inchoate. It is going from one end of the spectrum to another. It is going from they have taken false oaths to the three people you are naming be debarred from contesting elections to saying that the plane you were flying crashed to your daughter being missing to some former CJI trying to kill you. Are you well? No human being can understand the petition."

Responding, the petitioner said, "Yes I am well, Sir. The petition is very clear. Sir, my daughter is being kidnapped, there is a police report

to this effect. I was also kidnapped and taken to a police station where they bargained with me that if I keep my mouth shut, they will hand over my child back to me." The bench told him the plea makes no sense and the single judge was right in holding that it was replete with unsubstantiated allegations. While dictating the order, the division bench said it was of the opinion that the appellant, if not suffering from hallucination, is conjuncting facts and certainly needs medical help.

"But the appellant insists he is well and needs no medical help. However, keeping in view the provisions of the Mental Health Act, this court directs the SHO of the local police station, SDM and district judge to keep a watch on the appellant and if required, may exercise the discretion conferred on them, individually or collectively, under the said statute," it said. On May 30, the single judge had rejected the plea saying the allegations levelled were "reckless" and "unsubstantiated" and the petition was tainted with malafide and oblique motives and such averments in a petition cannot be entertained.

Student wings of INDIA Bloc parties protest at Jantar Mantar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Raising slogans against the central government and the National Testing Agency (NTA), the student outfits of some INDIA bloc parties staged a protest at the Jantar Mantar here on Wednesday against alleged irregularities in several competitive examinations.

In a separate protest, the Congress' youth wing, Indian Youth Congress (IYC), staged a demonstration against the irregularities near the protest site. Several Youth Congress workers shaved their heads as a sign of protest while raising "anti-Modi" slogans. The members of the Left-backed All India Students Association (AISA), Student Federation of India (SFI), All India Students' Federation (AISF), along with the Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha and the Congress' students wing NSUI gathered at the Jantar Mantar to take out a march. The student groups aimed to march to the Parliament to press for their demands of scrapping the National Testing Agency, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation and



Ranjana Dimri

decentralisation of entrance tests. However, the students were not able to hold the march due to heavy police deployment and barricading at the site. They also demanded re-examination of the medical entrance test NEET-UG for all candidates, who had appeared in the May 5 exam.

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Opp walkout during Modi reply a disgrace: Dhankhar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday said the Opposition has set a "dangerous precedent to democratic values" by walking out during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply during discussion on the motion of thanks to President's address. In his concluding remarks of the 264th session of Rajya Sabha before adjourning the House sine die, Dhankhar also termed the instance of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge walking into the well of the House during the session "a disgrace to parliamentary conduct and propriety".



over the disruptions that marred the proceedings". "Witnessing seasoned members conduct themselves irresponsibly was particularly disheartening. I wish to reiterate that disruption not only impedes the transaction of the listed business but also erodes the prestige of this esteemed institution," he asserted. Pointing out the instance of Kharge entering the Well of the Rajya Sabha on Friday, Dhankhar said, "It was extremely painful to notice that even the Leader of the Opposition walked into the Well of the House and that was

a disgrace to parliamentary conduct and propriety." He asked the members of the House to "exemplify their conduct so that this becomes a temple for deliberations, discussion, dialogue and debate". "Their walkout today was extremely painful. It was a historic occasion. The government was in its third term with the prime minister heading it continually after six decades. They walked away from their constitutional ordainment and that has set a dangerous precedent antithetical to democratic values," Dhankhar said.

The 264th session of the Upper House began with President Droupadi Murmu's address to both houses of Parliament, which the chairman described as "an important tradition that set the tone and outlined the government's agenda". The House also witnessed Modi introducing his new council of ministers after he was sworn-in as the prime minister for the third consecutive term. "The Motion of Thanks to the President's address witnessed lively participation by 76 members for over 21 hours. The House also heard maiden speeches by 19 newly-elected members," Dhankhar said. The Rajya Sabha chairman said while the prime minister gave a "spirited address while participating in the debate", the House lost 43 minutes due to forced adjournments but the shortfall was "made up by continuing discussion during lunch break and sitting beyond the scheduled time".

Putin, envoys condole devotees' deaths in Hathras stampede

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday expressed condolences over the stampede at a religious congregation in Uttar Pradesh in which 121 people were killed. Several envoys here including Germany, China, France and Israel also mourned the deaths. "President of Russia Vladimir Putin sent a condolence message to President of India Droupadi Murmu & Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi over the tragic stampede in #UttarPradesh: Kindly accept the most sincere condolences over the tragic accident in Uttar Pradesh," the Russian Embassy in India said in a social media post. The stampede took place on Tuesday at Phulrai village in Sikandra Rao area of the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh. The victims were part of the crowd of thousands that had gathered near Phulrai village in the Sikandra area for the 'satsang' by religious a

preacher. Meanwhile, envoys of several countries, including Germany, France, China and Israel have mourned the loss of lives in a stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras and extended condolences to the victims' families. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in a social media post on Tuesday had said he was deeply distressed by the tragic incident. "Deeply saddened by the tragic loss of lives in a stampede in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. Sincere condolences to the bereaved families. Pray for the speedy recovery of the injured," he wrote on the social media platform. The stampede at a religious congregation killed 121 people as devotees suffocated to their deaths and bodies piled atop each other in the worst such tragedy in recent years. The incident took place as the devotees -- most of them women -- headed home after a 'satsang' in the Hathras district's Phulrai village. The 'satsang' was conducted by Baba Narayan Hari, who is also



known as Jagat Guru Saakar Vishwahari's Bhole Baba. German envoy Philipp Ackermann in a post on Tuesday evening offered condolences to the families that lost their loved ones in the stampede and said he was deeply saddened about the tragic incident. "Deeply saddened about the tragic events in Hathras. My condolences to the families that lost their loved ones. We hope that help quickly reaches the injured," he wrote on the social media platform. Later on Tuesday night, Chinese envoy Xu Feihong also took to X to mourn the loss of lives in the incident.

"Shocked and saddened about the tragic events in Hathras, UP. Deeply mourn for the lives lost and extend heartfelt sympathies to victims' families. Wish the injured a speedy recovery," he wrote on the social media platform. French Ambassador to India Thierry Mathou also posted a message on X, which was reported by the French Embassy in New Delhi. "Deeply saddened by the loss of lives following the tragic stampede in Uttar Pradesh's #Hathras district. France expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the victims and wishes the injured a speedy recovery," the envoy wrote on X. Israeli Ambassador Naor Gilon also echoed the sentiments expressed by the other envoys. "Deeply saddened about the loss of lives at the tragic stampede in #Hathras, UP. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims. Wishing a speedy recovery to the injured. Such incidents are truly heart-breaking," he wrote on X.

New law makes sexual offences gender neutral

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A police officer can detain a person who resists or disregards lawful directions to prevent a cognisable offence, according to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) which came into effect on Monday.



Also, the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which replaces the British-era Indian Penal Code, has made sexual offences "gender neutral" for the victim and the perpetrator, according to official documents. The BNSS, which replaced the British-era Code of Criminal Procedure, has introduced "a

BJP flays Opposition MPs for RS walkout

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday flayed the opposition members for staging a walkout during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the Rajya Sabha and said their intention was to only create ruckus in the House as they did not have the "strength" to hear the truth. "The opposition parties' INDIA bloc, led by the Congress, staged a walkout of the Rajya Sabha after the Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was not allowed to intervene during Prime Minister Modi's reply on the motion thanking President Droupadi Murmu for her address to the joint sitting of Parliament. "The opposition is demoralised, aimless and anarchic due to its defeat (in the Lok Sabha polls) for the third time in a row. It is



disrespecting our constitutional values and is busy in conspiracy to hide its defeat," BJP chief and Leader of the Rajya Sabha JP Nadda said in a social media post. "These negative efforts by them cannot hinder the NDA government's journey towards achieving its goal of building a 'developed India'," he added. Nadda said that Prime Minister Modi paved the way for building a "developed India" in the Rajya Sabha in his reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address. This will become a roadmap for the progress of people and rapid development of the country, he added. Nadda said the last 10 years under Prime Minister Modi's leadership have been marked by "revolutionary decisions, historic

progress and upliftment" of people. This journey of development will acquire new dimensions in "Modi government-3.0," the BJP chief said. "We will take the global prestige of the nation to new heights," he added. Slamming the Opposition members, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged that they staged a walkout during the prime minister's speech as they did not have the strength to hear the truth. "It's sad. They had boycotted the prime minister's speech in the last session. They created uproar (in the Lok Sabha) in the current session as well and boycotted (PM's speech) in the Rajya Sabha. This shows that perhaps, as the prime minister also said, they do not have the strength to hear the truth," he told reporters in Parliament complex, when asked for comment.

India-Mongolia joint military exercise to defence boost ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a further boost to bilateral defence ties, the 16th edition of India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant' commenced on Wednesday at Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya). The exercise is scheduled to be conducted from July 3-16, army said here. Last edition of the annual exercise was conducted in Mongolia in July 2023. Giving details about the latest drill, officials said Indian contingent comprising of 45 personnel is being represented by a battalion of Sikkim Scouts along with personnel from other arms and services. The Mongolian contingent is being represented by personnel from 150 Quick Reaction Force Battalion of the Mangolian Army. The Opening Ceremony of the Exercise was attended by His Mongolian Envoy to India Dambajavyn Ganbold and Major General Prasanna Joshi, General Officer Commanding 51 Sub Area of the Indian Army. The aim of the Exercise is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate. The exercise will focus on operations in the semi-urban and mountainous



terrain. Tactical drills during the Exercise include Response to a Terrorist Action, Establishment of a Joint Command Post, Establishment of an Intelligence and Surveillance Centre, Securing of a Helipad/ Landing Site, Small Team Insertion and Extraction, Special Heliborne Operations, Cordon and Search Operations besides Employment of Drones and Counter Drone Systems amongst others. Major General Gyanbamba Sunrev, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Mongolia is scheduled to attend the closing ceremony on July 16 along with Lieutenant General Zubin A Minwalla, General Officer Commanding 33 Corps of the Indian Army. The Exercise will enable both sides to share their best practices in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures of conducting joint operations. The exercise will also facilitate developing interoperability, bonhomie and camaraderie between the two armies. This will also enhance the level of defence cooperation, further augmenting bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

ANNEXURE - A
APPENDIX - IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)] Sale notice for sale of immovable properties e-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank, Noida Sector 63 Branch (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is basis" on 12.03.2024, for recovery of Rs. 23,87,890/- (Rupees Twenty Three Lakhs Eighty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Only) as on 14.11.2021 plus Interest & other expenses till realization of the dues to the Indian Bank, Noida Sector 63 (Secured Creditor), from M/s. A One Traders, and its Smt Rukhsana (Proprietor/Mortgagor) W/o Mr. Yasin Saifi, R/o Main Road-Dandri Road, Near Petrol Pump, Grater Noida, GB Nagar, UP-201009 and Jabal Colony, Near Barahi Mandir, Surajpur, Greater Noida, G B Nagar, UP-201009 & 2) Mr. Yasin Saifi (Guarantor) S/o Ali Sher R/o Village-Surajpur, Pargana Dadi, Greater Noida, GB Nagar, UP-201009

The specific details of the properties intended to be brought to sale through e-auction mode are enumerated below:

Detailed description of the Property	All the part and parcel of Residential property at Plot All the part and parcel of Residential property bearing Khata no 248, Khet No 217, situated at Village Surajpur, Pargana Dadi, Distt and Tehsil Gautam Budh Nagar, U. P., admeasuring 83.61 Sq Mtr (100 Sq. Yd.) in the name of Smt Rukhsana W/o Shri Yasin Saifi.
East: Plot of Momin North: Other Plot West: 15 feet Road South: Plot of Noor Mohammad	
Encumbrances on Property	Not known to the Bank
Reserve Price	Rs. 35,00,000/- (Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs Only)
EMD Amount	Rs. 3,50,000/- (Rupees Three Lakhs Fifty Thousand Only)
Bid incremental amount	Rs. 25,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand only)
Date and time of e-auction	12.03.2024 between 11.00 A.M to 5.00 P.M
Property ID No.	IDIB6466446281

Bidders are advised to visit the website (www.mstccommerce.com/auction/home/ibapi) of our e auction service provider MSTC Ltd to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call MSTC HELPDOESK No. 033-2340002/23400021/23400022 and other help line numbers available in service providers help desk. For Registration status with MSTC Ltd, please contact ibapiop@mstccommerce.com and for EMD status please contact ibapiop@mstccommerce.com.

