



OPINION 6 RELIGION AND POLITICS IN MODERN INDIA

WORLD 8 STARMER BEGINS POST-BREXIT 'RESET' WITH EU

MONEY 10 CYBERSECURITY PLAYERS SEEK DIGITAL SECURITY PUSH IN BUDGET

Published From DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 34 Issue 199 \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY JULY 19, 2024; PAGES 12 & 4

Established 1864

# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



F1 DRIVER MAGNUSSEN TO LEAVE HAAS AT END OF THIS SEASON 11 SPORTS

## SC directs NTA to upload NEET UG results on its portal by July 20th



Students display placards in the precinct of the Supreme Court during a hearing on the NEET paper leak case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to publish the city and centre-wise results of this year's NEET-UG exam on their website, masking the identity of the candidates, by 12 noon of July 20 (Saturday). The top court will resume hearing the arguments on July 22 on a batch of pleas seeking cancellation, re-test and a court-monitored probe into

the allegations of large-scale malpractices in the prestigious test held on May 5. "We direct the NTA to publish the marks obtained by students at the UG-2024 NEET examination, while, at the same time, without disclosing the identity of the students. The result should be declared city and centre wise by 12 noon on July 20, 2024 and shall be uploaded on the website of the NTA," the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said in its

order. "We want the identity of students be masked. You can have dummy roll numbers. But let us see it centre-wise what is the marks pattern," the bench said.

The call for city-and centre-wise results underlines the focus this hearing has taken a deep-dive into data about the precise number of students who sat for the exam and passed, as well as the number who have asked for a re-test or for results to be scrapped, and those opposing any intervention. The bench noted the counsel for the petitioners have submitted that it would be appropriate if the result of NEET-UG 2024 examination was published on the NTA website so as to bring about transparency with regard to centre-wise marks obtained by candidates.

It also said material collected by the Bihar Police and the report of its Economic Offences Wing (EOW), before the investigation was taken over by the CBI, shall be filed in the court by 5 pm on July 20. At the outset, the bench said it has prioritised the hearing on the pleas over other cases as these have "social ramifications" and lakhs of students are waiting for the outcome.

Continued on Page 2



Local residents gather after Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derails in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday

## Express coach derailment in UP leaves two dead

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GONDA/NEW DELHI

Two passengers were killed and 20 injured when eight coaches of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derailed near Gonda in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday. A railway bulletin said in the wake of the accident, three trains were being run on diverted route. The diverted trains are 15707 Katihar-Amritsar Amrapali Express, 15603 Guwahati-Jammu Tawi Amarnath Express and 15910 Lalgarh-Dibrugarh Avadh Assam Express.

Gonda District Magistrate Neha Sharma, who reached the spot, said eight coaches of the train got derailed. He said the injured are being rushed to hospital and relief operations are on at the site. A 40-member medical team and 15 ambulances are at the spot and more medical teams and ambulances are being

rushed there, Relief Commissioner Kumar said. Eyewitnesses said the loud noise of the coaches leaving the track and toppling over to the left was followed by loud cries of the passengers, especially children. The passengers started coming out of the emergency windows and doors of the tilted sleeper coaches, and some went back to pull out their belongings. In the AC coaches, passengers helped each other break the window panes and pull out those injured or stuck. Passengers had to wade through knee-deep water in the fields on either side of the track to reach the nearby approach road. Others, shocked by the accident or injured, sat on the track itself, waiting to be rescued. When police teams reached the spot, officials made announcements asking people to stay away from the damaged coaches.

Continued on Page 2

## Army prepares for long haul in Jammu

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU/NEW DELHI

While gradually inducting more troops on ground zero, the Indian Army is preparing for the long haul ahead of flushing out Pakistani terrorists occupying 'Jammu Heights'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also reviewed the current security situation in Jammu in the wake of number of terrorist attacks in the past weeks. He chaired a meeting of Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which includes Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Adopting offensive posturing the Indian Army has already rushed additional troops to be deployed along the higher reaches of the Kathua district bordering Himachal Pradesh to plug the gaps and block the escape routes of infiltrating terrorists.

Troop deployment is also being reviewed across the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch as the region has witnessed repeated ambushes on army trucks and patrol parties since October 2021. The security forces are also contemplating setting up additional posts in the upper reaches of the Doda and Kishtwar districts to block the traditional routes of crossing into the Kashmir valley.

As per the preliminary assessment made by the different agencies, part of the multi-layered security grid in Jammu and Kashmir, the involvement of ex-Pak army



Army personnel during an encounter with terrorists in a forest village in Doda district on Thursday

regulars along with a well-trained cadre of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist outfit cannot be ruled out behind these attacks. Most of these ambushes were planned and executed under the same command structure and the desired objective was to inflict maximum casualties on the Indian security forces to spread the 'Arc of terror' across the peaceful Jammu region.

Before the four soldiers were martyred in the Dessa forest area of Doda, five soldiers were ambushed by Pakistani terrorists in the Badnota area of Machhedhi in the Billawar tehsil of Kathua on July 8. The security grid along the International border has been kept in a state of high alert to prevent fresh infiltration attempts from across the border.

Meanwhile, two terrorists were killed as security forces foiled a fresh infiltration bid

along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Thursday.

In a post on X, the Srinagar-based Chinara Corps said, "An infiltration attempt has been successfully prevented with the elimination of two terrorists today on the LoC in Keran Sector, Kupwara. Anti Infiltration Operations are continuing". In Doda, two Army personnel were injured when a group of terrorists lobbed a grenade and opened indiscriminate firing on the Government school building where these soldiers had taken a temporary shelter during the night.

According to official sources, the information about the presence of soldiers in the school complex may have been shared by the local associates of the terrorists in the Kastigarh area of Doda.

Continued on Page 2

## India issues advisory after shocking Bangladesh quota protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/DHAKA

India on Thursday issued an advisory to its nationals and students in Bangladesh, urging them to restrict movement outside their living premises. The advisory comes in the wake of the ongoing quota violence across parts of the country claiming six lives. India also issued some 24-hour emergency numbers.

"In view of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Indian community members and the Indian students residing in Bangladesh are advised to avoid travel and minimise their movement outside their living premises," the advisory read.

"In case of any urgency or need for assistance, please reach out to the High Commission and our Assistant High



Commissions," it stated. There were approximately 7,000 Indians in Bangladesh, according to the High Commission's website.

On Wednesday, student protesters demanding reforms in the quota system in government jobs announced plans to enforce a complete nationwide shutdown on Thursday in response to the actions of the security forces. The clashes left at least six people, including four students, dead across the country.

A key coordinator of the movement, Asif Mahmud, in a Facebook post, said all establishments, barring hospitals and emergency services, will remain closed, and only ambulance services will be permitted to operate. The movement urges students from all educational institutions to participate and calls on guardians to support their cause, a newspaper reported. Meanwhile, authorities called out the paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) troops in four major cities after hundreds of policemen in riot gear fanned out in public university campuses across the country.

Continued on Page 2

## PM Modi boosts Party cadre confidence post elections



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by Union Minister and BJP President JP Nadda as he arrives to meet party workers at the BJP headquarters, in New Delhi, on Thursday

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A day after political activities were reported from Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday reached out to the party workers to boost the sagging morale after not so good performance in the just concluded general elections in which BJP could not secure majority on its own to form the Government just like it did comfortably in 2014 and then in 2019.

Sources said Modi reached the BJP headquarters in the evening and moved around the party's huge complex on DDU Marg and chatted impromptu with many of the workers. The

PM also visited a few offices of party workers and then moved on to interact with the party workers and volunteers in a conference hall.

Modi interacted with them in what is being seen as his appreciation for their work following his return to power for a third straight term. Hailing their contributions, Modi said he will continue to meet them in future. Modi was greeted by BJP president J P Nadda as he arrived at its headquarters.