For property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and conditions please visit: https://ibapi.in and for clarifications related to this portal, please contact help line number '18001025026' and '011-41109131'. Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website with https://ibapi.in and www.mstccommerce.com.

Date : 04.07.2024
 Place : Noida
 Authorised Officer

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Haryana, Bays No. 55-58, Paryatan Bhawan, Sector-2, Panchkula, Haryana vide their file no. SEIAA/HR/2023/432 and EC Identification no-EC24B038HR158095 dated: 02.07.2024 has accorded the "Environment Clearance" to M/s Pyramid Infotech Private Limited., having its Reg. office at H-38, Ground floor, M2K White House, Sector-57, Gurugram, Haryana-122002 for Proposed Group Housing Colony under TOD Policy over an area measuring 4.52 Acres in revenue estate of Village-Begampur, Khatola, Sector-71, Gurugram, Haryana.

General Public is further informed that copy of said Environment Clearance Letter is available in the office of Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Panchkula and State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Panchkula, Haryana.

Place: Gurugram
 Dated: 03.07.2024
 M/s Pyramid Infotech Private Limited,
 Reg. office at; H-38, Ground floor, M2K White House,
 Sector-57, Gurugram, Haryana-122002

ANNEXURE - A
APPENDIX - IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)] Sale notice for sale of immovable properties e-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank, Noida Sector 63 Branch (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is basis" on 24.07.2024, for recovery of Rs. 15,82,079.00 (Rupees Fifteen Lakhs Eighty Two Thousand and Seventy Nine only) as on 01.08.2022 plus Interest & other expenses till realization of the dues to the Indian Bank, Noida Sector 63 (Secured Creditor), from M/s R. R. Construction Company, at GF-23, Durga Chamber, RDC Complex, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201001 and Shri Hemant Pratap Singh (Partner) S/o Shri Homendra Pratap Singh R/o M-73A, Sanjay Nagar, Sector 23, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201001 and Smt. Lakshmi Devi (Partner) W/o Shri Ram Nivas Singh R/o C-102, Sanjay Nagar, Sector 23, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201001.

1. Smt. Urmila Chauhan W/o Shri Homendra Pratap Singh R/o M73A, Sanjay Nagar, Sector 23, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201001.

Also at: Residential Property situated at Flat no. N 452A, First Floor without roof rights, GDA Flat Block N, Sector 23, Sanjay Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201001

The specific details of the properties intended to be brought to sale through e-auction mode are enumerated below:

Detailed description of the Property	All the Part and Parcel of Residential Property situated at Flat no. N 452A, First Floor without roof rights, GDA Flat Block N, Sector 23, Sanjay Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201001 admeasuring 33.07 Sq. Mtrs. standing in the name of Smt. Urmila Chauhan W/o Shri Homendra Pratap Singh having boundaries as follows - East: Flat no. N450A, North : 25 Feet Road on ground floor West: Flat no. N419A, South : Flat no. N451A
Encumbrances on Property	Not known to the Bank
Reserve Price	Rs. 11,21,000/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Twenty one Thousand only)
EMD Amount	Rs. 1,12,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Twelve Thousand only)
Bid incremental amount	Rs. 25,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand only)
Date and time of e-auction	24.07.2024 between 11.00 A.M to 5.00 P.M
Property ID No.	IDIB6461375176

Bidders are advised to visit the website (www.mstccommerce.com/auction/home/ibapi) of our e auction service provider MSTC Ltd to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call MSTC HELPDOESK No. 033-2340002/23400021/23400022 and other help line numbers available in service providers help desk. For Registration status with MSTC Ltd, please contact ibapiop@mstccommerce.com and for EMD status please contact ibapiop@mstccommerce.com.

For property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and conditions please visit: https://ibapi.in and for clarifications related to this portal, please contact help line number '18001025026' and '011-41109131'. Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website with https://ibapi.in and www.mstccommerce.com.

Date : 04.07.2024
 Place : Noida
 Authorised Officer

Indian Overseas Bank
 Bhiwani Stand, Rohtak Branch
 (Address : Bhiwani Stand, Rohtak 124001
 E-mail : iob0471@iob.in)

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI Act) read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (Rules)

1. Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Indian Overseas Bank under SARFAESI Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (2) read with Rule 3, issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors listed hereunder (hereinafter referred to as the "said Borrowers"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the Notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of Notice, as per details given below.

2. The said Notices have been returned undelivered by the postal authorities/ have not been duly acknowledged by the borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors. Hence the Bank by way of abundant caution is effecting this publication of the demand notice. The undersigned has, therefore, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known addresses of the said Borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors as per the said Act. Copies of the said Notices are available with the undersigned and the said Borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors, may, if they so desire, collect the said copies from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.

3. Against the above background, Notice is hereby given, once again, to said Borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors to pay to Indian Overseas Bank, within 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated/payable as given below under the loan & other documents. As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to Indian Overseas Bank by the respective parties as below.

S No.	Name of the Borrowers/ Mortgagors/ Guarantors with Address	Total Outstanding as on 08.05.2024 (in Rs.)	Description of Secured Assets	Date of Demand Notice
1.	SHASHIBALA W/O VIRENDER, Permanent Address: HOUSE NO. 2456, RAJENDER COLONY, ROHTAK, 124001, 2 VIRENDER Permanent Address: H NO 2456, RAJENDER COLONY, ROHTAK, 124001	1336156.87*	H NO 1294 Property Id 257-C-644-U-295 situated at New RAJENDER NAGAR, old sugar mill Road, Near Bhiwani, Chungi, Rohtak measuring 121 sq yds in the name of Smt. Shashi Bala w/o Sh. Virender East 189' Gali 15' wide West 206' House of anil North 586' House of Khazan Singh South 536' house of Salish	08.05.2024

* payable with further interest at contractual rates/rests as agreed from the date mentioned above till date of payment.

4. If the said borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors fail to make payment to Indian Overseas Bank as aforesaid, then Indian Overseas Bank shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act and Rules entirely at the risks, costs and consequences of the said borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors.

5. Further, the attention of borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them to redeem the secured assets.

6. The said Borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors are prohibited under the SARFAESI Act from transferring the secured assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of Indian Overseas Bank. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the Act or Rules shall be liable for imprisonment and/ or fine as given under Section 29 of the Act.

Date : 03.07.2024
 Place : Rohtak
 Sd/- Authorized Officer, Indian Overseas Bank

Congress predicts fall of Modi Government any time

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's legitimacy has been diminished to "one-third" and his Government is on its "last legs" and can fall any time. Hitting out at the Prime Minister over his remarks on Manipur in the Rajya Sabha, the Congress also said he made an "astounding claim" that the situation is normal there when in actuality it is still tense and pointed out that he has still not visited the State since violence erupted in May last year. The Opposition party's assertion regarding recently held Lok Sabha polls came over the Prime Minister's remarks in the Rajya Sabha that since the results came out, one Congress leader kept on beating the drum that there is a "one-third government" in place. "What can be a bigger truth than this that we have completed 10 years, 20 more are left. One-third is done, two-thirds are still left and so we are very happy in this prediction," Modi said in his reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address to the joint sitting of Parliament. Modi's remarks were an apparent dig at Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who



has been referring to the PM as 'one-third PM'. Reacting to the remarks, Congress general secretary Ramesh said, "As always, the 'one-third' Pradhan Mantri is distorting. The label of 'ek tihai (one-third)' does not refer to his government's tenure. It refers to our very own non-biological PM." "After the resounding personal, political, and moral defeat of June 4th, it is his legitimacy and aura that has been diminished to one-third - and he himself is dependent on two other Ns for his political survival. His Government is anyways on its last legs and can fall any time," Ramesh said in an apparent reference to JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar and TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu. In his speech in the Rajya Sabha, Prime Minister Modi said the 2024 general election verdict showed people have rejected propaganda and voted for performance. He said the politics of misleading people has been defeated. Modi said for his party BJP, the Constitution is not just a

compilation of articles but its spirit and words are very important too. As regards Manipur, Congress criticism came after Prime Minister Modi said violence in Manipur is continuously declining and the schools have reopened in most part of the state, and efforts are being made to ensure a return of complete peace. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Modi said the Centre was working with the state government and others to restore normalcy in the state. In his reaction to the remarks, Jairam Ramesh said, "Today in the Rajya Sabha, after months of absolute silence on the issue, the non-biological PM made the astounding claim that the situation in Manipur is normal." "In actuality, the situation is still tense as the MP from Inner Manipur pointed out in the Lok Sabha on 1st July. And the non-biological Pradhan Mantri has still not visited Manipur since it erupted on the night of May 3rd, 2023 - nor has he met with the political leaders of the state.

MP Budget focuses on infrastructure development, women and tribal welfare

PTI ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday presented its budget for FY 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs 3.65 lakh crore, marking substantial allocations for infrastructure development and initiatives for women and tribals, amid din by Congress over a nursing college 'scam'.



Finance Minister Jagdish Devda described the budget as "sarvparshi" (all-inclusive), announcing no new taxes during its presentation in the state legislative assembly. The assembly session, however, saw disruptions from Congress members who demanded the resignation of former medical education minister Vishvas Sarang over the nursing college "scam" and sought the setting up of a House committee of members of all parties.

Infrastructure related to the 2028 Simhashta congregation in Ujjain. Additionally, cultural and religious tourism initiatives like the "Shri Krishna Pathay Yojana" to identify and develop the route covered by lord Krishna in Madhya Pradesh and "Ram Path Gaman Yojana" were emphasised, alongside a Rs 341 crore allocation for establishing "Vedant Peeth".

The Assam government is keen to develop the state as a sustainable and environmentally clean source of coal for relevant industries, Chief Secretary Ravi Kota said.

Assam Govt keen to develop clean source of coal for industries, says Chief Secy

PTI ■ GUWAHATI



The Assam government is keen to develop the state as a sustainable and environmentally clean source of coal for relevant industries, Chief Secretary Ravi Kota said. Kota said this while reviewing coal projects in the state with chairman and managing director of Coal India Limited (CIL) P M Prasad.

increase to three lakh tonnes per annum very soon and efforts are being undertaken to expand the same to 15 lakhs tonnes (1.5 million tonnes) per annum, he said.

BRS MLA booked for obstructing Govt officials on duty

PTI ■ KARIMNAGAR (TELANGANA)

A case was registered against BRS MLA P Kaushik Reddy for allegedly obstructing the District Collector and other government officials from discharging their duties in Karimnagar district, police said on Wednesday.

ASSAM FLOODS 11 wild animals drown in Kaziranga National Park

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Eleven animals, mostly hog deer, have drowned while 65 other animals have been rescued from floodwaters in Kaziranga National Park in Assam, an official said on Wednesday.

Public Notice: To be known to all that I, Puneeta Chauhan W/o Charan Singh Chauhan R/o. Plot No. 856, Area Measuring 32.00 Sq.Mtrs. Block-C Pocket-01 Sector-35, Rohini Delhi, Mob. 9811276414.

Public Notice: To be known to all that I, Kishan Lal And Sat Narain both S/o Shri Tek Chand R/o. Flat No. B-1/11/Ganga Triveni Co-operative Group Housing Society Limited, Plot No. 24/1 Sec-9 Rohini, Mob. 8168530958.

Public Notice: My client HDFC Bank Ltd. Capital Court, Munirka, New Delhi, in the business of Housing Loan, from whom Mr. Manu Gernini has taken a housing loan against Flat No. 964, HIG-1, 9th Floor, in Project Mahagun Puram Gayatri, Ghaziabad, UP but in the internal movement of file one file containing the original Sale Deed dated 18.04.2018 Document bearing No. 2884, is not traceable, if any body find the same may return to the undersigned, if anybody misuses the same, the same shall be at his/her own risk and cost.

Public Notice: To be known to all that, I, Garmella Suryanarayana S/o Garmella Suryanarayana R/o H.No. C-123/1-1074/1/71, Sri Datta, Sai Apartment RTC X Rd, Opp Saphagni Theatre, Musheerabad, Hyderabad, Telangana-500020 owner of DDA SFS CAT-II, Flat 450, G.F., Pkt-10, Sec-11, Rohini, Delhi has applied for certified copy of the Allocation letter in DDA. All the original documents in Allocation letter, Form & Final Demand letter, Possession Letter, Site Possession Letter, NOC Water & Electricity issued by DDA, of the above property have been lost. An FIR against this effect has been lodged in Police station. Any persons claiming any right, interest, having any objection or find in possession of original documents, may write contact with above named person at above address/Phone No. 994900967 within 15days from the date of publication of this notice.

Public Notice: To be known to all that, Nidhi Nijhawan wife of Col. M/Njawan resident of Flat No.89, Ground Floor, Basant Enclave, New Delhi is owner of Nijwatee and in physical possession of DDA SFS Flat No.89, on Ground Floor, Cat-SFS-II, Basant Enclave, New Delhi, which has been allotted by DDA vide File No.F.4(142)1979/SFS/BE and applied for conversion from lease hold into free hold of said flat in D.D.A. The original Possession Letter, NOC for Water and Electric connection, and other related documents of said flat have been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address/Phone No. 8527215634 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Public Notice: To be known to all that, Nidhi Nijhawan wife of Col. M/Njawan resident of Flat No.89, Ground Floor, Basant Enclave, New Delhi is owner of Nijwatee and in physical possession of DDA SFS Flat No.89, on Ground Floor, Cat-SFS-II, Basant Enclave, New Delhi, which has been allotted by DDA vide File No.F.4(142)1979/SFS/BE and applied for conversion from lease hold into free hold of said flat in D.D.A. The original Possession Letter, NOC for Water and Electric connection, and other related documents of said flat have been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address/Phone No. 8527215634 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

FORM NO. INC-26 Pursuant to rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014

Public Notice: BIHAR BANDHU CO-OPERATIVE GROUP HOUSING SOCIETY LTD Flat No. 3, Pocket-5, DDA Flats, Sector-12, Dwarka, Delhi-110078 in accordance with rule 19(2) of DCS rules, 2007, it is to inform publicly that the 9 members of the Bihar Bandhu CGHS Ltd. have resigned from the society and they have been paid their share money & contributions. The names of resigned member are: 1. Asha Alina & Anand K. John (M. No. 146) 2. Lalit Turkey (M. No. 147) 3. Rosalia & Late J.P.P. Kujur (M.No.149) 4. Niip Kumar & Jagrani Minj (M.No. 151) 5. Francisca & Tarcus Kujur (M.No. 152) 6. Suresh Bandhoni (M.No. 173) 7. Rajeev Bhardwaj (M.No. 184) 8. Lokeshwar P. BUCKKOTI (M.No.201) 9. Late Ram Kishan Bhardwaj (M.No.229). If anyone who is having objections, may lodge objections at the society office, which is located at Flat No.3, Pocket-5, DDA Flats, Sector-12, Dwarka, New Delhi-78, or at the RCS office, Parliament Street, New Delhi within 15 days from the date of publication of the public notice.

Public Notice: My client HDFC Bank Ltd. Capital Court, Munirka, New Delhi, in the business of Housing Loan, from whom Mr. Manu Gernini has taken a housing loan against Flat No. 964, HIG-1, 9th Floor, in Project Mahagun Puram Gayatri, Ghaziabad, UP but in the internal movement of file one file containing the original Sale Deed dated 18.04.2018 Document bearing No. 2884, is not traceable, if any body find the same may return to the undersigned, if anybody misuses the same, the same shall be at his/her own risk and cost.

Public Notice: To be known to all that, Nidhi Nijhawan wife of Col. M/Njawan resident of Flat No.89, Ground Floor, Basant Enclave, New Delhi is owner of Nijwatee and in physical possession of DDA SFS Flat No.89, on Ground Floor, Cat-SFS-II, Basant Enclave, New Delhi, which has been allotted by DDA vide File No.F.4(142)1979/SFS/BE and applied for conversion from lease hold into free hold of said flat in D.D.A. The original Possession Letter, NOC for Water and Electric connection, and other related documents of said flat have been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address/Phone No. 8527215634 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

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Public Notice: My client HDFC Bank Ltd. Capital Court, Munirka, New Delhi, in the business of Housing Loan, from whom Mr. Manu Gernini has taken a housing loan against Flat No. 964, HIG-1, 9th Floor, in Project Mahagun Puram Gayatri, Ghaziabad, UP but in the internal movement of file one file containing the original Sale Deed dated 18.04.2018 Document bearing No. 2884, is not traceable, if any body find the same may return to the undersigned, if anybody misuses the same, the same shall be at his/her own risk and cost.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Innocent lives lost

Stampede at a satsang in Hathras kills at least 121, highlighting the urgent need for stronger regulations

In a tragic and devastating incident in the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh, a stampede during a satsang resulted in the deaths of at least 121 people. Although the exact cause of the mishap will be determined after a detailed investigation, eyewitness accounts reveal that the stampede occurred when devotees surged forward to seek blessings from Narayan Sakar Vishwa Hari, also known as Bhole Baba. The devotees rushed to touch Bhole Baba's feet and attempted to gather soil from his path, a customary practice that led to the chaos. Many people fell into a nearby drain. Some eyewitnesses reported that after the satsang concluded, many followers rushed toward Bhole Baba to touch his feet or catch a glimpse of him as he departed in his car. People wanted to get his *darshan* and collect soil from the road on which his car left the venue. As the satsang ended, people started leaving in groups. Due to the rain, many slipped, and others fell on top of them, leading to a crushing cascade. Others maintain that people started rushing out due to the humidity when the incident occurred, and many followers, most of whom were women, felt suffocated.



The incident exposes many disturbing facts, ranging from the negligence of the administration to the unchecked influence of godmen over innocent people. Bhole Baba is reportedly absconding. First of all, the number of attendees far exceeded the permitted limit. The chief sewadar (organizer) of Baba's program estimated an attendance of around 80,000 people, but the actual number was significantly higher. Indeed, this breach of the permitted capacity likely exacerbated the situation, leading to overcrowding in a venue that was inadequate. Now, after this horrific incident, the government is in damage control mode. Compensation for the deceased has been announced, and the Chief Minister is expected to visit Hathras. Additionally, a team has been set up to investigate the cause of the incident. However, in all probability nothing will change and that this incident will soon be forgotten like many before. As we mourn the loss of 121 lives and support the injured and their families, it is imperative to learn from this tragedy and implement effective measures to prevent such incidents in the future. We must prioritise safety, preparedness, and responsible management to ensure the safety of the people. Moreover, shouldn't there be a check on the activities of mushrooming godmen who exploit people's faith and endanger their lives? Many such godmen become so powerful that they are able to dictate terms to the administration and have considerable political clout which gives them power. However, the lack of awareness among people and their sense of helplessness contribute to the proliferation of these godmen who thrive on the ignorance and innocence of the people.

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PICTALK



Farmers carry paddy saplings for plantation in an agricultural field, in Nadia

PTI

Pandemonium in Parliament

As the Modi Govt navigates a new power dynamic, the increased presence and assertiveness of the Opposition suggest a challenging path ahead

The 18th Lok Sabha has the potential for positive functioning. The Modi government said they wanted consensus. Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought agreement and criticised the Opposition for causing problems. Modi stated that in his third term, his Government would aim to build consensus. The Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, also emphasised the importance of the Opposition's role in representing the 'voice of the people' in the House. But at the start of the session, they couldn't agree on important issues. Congress leader Sonia Gandhi wrote in an editorial recently in an English daily that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "Preaching consensus, provoking confrontation."