"He was too glad to meet us and personally identified many of us to whom he said he has been knowing several of the dedicated workers for more than five decades now. He

reminded some of the chit chats and also cracked jokes while recalling some of the events that happened in the closed premises of the party headquarters which was earlier at Ashoka Road in Lutyens," said a worker attached to a party General Secretary while quoting the PM. He mentioned that Modi told them to continue working with the same zeal as it is their sole contribution for making BJP the largest political party of the world, another worker said, quoting the PM.

This gesture is not unprecedented, as Modi has similarly met and thanked party workers following the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, aiming to boost morale and recognise their contributions. The BJP, known for its robust cadre-based structure, upholds a tradition of top leadership engaging directly with ground-level workers to bolster their efforts.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the party lost its parliamentary majority, securing 240 seats, a decrease of 63 seats compared to their 2019 performance. Notably, in the crucial State of Uttar Pradesh, the party's seat count dropped from 61 in the previous term to 33 in this election.



## Religion display on stalls on UP highways to help Kanwars eat right

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/MUZAFFARNAGAR

After drawing fire from various quarters, including politicians, over display of owners' names over the eateries enroute Kanwar Yatra, the Muzaffarnagar Police on Thursday issued fresh advisory making it a "voluntary" measure to put a board of names of their owners. The Muzaffarnagar Police said its intention was not to create any kind of religious discrimination but only to facilitate the devotees passing through Muzaffarnagar district and prevent any untoward situation. "During the holy month of Shrawan, many people, especially Kanwariyas, abstain from certain food items in their diet," the Muzaffarnagar Police stated through its

social media posts.

"In the past, such instances have come to light where some shopkeepers selling all types of food items on Kanwar Marg named their shops in such a way that it created confusion among the Kanwariyas and created a law and order situation. To prevent such a recurrence, hotels, dhabas and shopkeepers selling food items on Kanwar Marg have been requested to voluntarily display the names of their owners and employees... This system has been prevalent in the past, too," the advisory further said.

The fresh advisory came after the administration's earlier order asking eateries, including roadside carts, to display the names of their owners in front of their shops faced severe criticism. Police personnel had also started to enforce the order.

Continued on Page 2

## Disgraced daughter Puja Khedkar leads mother into remand, father on the run

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Within days after controversial probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar was shunted back to her Mussoorie-based alma mater on disciplinary grounds, the police arrested her mother Manorama Khedkar on Thursday for allegedly threatening some farmers at gunpoint to grab their land at Mulshi taluka in Pune district.

Manorama — who had been absconding for nearly a week after a video showing her threatening farmers at Mulshi in a bid to usurp their land went viral — was traced to a small lodge, Parvati Niwas, near Mahad town in Raigad district where the visiting Pune rural police reached and arrested her.

Manorama was later brought back to Pune where a court Judicial Magistrate First Class SG Barde remanded her in police custody till July 20. A former Sarpanch (village headwoman) of Bhalgaon in Pune district, Manorama had been staying at the lodge under a fake name of 'Indu Dnyandev Dhakane' with another person identified as 'Dadasaheb Dnyandev Dhakane'. Acting on a complaint lodged by farmer Pandharinath Pasalkar (65), the Paud police had registered a complaint against Manorama and her husband Diliprao Khedkar, both residents of National Housing Society in Baner, and one Ambadas Khedkar of Ambi village in Haveli, and other unidentified persons.



## Insult to India's dhoti kurta forces a Mall to shut shop in Bengaluru

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

In an interesting development, the Karnataka Government on Thursday ordered closure of a mall for seven days after a farmer was allegedly denied entry owing to his attire — a 'dhoti' and a white shirt — an incident which drew strong condemnation from members cutting across party lines in the Legislative Assembly. The Government also termed the alleged insult to the farmer as an infringement on "dignity and self respect", and said it cannot be tolerated.