Sonia Gandhi criticised Prime Minister Modi for not acknowledging the electoral outcome and for promoting confrontation over consensus. She expressed disappointment with the first few days of the 18th Lok Sabha, pointing out that there's no sign of a changed attitude from the Prime Minister. The 18th Lok Sabha is a significant shift in Indian politics, marking the first time in a decade that Modi is leading a Parliament from a less dominant position. This shift in power dynamics requires him to navigate a coalition and contend with a more assertive opposition. The Modi government now relies on crucial support from two key allies - JD(U) and TDP. This means the NDA allies could significantly influence the Government's plans and actions, a departure from the substantial majority the BJP enjoyed in 2019 and 2014. The increased presence of the Opposition in various parliamentary panels is likely to generate greater engagement. The first session of the current Lok Sabha began with a strong Opposition asserting its rights. Before the session started, there was a dispute over the appointment of BJD M.P Bhartruhari Mahtab as the protem Speaker to administer. The Congress and the INDIA



bloc members felt that Congress MP Kodukkunil Suresh, elected eight times, should have been given the position. However, the BJP argued that they followed the rules. Mahtab was elected to the House seven times in succession, while Suresh lost two elections. This appointment is significant as the Speaker plays a crucial role in the Indian parliamentary system as the head of the Lok Sabha, responsible for maintaining order, conducting debates, and ensuring the House's smooth functioning. Secondly, Rahul Gandhi said he would back Om Birla, the NDA candidate, but only if the Deputy Speaker position, usually given to the Opposition, was assured. While Thambi Durai of the AIADMK, a BJP ally at the time, served as the Deputy Speaker from 2014 to 2019, the position remained vacant from 2019 to 2024. Article 93 states two Lok Sabha members will be selected as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Om Birla has been re-elected as the Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha, bringing continuity and stability to the House. After being congratulated, the newly elected Speaker took out a paper and read a resolution against the 1975 Emergency imposed by

SOME OPPOSITION PARTIES THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL SPEECH TO A JOINT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT IGNORED THE COUNTRY'S MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS. ALSO, THE OPPOSITION CALLED FOR REMOVING THE SENGOL, WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD INSTALLED WITH MUCH FANFARE BEFORE THE ELECTION

late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This surprising move caught many off guard and caused tension with Congress, as the Emergency was declared on the same date in 1975. This led the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, to lead a group to the Speaker to express their objection to a political statement from the chair. Fourthly, some opposition parties thought the president's inaugural speech to a joint session of Parliament ignored the country's most serious problems. Also, the Opposition called for removing the Sengol, which the Prime Minister had installed with much fanfare before the Election. Fifthly, Rahul and other Opposition MPs proposed discussing the leakage of the NEET question paper first. The Speaker, however, insisted that a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, a significant issue, should be held first. The first week's confrontation shows despite the decrease in numbers, the BJP is unlikely to change its working methods. An energised opposition will also be belligerent. The proceedings in Rajya Sabha also saw disruptions and adjournments as Opposition members raised slogans demand-

ing a discussion on the NEET question paper leak issue. There was also a heated argument between the Chairman and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. The functioning of the House lies with the Speaker, a position of utmost importance in maintaining order and ensuring fair debates. The Rajya Sabha Chairman presides over the Upper House. A functioning House is necessary and a prerequisite for a healthy democracy. The need for constructive cooperation between the Government and the Opposition cannot be overstated. The House functions effectively in addressing the pressing issues facing the nation. Both sides must recognise the truth and collaborate to make Parliament more organised. After all, the Government is accountable to Parliament. The parliamentary system emphasises collective responsibility, accountability, and flexibility. As former President Pranab Mukherjee said, its functioning is based on Debate, Dissension, and Decision.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CYBERCRIME ON THE RISE

Madam — Despite warnings, people are losing huge amounts of money to cyber criminals via stock market investments and online purchases. Fraudsters generally target the middle-aged and the elderly but youngsters are not spared. People are lured by attractive advertisements on social media platforms like WhatsApp, telegram, Instagram and facebook. When innocent citizens are asked to pump money through websites, they fall in line because the "profit accrued by similar investors" is prominently displayed in the common group. Furthermore, the fraudsters "train" the investors in stock market intricacies. Unsuspecting investors are unaware that another victim's money is transferred to his/her "account" to show profit. Duped investors sense something is amiss when they are asked to cough up a substantial commission and when their genuine queries go unanswered or are vaguely shrugged off. However, only when the scamster swindles the hard-earned money out of a person does the latter go to the cyber police. Since most states, if not all, have cyber crime helplines, it is vital to report the fraud very quickly because the cheaters are known to waste little time in hoodwinking the law. It is always a good practice to ask SEBI or RBI licence from the opposite party. Fake websites can always be checked. Sharing one-time password(OTP) is never a good idea.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

RAHUL GANDHI MUST INTROSPECT

Madam — Rahul Gandhi's recent speech in Parliament was nothing short of a disgraceful spectacle. His attempt to lecture on Hinduism was an insult to the intelligence of the nation. By clumsily parroting platitudes about Hindu philosophy, Gandhi not only displayed his profound disconnect from

Tragedy strikes Hathras



More than 100 people died and several others were injured in a stampede at a religious congregation in a village in Hathras district on Tuesday, 2 July, police said. Senior Superintendent of Police, Etah,

Rajesh Kumar Singh said the incident occurred at a 'satsang' in Pulrai village. The people had gathered large numbers for the event. The stampede occurred due to overcrowding, Sikanara Rao police station SHO Ashish Kumar said. Victims, dead or unconscious, were brought to the Sikanara Rao Trauma Centre in trucks and other vehicles. The bodies were laid outside the health centre as people milled around them. One video clip showed a woman crying, sitting among five or six bodies in a truck. Another picture showed a man and a woman lying lifeless in another vehicle. Eyewitness Shakuntala Devi said that the stampede took place while people were leaving the venue at the end of the 'satsang'. With this the tragedy struck at the Hathras.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CONCERNS ON NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

Madam — The editorial on the three new criminal laws(2-7-24) is welcome. In the name of extending justice, the government has hurried through at every stage keeping all democratic norms aside. The Bills were introduced after suspending around 140 opposition members in the parliament and were passed with the least discussion. Such an important Bill should have been placed before the public for widespread discussions and debates and the opposition members who are also elected by the people should have been involved in the process, besides consulting the luminaries in the field. Nothing is done. How such a law is going to ensure justice? Moreover, it may take quite a long time for all those in the legal field to get themselves familiarised with the new versions. It looks to be a case of smashing a mountain to catch a small rat.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Modernising Govt IT: Imperative shift to a multicloud future



SRINIVASCHARY T

This will ensure that services are not only delivered effectively but also in a cost-efficient and secure manner as it bolsters cybersecurity

From cybersecurity threats to unprecedented data management complexity to systems outages, outdated IT hinders the government's ability to provide important services in the safest and most efficient manner possible.



Our technology infrastructure should receive the same attention and investment as our roads, bridges, energy, and broadband infrastructure. Instead, current policies deter government IT leaders' ability to choose the best solutions to meet modern challenges. Public agencies are too often using outdated technology and face too many barriers to effectively modernize their systems. With modern technology and data availability, the government will be able to better track life-threatening illnesses, while policymakers would be armed with relevant data to chart robust policies for prevention and treatment. According to a Deloitte research report, BFSI sector is also investing more on cloud to transform systems.

Federal and state agencies have been slowly upgrading IT infrastructure over the past decade by shifting to a public cloud computing model. This is primarily driven by the promise of increased efficiency, lower costs, and improved continuity to enhance the services they offer to the public. While many government organizations have taken advantage of the flexibility public cloud computing offers, given privacy, compliance and security concerns, this approach does not work in every situation. It is critical that IT leaders have flexibility to choose the most cost-effective solutions. Government agencies should consider a multicloud by design approach,

where you use cloud services from multiple public and private cloud providers. While a single-cloud strategy might seem simpler, it limits service offerings and often commits organizations to a single vendor, which often costs more in the end.

A multicloud approach to cloud computing is used for better data control, allows access to the best services from each provider, and offers more flexibility as IT leaders can optimize workload requirements. While government agencies - and ultimately taxpayers - that adopt multicloud approaches can also have greater control over cost, which is critical at a time when research firm IDC estimates that nearly two-thirds of organizations are spending more on cloud than initially budgeted. Policymakers need to make this multicloud modernization process a reality by investing in the technology modernisation fund allowing government agencies to replace legacy equipment with upgraded multi-

cloud computing solutions that will ensure agencies can provide critical services quickly and securely. This will require that all agencies conduct multicloud computing readiness assessments through an evaluation of current IT infrastructure, processes, and policies to determine the best path for adoption. The assessment should look at things like are the agency's applications considered cloud-enabled, what is the cost of migration, do cloud computing solutions meet security and compliance requirements, as well as what is the impact on civil service employees. We cannot fight off cyberattacks and provide the best services possible in the digital age with inadequate and outdated IT infrastructure. Adopting a multicloud approach will help secure management critical data, cut costs, and allow for our government to use the solutions that are most effective to meet our citizens' needs. (The writer is Lead Solution Architect, Dell Technologies India; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

UNDERSTANDING THE DIVINE HAND

Recognise and reciprocate God's boundless efforts by embracing dharma



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We don't give credit to God, because we take it for granted that Creation will go on. How about a business? We are all aware that it has limited longevity, however long it may run. But Creation, which is God's business runs and runs. Why? Because God keeps it going. Just picture this. There are many nuclear-armed countries; some of whom have crazy leaders. How does God prevent an all-out nuclear war? Simple; God has access to our hearts. He knows what we are thinking. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 13.2) And He knows how to mould it if His Creation is at risk. God is fully alert all the time; there is no chance of a slip-up. And we may be thinking that God is sitting somewhere or even sleeping. If this task undertaken by the Lord was not too much, just imagine being available to all eight billion of us all the time. You pray and God has to respond appropriately, if at all warranted. Why? Because most of the prayers are ridiculous like a student, having not studied all year, who prays for passing.

How does God achieve this task? Lord Krishna explains, "Having limbs on all sides; having eyes, head and mouth on all sides; having ears on all sides, God is situated in this world pervading all. (13.13) God does it in His unmanifest form. (9.4) He doesn't have to be doing it in gross form like we perceive someone to do. God is different from us, very different. If this task is not onerous enough, God ensures that we are justly rewarded and yes, punished also. Justice is always done, and no one is rewarded at the expense of another. Imagine two teams playing and their supporters fervently praying for victory. Who wins? The team with the right karmaphalas of course, i.e. what was destined. We don't know how it was arrived at but be sure that this was the right result.

Yes, God responds to prayers, but only to those who deserve it. And He knows who deserves it; more praying is not sufficient. One must pray and also qualify for a favourable result. If we wish to know what is required to qualify for God's kripa (favour), God has given detailed instructions in bonafide scriptures like the Bhagavad-Geeta. Additionally, God is very keen to guide, us if we pray sincerely for it. Picture our requesting for guidance from a local if lost. What does the local do? He does his best



to help us. God is not different; He helps. God is very much in the picture to safeguard good people from demons, as there is always a tussle going on between divine and demonic forces. God sides with the divine forces without infringing dharma, as was done in the Mahabharata War and during Lord Ramachandra's incarnation; the Lord killed Ravana among many other demons. Not only big killing, God takes care of all big tasks as Karta (doer) for His devotees.

How do you think Arjuna was able to kill/maim big warriors? Because God controls all the relevant five factors for success; nobody else has this control; we can control only ourselves. The place of action is determined by circumstances. Similarly, the instruments at our disposal are limited, for example, a doctor is hampered if all the right medicines are not readily available. Our efforts are also limited because we are limited by our health, etc. And the providence is surely not in our control. (18.14) God has no such infirmities.