"I checked with the BBMP (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) commissioner as to what can be done. The Government has the powers. Action will be taken against the (G T World)

mall in accordance with law immediately and we will ensure that the mall is closed for seven days," Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh told the House.

Social Welfare Minister HC Mahadevappa said the incident is condemnable. "For every individual self respect and dignity are important, this has been violated, and the Government will take action," said the Minister. The incident reportedly happened on Tuesday when septuagenarian Fakeerappa from Haveri district visited the mall, along with his wife and son to watch a movie at a multiplex. Fakeerappa was reportedly wearing white shirt and 'panche' (dhoti), and the security staffer at the mall allegedly told him and his son that he won't be allowed



Photo: Screengrab

inside in a 'panche', and asked him to "wear trousers and come." Earlier, Assembly Speaker U T Khader raised the issue and asked the Government to take action. "I saw in the media that a youth from the rural area, who is

studying here in Bengaluru, when he took his father wearing 'panche' — which is the traditional attire of Karnataka — to show him the mall, he was not let in because of the attire. This is highly condemnable and strict

action should be taken by the government, which becomes a lesson for all malls," he said.

"Merciless action should be taken, however big the mall owner or management is," the Speaker said. "We have nothing to do with them, we have to show that the super rich owning malls are not important for us, and it is the common man, poor and last person of the society who are leading a life with self esteem are important," he said.

Congress MLA Laxman Savadi, stating that mere condemnation won't help, urged the Government to at least cut the power supply to the mall for a week. Ranabennur Congress MLA Prakash Koliwad, noting that the farmer belongs to a village in his constituency, said, "The farmer

has given education to all his nine children, one of his son is studying MBA here in Bengaluru and the son wanted to take his father to show him the mall. The farmer was disrespected for his attire and the mall should be closed down."

Congress MLA and chief whip from the ruling side Ashok Pattan suggested that action should also be taken on private clubs in Bengaluru, which impose dress code.

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said such issues have been discussed in the House earlier too, "but what's the result?" The Speaker or the Government will have to issue some orders, which should be implemented strictly by the secretaries and bureaucrats.

Continued on Page 2



# TMC, BJP spar over infiltration

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has strongly refuted Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's contention that the steadily changing demographic patterns in Bengal, Assam and Jharkhand could lead to their "fall" and separation by 2051. Questioning the correctness of the statistical figures provided by Sarma particularly on Assam and Bengal TMC MP Sushmita Dev said that contrary to the Assam Chief Minister's claim that in 1950 Muslims accounted for 12 per cent of population of that State it was 25 per cent by the records. Sarma said that the Muslim population had now gone up to 40 per cent in many areas. "A false statement has come to light from Assam CM in Jharkhand. Firstly I want to tell that according to government data in 1952, 25 per cent of the Muslim population was registered," wondering about basis on which Sarma established his argument "when there has been no census conducted since 2011," Dev who also hails



from the same region said. Sarma, during a press conference in Ranchi, said, changing demography was a big issue in Assam where the Muslim population has reached 40 per cent today. "In 1951, it was 12 per cent," he added. Dev said, "I want to remind Assam CM that the Indian Government was supposed to conduct the population census but given the COVID-19 excuse, the census to date has not taken place... then how did the 40 per cent figure come from? The TMC MP also blamed the Chief Minister for not effectively sealing the Indo-Bangladesh border of his State. Party leader Kunal Ghosh too questioned Sarma's intention in raising such issues when elections will take place in Jharkhand in a few months from now. "Such statements are

not to be taken seriously because by now they have been exposed... the BJP has lost its communal steam which is proved by the general elections... their graph will now start falling... they are making such statements because they are not confident of winning elections normally... they tried that technique in Bengal but Mamata Banerjee gave them a good lesson," he said. The Chief Minister had in an interview to a senior journalist of a national television channel had earlier claimed that the way the Muslim population was increasing in the States like Assam, Bengal and Jharkhand the Hindus could turn into minority in those places in a few decades from now. For Bengal he said that present-