God is always very busy. Not only engaged, but God is very carefully engaged in action. Why? Because men follow His lead, God is the most superior entity. As pointed out earlier, God has taken upon Himself many tasks; I have pointed out only a few. What is the message of this article? That we should become aware of God's enormous contribution to our well-being if we choose to take His shelter and follow His instructions, especially dharma. What does God want in return from us? That we should work actively towards our progress and help and serve others so that they do likewise. God wants us to be useful just as God is. (The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Wake-up call against rising plastic pollution

International Plastic Bag Free Day, observed annually on July 3, aims to raise awareness about the escalating crisis of plastic pollution



SRIRAJ KOTA



The International Plastic Bag Free Day is celebrated on Jul 3 every year. The awareness created due to observance of this day helps put focus on the threat of the silently growing footprint of plastic pollution. This is essential given the fact that plastic pollution, especially of Single Use Plastics (SUP) has now permeated all aspects of the environment. Today SUP and plastic microfibre pollution can be found from the highest point to the deepest part of the earth. The influx of 45,000 trekkers per year to Mt. Everest has unfortunately ensured that microplastic pollution can now be found in snow samples close to the peak of the world's highest mountain. Similarly, relentless marine traffic and indiscriminate disposal of garbage into the oceans has resulted in high microplastic pollution across the seas including in The Mariana Trench, Earth's deepest point in the Pacific Ocean, more than 11 km deep from mean sea level. As humanity achieves this dubious distinction of spreading litter to virtually all corners of the planet, India unfortunately is firmly at the forefront of plastic pollution spree. The figures speak for themselves. According to the Plastic Overshoot Day report by Swiss non-profit EA, Earth Action states that global plastic waste generation has risen by 7.11 per cent since 2021. The world is estimated to have generated 220 million tons of plastic waste this year, 70 million tons of which will end up polluting the environment. India is not far behind. India ranks 3rd globally contributing 5.5 KT of SUP and ranked ninety-fourth with per capita single-use plastic waste of 4 kg per year. The much-publicised SUP ban in India addresses only 11 per cent of the entire gamut of SUP plastic waste. India is among the twelve countries responsible



THE VARIOUS WATER BODIES IN THE COUNTRY ARE RIFE WITH MICROPLASTIC CONTAMINATION. IN THIS REGARD, INDIA CAN TAKE A LEAF OUT OF THE INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY GERMANY. WASSER 3.0 IN GERMANY HAS PERFECTED THE PROCESS OF NOT ONLY REMOVING MICROPLASTICS BUT ALSO MICRO-POLLUTANTS FROM WATER

for 60 per cent of the planet's mismanaged plastic waste. With a population of more than 1.44 billion, India generates 26,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day. This is the equivalent of approximately 26,000 small cars.

Unfortunately, only 8 per cent of this plastic is recycled. The Swiss report also states that India is poised to release 391,879 tonnes of microplastic into water bodies by the end of 2024. Second only to China. With abysmal conditions such as these, India's grip on plastic pollution can at best be described as feeble. The efforts to rein in the runaway plastic pollution have to begin at the grassroots level.

The International Plastic Bag Free Day focuses on the same by increasing awareness about the harmful impact of plastic bag usage and pollution. Additionally, stress is also laid on encouraging individuals, businesses, and organisations to adopt sustainable alternatives for SUP products. The special day urges governments across the world to step up policy changes and introduce radical systemic solutions to reduce plastic use and waste.

The current statistics of plastic pollution in India demand serious and innovative solutions that look beyond the traditional answers such as simple unsorted recycling of plastic, landfilling or co-processing.

The need of the hour is ultra-innovative remedies that deliver scalable and sustainable results in

record time. While India continues to construct a circular economy that reduces plastic waste, the focus must now be firmly shifted to handling the plastic pollution problem on large scale basis. As a part of this India must set up large-scale waste sorting facilities that can use artificial intelligence-based algorithms to automatically sift through various types of plastic waste and identify the same.

This as compared to traditional recycling methods can speed up the process of recycling and therefore increase the quantum of plastic recycled at the facility in one shift. This in turn can ensure that the facility can sort and recycle an entire district's monthly plastic waste within a week. An example in this regard is Sweden's plastic waste sorting facility called Site Zero which can handle up to 200,000 tonnes of plastic packaging every year, more than any other facility in the world, and enough to deal with the whole country's household plastic packaging waste. Similarly, microplastic pollution in water is a major concern.

The various water bodies in the country and the seas are rife with microplastic contamination. In this regard, India can take a leaf out of the innovative initiative taken by Germany. Wasser 3.0 in Germany has perfected the process of not only removing microplastics but also micro-pollutants from water—that too without any filters.

The process followed is called "Agglomeration Fixation" which clumps microplastics together on the surface of the water after which they are simply skimmed off. The process is simple, scalable with no side effects and can be applied to a variety of water bodies be it freshwater, seawater or even wastewater. Furthermore, the science of biochemical research can be leveraged to access plastic-degrading enzymes that can degrade and consume plastic waste in record time. This can go a long way in accelerating a year's plastic waste recycling activity to a few months.

With the aid of science, and artificial intelligence (AI) software the possibilities of innovative plastic pollution combat options are endless. AI aided by satellite support for instance can help India clean up its seas on a large-scale manner, special software-driven clean-up technologies can dredge up decades of plastic and other pollutants thereby providing a chance of survival for the delicate marine life. Plastic is in our everyday life and diet as well. A World Wildlife Fund study has revealed that an average human being ingests 5 gm of plastic every week. It is time to cut the growing footprint of this harmful substance to size in the interests of mankind and the environment. So next time we reach for that plastic bag, let us not.

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

Unveiling the leadership legacy of Narendra Modi: A definitive exploration

A new book, 'Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi,' offers a profound examination of Modi's leadership journey

Last ten years have been dominated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs. An outsider as he would call him has made deep inroads into the Indian politics as also into the hearts and minds of the millions of Indians who adore him for his unwavering determination and fulfil his promise of making India a developed nation. His leadership is indeed exemplary and has provided the country with a sense of purpose and confidence.

A new book delving into the leadership qualities of Narendra Modi is a treat. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi, authored by the distinguished development scholar Dr R Balasubramaniam, offers an



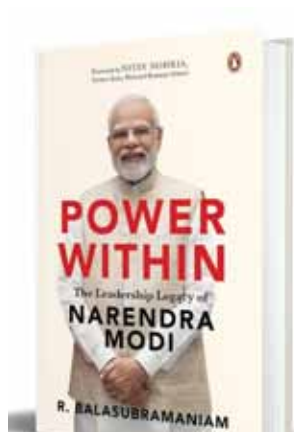
MADHU SEN

in-depth exploration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership journey, meticulously capturing his contributions to India's socio-economic landscape. Launched amidst notable dignitaries such as former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, NASSCOM President Debjani Ghosh, and Prof. B Mahadevan from IIM Bengaluru, the book is a testament to PM Modi's significant impact on the nation's

development, particularly in the realm of digital public infrastructure.

Dr. Balasubramaniam, renowned for his pioneering work with rural and tribal communities, brings a unique perspective to the narrative. He contrasts Western trait-oriented leadership approaches with Indian practice-oriented philosophies, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics. This blend of perspectives provides a nuanced view of Modi's fifty years in public life, from his formative years to his tenure as Prime Minister, underscoring the enduring qualities that have defined his leadership.

The book is particularly compelling in its discussion of PM Modi's role in the digital trans-



formation of India. As highlighted by Amitabh Kant during the launch, under Modi's leadership, India has achieved an astounding 130 billion fast

payment transactions annually. This achievement, stemming from initiatives such as the 100 Digital Melas in 2017, reflects Modi's relentless and meticulous approach to enhancing digital public infrastructure. Kant's insights, drawn from his tenure as NITI Aayog CEO, provide a vivid illustration of Modi's forward-thinking vision and commitment to digital inclusion.

Dr. Balasubramaniam captures these achievements through a series of poignant anecdotes and testimonies from Modi's colleagues, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The narrative paints a vivid picture of a leader dedicated to self-discovery and service, striving to uplift the nation through innovation and hard work. The

author's detailed exploration of Modi's leadership style, juxtaposing it with both Western and Indic leadership frameworks, offers valuable lessons for aspiring leaders and public servants.

His work encapsulates wisdom on leadership and its true essence. He suggests that, "exercising leadership is a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to the lives of others. And such an opportunity to express leadership crosses our paths every day. What is required is the sensitivity to recognize purpose when it emerges and the courage to act on it as a labour of love."

Notable figures such as Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, and Falguni Nayar, Founder and CEO of

Nykaa, have praised the book for its thought-provoking insights and its ability to shift perceptions on leadership. Mahindra hails it as a work that will "undoubtedly change perspectives and perceptions on powerful leadership," while Nayar emphasizes its relevance in understanding the dynamics that have propelled India to new heights.

Power Within is more than a biography; it is a guide to understanding the essence of leadership. Dr. Balu's reflections on the nature of leadership, emphasizing the importance of sensitivity to purpose and the courage to act, resonate deeply.

His portrayal of leadership as a labor of love, a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to others, is a pow-

erful message that underlines the entire narrative.

The book is a must-read for anyone interested in leadership, public service, and the transformative journey of one of India's most influential leaders. Dr. Balasubramaniam's nuanced portrayal of Narendra Modi's legacy provides not just a look at the man behind the political figure, but also a roadmap for those aspiring to lead with purpose and integrity. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi promises to be an essential addition to the library of anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of impactful leadership.

(The writer is a senior journalist and an arts critic; views are personal)

'Israel has made largest West Bank land seizure in 3 decades'

AP ■ JERUSALEM

An anti-settlement watchdog says Israel has approved the largest seizure of land in the occupied West Bank in over three decades. The Israeli group Peace Now said Wednesday that authorities recently approved the appropriation of 12.7 sq km (nearly 5 sq miles) of land in the Jordan Valley. The group's data indicate it was the largest single appropriation approved since the 1993 Oslo accords at the start of the peace process. The land appropriation was likely to worsen already soaring tensions linked to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Violence has surged in the West Bank since the start of the war, with Israel carrying out near-daily military raids that often spark deadly gunbattles with Palestinian militants. The land seizure, which was approved late last month but only publicised on Wednesday, comes after the seizure of 8 sq km (roughly 3 square miles) of land in the West Bank in March and 2.6 sq km (1 square mile) in February. That makes 2024 by far the peak year for Israeli land seizure in the West Bank, Peace Now said. The parcels are contiguous and located northeast of the West Bank city of Ramallah, where the Western-backed

Strike kills family as Israeli evacuation order sparks panicked flight from Gaza

Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip) (AP) An Israeli airstrike killed a prominent Palestinian doctor and eight members of his extended family after they complied with military orders to evacuate their home and moved into an Israeli-designated safe zone. The Hamdan family — around a dozen people from three generations — fled their home in the middle of the night after the Israeli military ordered an evacuation from the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis. They found refuge with extended relatives in a building further north, inside an Israeli-declared safe zone. But hours after they arrived, an Israeli airstrike on Tuesday afternoon hit their building in the town of Deir al-Balah, killing nine members of the family and three others. In all, five children and three women were among the dead, according to hospital records and a relative who survived. Israel's order on Monday for people to leave the eastern half of Khan Younis — the territory's second-largest

city — has triggered the third mass flight of Palestinians in as many months, throwing the population deeper into confusion, chaos and misery as they scramble once again to find safety. About 250,000 people live in the area covered by the order, according to the United Nations. Many of them had just returned to their homes there after fleeing Israel's invasion of Khan Younis earlier this year — or had just taken refuge there after escaping Israel's offensive in the city of Rafah, further south. The order also prompted a frantic flight from European General Hospital, Gaza's second-largest hospital, located in the evacuation area. The facility shut down after staffers and more than 200 patients were evacuated overnight and on Tuesday, along with thousands of displaced who had sheltered on the hospital grounds, according to the staff and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which had a medical team there.

Palestinian Authority is headquartered. By declaring them state lands, the Israeli government has opened them up to being leased to Israelis and prohibited private Palestinian ownership. The Palestinians view the expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank as the main barrier to any lasting peace agreement and most of the international community considers them illegal or illegitimate. Israel's current government considers the West Bank to be the historical and religious heartland of the Jewish people and is opposed to Palestinian statehood. Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three territories for a future state. Israel has built well over 100 settlements across the West Bank, some of which resemble fully developed suburbs or small towns. They are home to over 500,000 Jewish settlers who have Israeli citizenship. The 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under seemingly open-ended Israeli military rule. The Palestinian Authority administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank but is barred from operating in 60% of the territory, where the settlements are located.

Stop Labour's 'supermajority': UK PM's message as election campaign winds up

PTI ■ LONDON

Stop Labour's "supermajority" is the final message British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is trying to drive home on Wednesday, the final day of campaigning ahead of polling day on Thursday, as most of the incumbent Conservatives seem to have all but conceded defeat in the general election. "This is what unites us. We need to stop the Labour supermajority that will put up your taxes. The only way to do that is to vote Conservative tomorrow," said 44-year-old Sunak on social media, as he focused on drumming up support in the last few hours of the campaign trail. With his party trailing far behind the Keir Starmer-led Labour Party, the British Indian leader and his team's strategy seems to be to canvas their traditional voters to ensure a strong enough turnout in the polls on Thursday and narrow the gap of their widely expected defeat after Tory victories in the last three elections. "I totally accept where the polls are at the moment means that tomorrow is likely to see the largest Labour landslide majority — the largest majority that this country has ever seen. Much bigger than 1997," Sunak's Work and Pensions Secretary Mel Stride told the BBC.



"I have accepted that where the polls are at the moment... that we are therefore tomorrow highly likely to be in a situation where [Labour has] the largest majority that any party has ever achieved," he said, effectively conceding his party's defeat. It is being seen as a fear tactic to jolt Tory voters into action, with the hope of keeping the Labour majority under that won by former prime minister Tony Blair led Labour Party in 1997 of 179 seats. "Thursday's vote is now all about forming a strong enough Opposition. One needs to read the writing on the wall: it's over, and we need to prepare for the reality and frustration of the Opposition," Suella Braverman,

the most left-wing Labour government since the war with a huge majority, and we must not let it happen," he warned. The Labour Party, meanwhile, is keen to override this message of victory as a foregone conclusion a day before the polls to fight against any complacency within the ranks and among its own voter base. "People are saying the polls predict the future — they don't predict the future, every single vote counts, every single vote has to be earned... It isn't 'job done'," said Starmer. Polling experts have forecast a low turnout, which stood at 67 per cent in the last general election in December 2019 when Johnson won a solid majority on his "get Brexit done" message. On Thursday, polling booths will open across the country at 7am local time and close at 10pm local time as voters elect their MPs for the UK Parliament's 650 constituencies — with 326 required for a majority and to avert a hung Parliament. All eyes will then be on the election night exit poll at 10pm, which gives a fair snapshot of what can be expected nationally as the counting commences and centres up and down the UK. If opinion polls are to be believed, the incumbent Tories are in line to win anywhere between 53 and 150 seats, with Labour projected to win a landslide.

Deuba asks PM Prachanda to quit to allow formation of new govt

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba Wednesday asked Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to step down and pave the way for the formation of a new government after the Himalayan nation's two largest political parties struck a power-sharing deal to oust the former guerrilla leader. "The Prime Minister should resign after the largest parties NC and UML said that they would form a new government together," Deuba told reporters after a crucial meeting of the party at his residence at Budhanilkantha on the outskirts of Kathmandu. Deuba, 78, and Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman K P Sharma Oli, 72, — both former premiers — inked a power-sharing deal Monday night to form a new government. They

agreed to share the Prime Ministerial position on a rotation basis for the rest of the term of the Parliament. Nepali Congress, the largest party in the 275-member House of Representatives, has 89 seats at present, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. Their combined strength of 167 is sufficient for a majority of 138 seats in the lower house. Prachanda's party has 32 seats. The Nepali Congress Central Work Performance Committee (CWC) met at Deuba's residence at Budhanilkantha to discuss the current political situation and the party's future strategy. "The meeting reviewed the latest political situation in the country and discussed the future course of action," said former foreign minister Narayan Prakash Saud. The meeting also endorsed the agreement reached between Deuba and Oli to form a new coalition and share the post of

Prime Minister on a rotation basis. The meeting mainly discussed the agenda and modality of formation of the new coalition government, said Saud, who is also a Nepali Congress central committee member. The seven-point deal finalised between Deuba and Oli on Monday night includes the sharing of the remaining three-year term of Parliament between the two parties, the ministerial division, provincial leadership roles and a rotation for the prime ministerial position. Oli will assume the post of Prime Minister in the first phase and after one-and-a-half-year, the Nepali Congress will get the leadership of the government. Speaking to journalists after the meeting, party spokesperson Dr Prakash Sharan Mahat said, "The prime minister should pave the way after the largest parties —

Nepali Congress and UML — said they would form a new government together. This is also included in the decision." "Other parties, too, are supporting the new Nepali Congress-UML alliance. So, the Nepali Congress CWC has requested the prime minister to pave the way," he added. Mahat said a new government will be formed through the constitutional process if the prime minister does not pave the way for the formation of a new government. A senior leader of CPN-UML indicated that all the ministers of the CPN-UML will resign en masse to put pressure on Prachanda to step down. "Our ministers are ready to quit the post en masse but we are waiting for the Prime Minister to resign by Wednesday evening," said Bishnu Rijal, central committee member of UML. The UML has already urged the Prime

Minister to resign from the post paving the way for the new government formation. Meanwhile, the spokesperson of Janata Samajwadi Party Nepal Manish Suman said that his party will support the new coalition but has not yet decided on joining the government. JSP Nepal has five members in the Parliament. Rastriya Prajatantra Party with 14 members in the House of Representatives and Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party with four seats have also indicated support for the new coalition. However, embattled Prime Minister Prachanda has refused to resign from the post and said he would rather face a vote of confidence in Parliament. According to the constitutional provision, the prime minister losing a majority support in the House will be required to prove a majority within 30 days. The prime minister must seek a vote of

confidence once a ruling alliance withdraws support. This will be the fifth time Prachanda, 69, will seek a vote of confidence within a term of one and a half years. The former guerrilla leader has won three votes of confidence in Parliament. The CPN-UML has already urged Prime Minister Prachanda to step down from the position so that a new government can be formed as per the constitutional provision. It also asked all the political parties to join the "national government" under the leadership of Oli to bolster political stability in the country. But delaying its earlier decision, the party has decided to not recall ministers from the Prachanda-led Cabinet immediately. "We don't want more animosity [against the CPN-Maoist Centre] and so we did not recall our ministers today,"

UK election set to deliver more diverse Parl, high number of British Indian MPs

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK general election on Thursday is expected to deliver the most diverse Parliament in the country's history, including in the number of parliamentarians of Indian heritage likely to be elected from across the nation. According to an analysis by the British Future think tank, the Labour Party is set to have by far the largest number of ethnic minority MPs if the party wins an overall majority and even more in a landslide scenario. With around 14 per cent of MPs coming from an ethnic minority background this time, the analysis finds that the new Parliament will be closer than ever to reflecting the diversity of the British electorate. "This election will see the biggest rise in ethnic minority representation and the most diverse Parliament ever," said Sunder Katwala, Director of British Future. "In the space of 40 years, we'll have gone from zero to one in seven MPs being from an ethnic minority background. Britain is closing the gap between the diversity of Parliament and the electorate much faster than anyone thought possible," he said. The last general election in 2019 resulted in 15 MPs of Indian heritage crossing over the line, many of whom are contesting again alongside several first-timers. Conservative Party MP Alok Sharma and Labour veteran Virendra Sharma are among the most high-profile British Indians not seeking re-election this time, from Reading West and Ealing Southall, respectively. The latter constituency, with a large Punjabi electorate, has two British Sikh candidates contesting as Independents — Sangeet Kaur Bhail and

Jaginder Singh. Some of the key British Indian candidates to watch in Thursday's polls include Praful Nargund, who is contesting for the Labour Party in Islington North — the seat of the party's now-suspended former leader Jeremy Corbyn, who is contesting as an Independent candidate. Jas Athwal is contesting in another Labour stronghold of Iford South, while Baggy Shanker in Derby South, Satvir Kaur in Southampton Test, and Harpreet Uppal in Huddersfield are contesting more marginal seats for the party. Rajesh Agrawal, the Indore-born former Deputy Mayor of London for Business, is fighting to become a first-time MP from Leicester East and is up against a fellow British Indian Conservative candidate, Shivani Raja. This constituency, representing a large Indian heritage electorate, will be keenly watched as its former long-term Goan-origin MP, Keith Vaz, is also in the race as an Independent candidate. British Sikhs, including solicitor Warinder Juss from Wolverhampton West in central England and Gurinder Singh Josan from Smethwick, will be hoping to make gains for Labour, as will Bihar-born Kanishka Narayan contesting in Vale of Glamorgan — hoping to be elected as the first Indian-origin MP from Wales, and Sonia Kumar hoping to overturn a Tory majority in Dudley. For the Conservative Party, Chandra Kanneganti in Stoke-on-Trent Central and Ameet Jogi in Hendon are facing a tough fight in a race consistently forecast in favour of the Opposition Labour Party. "A diverse parliament brings different perspectives to its work, which can lead to more effective policy-making."