ly the population of the State it was about 26 percent "but going by the projected population growth rate by 2041 it may go beyond 36 percent... the Hindus can be minority by that time... and by 2051 or if not so by 2061 these States will fall." His statements were promptly lapped up by the Bengal BJP leaders who said such a situation could lead these three States to secede from the mainland. Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari who had to take some barbs from his own party colleagues for advising the scrapping of Minority Morcha within the State BJP -- apparently because the Muslims were not voting for the party -- came out in support of Sarma saying that the Assam Chief Minister was correct in his reading of the situation. "We have nothing against the local Muslims who have been living in India for generations... we are concerned about the Rohingyas who are steadily entering India through the unfenced borders of which there are about 72 in Bengal," Adhikari said holding Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for the present situation.

# West Bengal Govt sets up panel to review new criminal laws

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The implementation of the three new criminal laws replacing the older ones has opened a new battle front between the Mamata Banerjee Government and Governor CV Ananda Bose. This after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee set up a seven-member committee to review the central laws which came into force from July 1. The new laws are Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) which have replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act in that order. Reminding that Bengal could not be allowed to turn into a "banana republic," the Governor has asked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to furnish before him a report on the objectives of the seven-member committee to review the three new central laws.



The Chief Minister has prepared a panel of experts led by a retired High Court Judge Justice Ashim Roy and includes Law Minister Malay Ghatak and Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya apart from academicians and lawyers. While an official notification reads the committee shall have the power to engage academic experts, senior advocates, research assistants and other legal experts for seeking their views on the subject matter. It shall also have the power to carry out public consultation; the Governor reminded that "Bengal cannot be a state within a state or turned into a banana republic."

Incidentally before the beginning of the new parliamentary session Banerjee had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to defer the implementation of the new laws and urged that the issue should be discussed in the House before the laws were implemented. Constitution provides for three Lists on which the Centre and the State can make laws. These are Central List, State List and Concurrent List. It also provides that when there is any conflict between the central and the State laws the former will prevail. However the States have the authority to amend the central laws to suit respective situations.

# Some BJP MLAs keen on joining NCP (SP), claims Anil Deshmukh

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday claimed that some BJP MLAs are keen on joining the NCP (SP). He said the "switch" to the Sharad Pawar-led outfit has started in the form of ex-corporators, referring to the resignation of Ajit Pawar-led NCP's Pimpri-Chinchwad unit chief Ajit Gavhane and two former corporators. Gavhane had said on Wednesday that they would seek the blessing of Sharad Pawar. Speaking to reporters after a press conference here, the senior NCP (SP) leader claimed that some MLAs from the BJP are also interested in being a part of his party as they are "disappointed after not getting representation in the government." "MLAs from the NCP (headed by Ajit Pawar) will also return. However, Sharad Pawar will decide who will be taken into NCP (SP)," he said.

# Noted cardio surgeon Valiathan passes away

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Dr Marthanda Varma Sankaran Valiathan, National Research Professor of India and well known cardiovascular surgeon with a number of national and international accolades to his credit is no more. He breathed his last late Wednesday evening. The 90-year-old doctor was ailing for sometime and was the founder chancellor of Manipal University. Prof Valiathan who hailed from the Royal Family of Mavelikkara, had his medical education at Thiruvananthapuram Government Medical College from where he had his MBBS (1951-1956), Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh and Masters Degree in Surgery from University of Liverpool. He received advanced training in surgery from John Hopkins School of Medicine, George Washington and Georgetown University Hospitals in the US.



After returning to India, he worked at PGIMER, Chandigarh when the then chief minister of Kerala C Achutha Menon requested him to set up a specialty hospital at Thiruvananthapuram for the benefit of poor and down-trodden people. Prof Valiathan is the founder of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences at Thiruvananthapuram, a multi-disciplinary hospital and research center where he led a team of doctors and scientists to develop heart valves for patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases. SCTIMS reached its peak during the tenure of Prof Valiathan and established itself as an inter-

nationally reputed institute for cardio vascular treatment. After resigning from SCTIMS, he joined as Vice-Chancellor of Manipal University where he was in service till 1999. Though he retired in 1999, Prof Valiathan continued to lead and guide research teams in bioinformatics, western medicine and the Indian system of knowledge including Ayurveda. The professor was honored with Padma Vibhushan (2005), Padma Shri (2002), Dr B C Roy National Award, the Hunterian Professorship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, Chevalier of the Order of Palmes from France, and the Dr Samuel P Asper Award from John Hopkins University. He also wrote the three volume "Legacy of Caraka, Sushruta and Vagbhata, the Holy trinity of Ayurveda. It was Dr Valiathan as the National Research Professor of India who played a major role in elevating Ayurveda to the international arena.

# Indian crew member of capsized Comoros-flagged oil tanker dies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

An Indian crew member of a Comoros-flagged oil tanker that capsized off the Oman coast has died, officials said on Thursday. On Wednesday night, the Indian Navy said eight Indians and a Sri Lankan national were rescued by Indian warship INS Teg while carrying out a rescue operation to trace the crew members of the cargo ship. The vessel had capsized about 25 nautical miles southeast of Ras Madrakah in Oman on July 15 and search and rescue efforts are underway, the officials said. Minister of state for external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said the body of the Indian has been retrieved. The tanker MT Falcon Prestige has a 16-member crew including 13 Indians and three Sri Lankans, according to Oman's Maritime Security Centre (MSC). "Spoke to our Ambassador in Oman, Amit Narang, to get an update on the capsized vessel



MV Prestige Falcon. Relieved to know that eight Indians who were rescued by INS Teg have reached ashore and are being looked after," Singh said in a social media post. "One Indian person's body has been retrieved. We are closely monitoring the situation and the government is ensuring all possible assistance. Thank all authorities in India and Oman involved in the process," he said. The Indian Navy said the search and rescue operation by Indian and Omani assets is being undertaken in challenging weather conditions as the area is experiencing rough seas and strong winds.

# 3 accused in GTB hospital killing arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Thursday has arrested three main accused involved in the killing of a 32 year old in a case of mistaken identity at Guru Tegh Bahadur (GTB) hospital. The police held three accused who were all shooters who went to the

hospital's war number 24 and shot a dentist identified as Riyazuddin. "All three along with their another associate went to GTB Hospital on July 14 and killed the deceased Riyazuddin thinking him to be another notorious criminal Waseem," DCP Shahdara Surendra Choudhary said. He said all three were arrested from NE Delhi's Brampuri

when they were planning to flee from the city and that further investigation is in progress. The accused have been identified as 20-year-old Fauzan, who is brother of an arrested accused Faiz, 19-year-old Said, resident of Delhi's Chauhan Bangar and one CCL (Children in conflict with law).

# India issues advisory...

From Page 1

The violence prompted the government to close all public and private universities alongside schools and colleges across Bangladesh for an indefinite period on late Tuesday asking residential students to leave dormitories. The clashes erupted on Monday as activists of ruling Awami League's student front confronted the protestors who insist the existing quota system was largely debarring the enrolment of meritorious students in government services. Demonstrators accused the ruling party's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League of attacking their "peaceful protests" with backing from police. Student protesters have decided to enforce a complete nationwide shutdown on Thursday. Fifty-six per cent of government jobs are reserved under the current quota system with 30 being for the descendants of the 1971 Liberation War freedom fighters, 10 per cent for backward administrative districts, 10 per cent for women, five per cent for ethnic minority groups and one per cent for the handicapped people. Every year, some 3,000 government jobs open up to nearly 400,000 graduates. The protestors waged the campaign for the reform of the system saying it was debarring meritorious students' recruitment in first-class and second-class government jobs.

# Religion display on stalls on UP highways to help Kanwars...

From Page 1 Muzaffarnagar police chief Abhishek Singh on