Egypt swears in new Cabinet

Cairo (AP): Egypt's new Cabinet was sworn in Wednesday as the country faces an ailing economy and raging conflicts in neighbouring nations. Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly — who was first appointed in 2018 — has been again tapped to form the new Cabinet which includes several technocrats. Some ministers, including those in charge of police and tourism, remain in place, but others, particularly defence, foreign affairs and economy-related portfolios, represent major challenges. The ministers have taken the oath before President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi in Cairo. Among the changes were the finance, electricity, justice, petroleum, education and investment portfolios. The new government comes three months after el-Sissi was sworn in for his third term.

Trump Campaign outraises Biden by over \$67 mn in 2nd quarter

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Republican presumptive nominee and former president Donald Trump has out-raised incumbent President Joe Biden by over USD 67 million in the second quarter of this year by raising USD 331 million. Trump, 78, the presumptive Republican Party candidate, is pitched against 81-year-old incumbent President Joe Biden for the November 5 presidential elections. The Trump Campaign raised USD 331 million against the USD 264 million raised by the Biden-Harris Campaign during the second quarter of this year, according to the figures released by the two campaigns. However, the Biden-Harris Campaign out-raised Trump in June, raising a record USD 127 million. Of this, USD 38 million was raised in the four days following the first presidential debate in Atlanta on June 27.



The Biden-Harris Campaign has USD 240 million in cash on hand — up from USD 212 million last month. Team Trump's cash on hand at the end of June is USD 284.9 million. "President Trump's campaign fundraising operation is thriving day after day and month after month. Winning this quarter brought us a cash-on-hand advantage, which is punctuated by a Biden burn rate that grows while yielding no tangible results for them," said Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles from the Trump Campaign. "Despite Biden spending nearly USD 120 million on TV, cable and radio alone, polling and voter enthusiasm continue to grow for President Trump. This fundraising momentum is likely to grow even more as we head into a world-class convention and see the Democrats continue their circular firing squad in the aftermath of Biden's debate collapse," they said. "June's USD 127 million haul was not just Team Biden-Harris' best month overall, it was the strongest grassroots month to date. Nearly two-thirds of June's raise came from grassroots donors, and of the USD 38 million raised following the debate, more than USD 30 million came from grassroots donations," said the Biden-Harris Campaign.

This second quarter haul is USD 75 million more than Team Biden-Harris' raise in the first quarter of 2024. Since launch, more than 2.5 million Americans have contributed to Team Biden-Harris — more than 1.1 million of them are brand new donors, it said. Team Biden-Harris also now has 1.3 times more recurring donations than at this point in the 2020 cycle, and 95 per cent of all donations are less than USD 200 — another proof point of strong, sustained grassroots support, it said. "Our Q2 fundraising haul is a testament to the committed and growing base of supporters standing firmly behind the President and Vice President and clear evidence that our voters understand the choice in this election between President Biden fighting for the American people and Donald Trump fighting for himself as a convicted felon," said Biden-Harris 2024 Campaign

Manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez. "President Biden is building a positive future for our country — where every American has a fair shot, our rights are protected, and our president fights to strengthen our democracy — not tear it apart," she said. "And on the other side, every single day, Trump becomes more unhinged and dangerous, whether he's bragging about his role in overturning Roe or proudly and openly refusing to commit to accepting the results of this November's election," she added. National Democratic Committee Chair Jaime Harrison said in June, Democrats had their best fundraising month to date. "These dollars will go to opening offices, hiring staff, and spreading Democrats' message of hope — all of which will power Joe Biden and Kamala Harris back to the White House," he said.

issued a tropical storm watch stretching south from its border with Mexico to Belize City. Late Monday, Beryl became the earliest storm to develop into a Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic and peaked at winds of 165 mph (270 kph) Tuesday before weakening to a still-destructive Category 4. On Tuesday night, the storm was about 300 miles (480 kilometres) east-southeast of Kingston, Jamaica. It had top winds of 150 mph (240 kph) and was moving west-northwest at 22 mph (35 kph), the centre said. Beryl was expected to bring life-threatening winds and storm surge to Jamaica, where officials warned residents in flood-prone areas to prepare for evac-

Indian mission in NY launches initiative to help students find internship opportunities

New York (PTI): In a new initiative to support Indian students here, the Consulate General of India in New York has developed a special platform for them to find internship opportunities at companies in the US as well as provide access to attorney and medical information. The Consulate General of India in New York serves the north-eastern US states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. As part of the initiative to support Indian students in its jurisdiction, @IndianNewYork has developed a platform for Indian Students to find internship opportunities at companies in the USA, the Indian Consulate said in a post on X on Tuesday. The new facility for students is part of

the Consulate's effort to support Indian students in its jurisdiction. "Several Indian and American companies and organisations have agreed to consider deserving Indian students for internship opportunities," the Consulate said, adding that students are advised to apply directly to the companies as per the details provided in the portal. The portal lists student internship opportunities in companies across several sectors such as finance, IT, investment banking, automotive, software, science and technology, healthcare, hotels, multinational corporations and technology, government agencies, aviation, artificial intelligence, pharma and Tata Sons. The Consulate is also offering attorney and doctor information to support and help the students.

Committed to serving the Indian diaspora, the Consulate said it has reached out to some renowned attorneys within its jurisdiction who have agreed to "assist distressed Indians residing in the Northeast United States of America." "Members of the community may reach out to the Attorneys directly with the Consulate General's reference. It may please be noted that this initiative is aimed at assisting the Indian community and that the Consulate does not hold any responsibility for the outcome of the case," it said. Further, the Consulate has also reached out to some renowned doctors in its jurisdiction, who have agreed to assist Indian students enrolled in the 10 states under its jurisdiction with "psychiatry counselling and other consultations (including via telemed if needed)".

Beryl heads toward Jamaica

St Georges (AP): Hurricane Beryl roared through open waters Tuesday as a powerful Category 4 storm heading toward Jamaica after earlier crossing islands in the southeast Caribbean, killing at least six people. A hurricane warning was in effect for Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, and Cayman Brac. Beryl was losing intensity but was forecast to still be near major-hurricane strength when it passes near or over Jamaica early Wednesday, near the Cayman Islands on Thursday and into Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on Friday, according to the National Hurricane Centre. A hurricane watch was in effect for Haiti's southern coast and the Yucatan's east coast. Belize

issued a tropical storm watch stretching south from its border with Mexico to Belize City. Late Monday, Beryl became the earliest storm to develop into a Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic and peaked at winds of 165 mph (270 kph) Tuesday before weakening to a still-destructive Category 4. On Tuesday night, the storm was about 300 miles (480 kilometres) east-southeast of Kingston, Jamaica. It had top winds of 150 mph (240 kph) and was moving west-northwest at 22 mph (35 kph), the centre said. Beryl was expected to bring life-threatening winds and storm surge to Jamaica, where officials warned residents in flood-prone areas to prepare for evac-

Jamaica, as well as heavy rainfall. "This is a big hazard in the Caribbean, especially with the mountainous islands," Brennan said. "This could cause life threatening flash floods and mudslides in some of these areas." A tropical storm warning was in place for the entire southern coast of Hispaniola, an island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic. As the storm barrelled through the Caribbean Sea, rescue crews in southeastern islands fanned out to determine the extent of the damage Beryl inflicted on Carriacou, an island in Grenada. Three people were reported killed in Grenada and Carriacou and another in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, officials said.

"I am encouraging all Jamaicans to take the hurricane as a serious threat," Prime Minister Andrew Holness said in a public address Tuesday. "It is, however, not a time to panic." In Miami, National Hurricane Centre Director Michael Brennan said Jamaica appears to be in the direct path of Beryl. "We are most concerned about Jamaica, where we are expecting the core of a major hurricane to pass near or over the island," he said in an online briefing. "You want to be in a safe place where you can ride out the storm by nightfall (Tuesday). Be prepared to stay in that location through Wednesday." Storm surge of 6-9 feet (1.8 to 2.7 metres) above typical tide levels are likely in

Chopra says Paris Diamond League was not part of his competition calendar

PTI ■ SAARBRUCKEN, (GERMANY)
Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Wednesday clarified that Sunday's Paris Diamond League was never a part of his competition calendar this year. The statement came after a media report stated that Chopra pulled out of the event due to the adductor niggle that has been troubling him for the past couple of months. The 26-year-old took to 'X' to say that there was no question of a withdrawal when he had not even entered his name. "Hello, everyone. Just to clarify: the #ParisDL wasn't part of my competition calendar this season, so I haven't 'withdrawn' from it. I'm focusing on getting ready for the Olympic Games. "Thanks for your understanding and support, and wishing all the athletes competing all the best! #RoadToOlympics," Chopra



He was exempted from last week's National Inter-State Championships, which was a mandatory event for all Indian athletes, by the Athletics Federation Of India. The AFI said the relaxation was given to him due to the

short turnaround time between the domestic event and the Diamond League on July 7. "We have made it very clear that every athlete will compete in India at the Inter-State Championships," AFI president Adille Sumariwalla

had said, "But Paris Diamond League is clashing with the Inter-State Championships and we feel that Paris Diamond League will be very important for him (Neeraj) before the Olympic Games therefore he is the only guy who has been

given special permission to participate in the Federation Cup," he added. However, Chopra had indicated last month that his schedule will be decided according to the state of his body. "We had a discussion that I would play in the

National Inter-State Championships (June 27-30) and it's going to be held in Panchkula in Haryana but it was very near to the Paris Olympics," Chopra had said. "Since I was playing in Doha which is near to India. Moreover, there is Paris Diamond League (on July 7) between National Inter-State and Olympics. So, we decided to compete here (Federation Cup)," Chopra had said. "Further competition schedule will be decided later according to situation and my body. Otherwise, I will go to Paris from there (after competing in Turkey)." Chopra, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian to win a track and field medal at the Tokyo Olympics, had won the gold at the at the Paavo Nurmi Games last month. Following this, he had opened up about his adductor niggle which has affected his season, saying he will consult "different doctors" after the Paris Olympics.

Much-improved Netherlands beats Romania 3-0 to reach first Euros quarterfinals in 16 years

AP ■ MUNICH
The Netherlands could be peaking at just the right time. The Dutch team reached its first European Championship quarterfinal in 16 years with a 3-0 win over Romania on Tuesday after its best performance by far at Euro 2024. Cody Gakpo broke the deadlock in the 20th minute and substitute Donyell Malen scored two late goals to send the Dutch to their first quarterfinal in the tournament since 2008. "I think the whole performance today was outstanding and that's what we need to have a chance to continue in this tournament," coach Ronald Koeman said. "This is the level. If you go down in that level, then we don't reach the final." The Netherlands had missed a plethora of earlier opportunities to add to the lead and captain Virgil van Dijk also hit the woodwork. It was nevertheless a much-improved display compared to its disappointing group stage performance, which ended in a 3-2 loss to Austria. Koeman's side could get a quick rematch in Berlin on Saturday if Austria beats Turkey in the final round of 16 match later Tuesday. "Sometimes it's difficult to explain why you play bad," Koeman said. "Even today, the start was difficult. They were really aggressive. But finally we found our ball position. "What we created was good football... Maybe one critical point was that it took too long to score the second one. ... It's difficult to explain why one time you play badly and the next time you are really sharp from the beginning." It was nevertheless a match



to remember for Romania and its loud mass of yellow-clad fans, who have lit up the tournament. It was only the second time Romania had qualified for the knockout stage at a European Championship and it did so as group winner. The bouncing yellow wall at one end of the stadium gave its team such a magnificent send-off - singing and applauding the players long after the final whistle - that it was almost as though Romania had won the game. "Today we ended a great story, which we started two years ago. We continued that story here in Germany along with the fans of the national team," Romania coach Edward Iordanescu said. "The team gave a great effort, but there is some sadness. "We wanted more, but we gave our all. Thank you to my lads, the supporters and Romanians everywhere in the world who supported us." Romania had dominated possession until Gakpo's goal, but never really tested Netherlands goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen. Instead the opener came when Xavi Simons surged forward before finding Gakpo on the left. The Liverpool forward cut inside the blue-haired Andrei Rău and fired into the near bottom corner.



No Messi in Argentina's Olympic soccer squad
AP ■ BUENOS AIRES
Lionel Messi won't be in Argentina's squad at the Olympics starting later this month in Paris. Coach Javier Mascherano included four World Cup winners in the squad he announced Tuesday, including striker Julián Álvarez and defender Nicolás Otamendi. The 37-year-old Messi, who has struggled with injuries this year, is now playing at the Copa America, aiming to defend the continental title he won in 2021. That victory served as a springboard for Argentina to lift the World Cup in 2022. Messi won the gold medal at Beijing in 2008 in his only Olympic campaign. The Olympic men's soccer tournament is for under-23 teams, but three older players are allowed on each squad. Mascherano, who won the Olympic gold medal as a player in 2004 and '08, will add goalkeeper Gerónimo Rulli, Otamendi and Alvarez to his squad after Copa America is finished. Midfielder Claudio Echeverri, a recent signing for Manchester City from River Plate, will also join. Argentina will play two friendlies in France before its Olympic soccer tournament opener against Morocco on July 24.

Colombia draws Brazil 1-1 and will play Panama in quarterfinals while Seleção face Uruguay

AP ■ SANTA CLARA (US)
Daniel Muñoz scored the tying goal in the first-half stoppage time, and Colombia won its first-round group at the Copa America with a 1-1 draw against Brazil that extended its unbeaten streak to 26 games. Colombia goalkeeper Camilo Vargas saved Brazil's final chance on a shot by Andreas Pereira in the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time. Colombia plays Panama in a quarterfinal on Saturday at

Glendale, Arizona, while Brazil fell into what appears to be a more difficult game against Uruguay later that night at Las Vegas. Los Cafeteros, who finished with seven points to Brazil's five, had back-to-back scoring chances in the 84th minute but couldn't capitalize. Brazil went ahead in the 12th minute when Raphinha launched a left-footed free kick into the upper right corner of the net just above the outstretched hand of Vargas. The Brazilian winger jumped



and pumped his fist as the seasoned Seleção struck first on a blazing-hot night at Levi's Stadium, home of the NFL's San Francisco 49ers.

Players put on an entertaining show in the Group D finale, with Brazil's Bruno Guimarães calling Colombia "a stone in our shoe" in the lead up to Tuesday. What was expected to be a tense, physical, foul-filled match more than lived up to that hype featuring five yellow cards as a sea of jerseys the same color representing both countries packed the seats - once the fans finally got inside, that is. Some scanning equipment became very hot and slowed down the process. A crowd of 70,971 attended the

game, and the 24 group-stage games drew 1,115,400 for an average of 46,475. The Bay Area is facing an excessive heat warning and the temperature at kickoff was 98 degrees - though about half the field on one sideline was shaded. In the eighth minute, James Rodríguez had Colombia's best early chance when he hit the bar on a left-footed shot on a direct free kick from outside the penalty area He had another shot in the 16th that sailed high.

Gunok's wonder-save at Euro 2024 sparks Turkish celebrations

AP ■ LEIPZIG (GERMANY)
A moment of Mert Gunok's brilliance sparked celebrations for Turkish fans and a big exclamation from Austria rival Michael Gregoritsch, who described it as one of the best saves he'd ever seen. Goalkeeper Gunok pulled off one of the saves of the European Championship deep into injury time on Tuesday to secure Turkey's place in the quarterfinals. He leaped instinctively into a full-stretch dive to his right to palm away a close-range header from Austria's Christoph Baumgartner four minutes into stoppage time, preserving his team's 2-1 win and preventing the round-of-16 match from going into extra time. "I think that's one of the best saves I've ever seen live on the field," Gregoritsch said. "You have to give credit to the Turkish goalkeeper because I think it was extremely difficult to stop.



Unbelievable, really." Austria coach Ralf Rangnick was asked if the goal reminded him of England goalkeeper Gordon Banks' famous stop to deny Pelé at the 1970 World Cup. "True," he replied. Later, Rangnick rued the save, saying he was sure that if the ball had gone in, Austria would have gone on to win the match. "With Gordon Banks in

goal, that was the last chance that we had," the German coach said. It was Gunok's fourth big save of the game, including a one-on-one situation against Marko Arnautovic. It meant Merih Demiral's two goals were enough to send Turkey through to a quarterfinal against the Netherlands in Berlin's Olympiastadion on Saturday.

30 swimming prospects to get training at IIS for Olympic & Asian Games glory

PTI ■ BELLARY
As many as 30 "high-potential" swimmers have been identified for training as part of a newly-launched 'Mizuho Elite Programme' at the Inspire Institute of Sports here to prepare them for the 2026 Asian Games and the 2028 Olympic qualifiers. Inspire Institute of Sports has entered into a partnership with Mizuho Bank for this. The two entities have identified swimming as one of the key sports which can be developed at the grassroots level and announced a partnership to support 30 swimmers. Launched in 2023, the IIS Swimming Programme features two state-of-the-art pools, and promises technical coaching, competition exposure, and support in sports science, strength and conditioning, nutrition, education, mental



health, and residential facilities. Talented young swimmers Maana Patel, Kushagra Rawat, Ishaan Mehra, Astha Choudhury, Ashmitha Chandra, and Bikram Changmai are part of the programme. Maana Patel said the partnership will go a long way in helping them realise

their potential. "I am grateful to be a part of such a programme. Mizuho has been generous in their donations, which has allowed us to participate in various competitions globally, buy heating plant and other various training equipment for the pool," she said. Parth Jindal, Founder of IIS, echoed the sentiment. "It energises our mission to make India a sporting superpower. Their belief in our swimming programme is inspiring, and I am excited for the future," he said. "Mizuho's support will significantly raise our standards. Our rapid growth and success promise a transformative impact on Indian sport," Rushdee Warley, CEO of IIS, added. Mizuho, a leading global bank with over 28 years in India, operates five branches and four entities, including Mizuho Bank and Mizuho Securities. Piyush Agarwal, Senior Managing Director & Head - Corporate & Institutional Banking (India) at Mizuho, said, "We believe India, with its youthful population, deserves a place on the global podium. Sports build essential skills like resilience and teamwork, and we hope to inspire many through this initiative."

Vondrousova is 1st defending woman Wimbledon champ out in first round since 1994

AP ■ LONDON
Marketa Vondrousova became the first defending women's champion at Wimbledon to lose in the first round the next year since 1994, eliminated 6-4, 6-2 by Jessica Bouzas Maneiro at Centre Court. Vondrousova was a surprise title winner at the All England Club 12 months ago, the first unseeded woman to claim the trophy at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament. Now she enters the books in another — and less-wanted — historic way. The only other time in the sport's Open era, which dates to 1968, that a woman went from a championship at Wimbledon to an immediate exit a year later was when Steffi Graf was defeated by Lori McNeil 30 years ago. "I was happy to be back on the Centre Court," Vondrousova said. "It just didn't go as planned today." Vondrousova was seeded No. 6 this time, but the left-hander, who was the runner-up at the 2019 French Open and a silver medalist at the Tokyo Olympics three years

ago, was never quite able to demonstrate her full game Tuesday. She appeared to still be suffering after-effects from a fall during a tuneup tournament on grass in Berlin last month that hurt her hip. "I was a bit slower, maybe. I was a bit scared," Vondrousova said. "But credit to her. She was playing a good match, too. I didn't feel at my best, (but) she didn't give me many points for free." How big a deal was this for Bouzas Maneiro? She is competing in a Grand Slam tournament for only the third time and came into the day with an 0-2 record at those events. Bouzas Maneiro also had never won a match at a tour-level grass tournament and never beaten an opponent ranked in the top 10. "This is one of the most important moments in my life, in my career, here in this sport. This is amazing," said Bouzas Maneiro, a 21-year-old from Spain who is ranked 83rd this week, equaling her career high. "I was like, I have no pressure. Just enjoy the moment, enjoy the



tournament. Just trying to be free playing, and I did it, so I'm happy for that," she said. Vondrousova added to the series of past major title winners dropping out of the singles

brackets within the first 30 hours of action at Wimbledon this year - although others did so without playing a point. Earlier Tuesday, Andy Murray pulled out of singles because he

decided he wasn't able to compete a little more than a week after having surgery to remove a cyst from his spine. His final appearance at Wimbledon, which he won in 2013 and 2016, will

come in doubles alongside his older brother, Jamie. Two seeded women who both have been ranked No. 1 and own two Australian Open championships apiece, No. 3 Aryna Sabalenka and No. 16 Victoria Azarenka, withdrew on Monday before their first-round matches because of shoulder injuries. Sabalenka was the pre-tournament favorite to take the women's title, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. Intermittent rain delayed matches on the outside courts more than once Tuesday, and the retractable roofs at Centre Court and No. 1 Court were shut to allow play in those two stadiums. No. 6 seed Andrey Rublev lost, while winners on Day 2 included No. 1 Iga Swiatek, 2022 champion Elena Rybakina and No. 5 seed Jessica Pegula among the women, and seven-time champion Novak Djokovic, No. 4 seed Alexander Zverev and No. 7 Hubert Hurkacz among the men. For Djokovic, his 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win against qualifier Vit Kopriva was the first match since having

surgery to repair a torn meniscus in his right knee on June 5. "Obviously started a little bit more cautiously, I would say. I didn't really maybe go for certain shots 100% ... (in) the first set," said Djokovic, who wore a gray sleeve on his right knee. "I played, I think, just enough to win confidently in straight sets. I felt like as the match progressed, I moved better." The initial signs of trouble for Vondrousova on Tuesday came right away: She double-faulted three times in the very first game and got broken to trail 1-0. "My serve wasn't so good today," Vondrousova said. "Overall, I think, I wasn't at my best." She would wind up with seven double-faults, part of her total of 28 unforced errors, twice as many as Bouzas Maneiro in a match that lasted only a little more than an hour. "I'm surprised with myself, honestly. At the beginning, I was a little bit nervous, but then ... The atmosphere was so nice," Bouzas Maneiro said. "I was comfortable here playing, and I was like at home."

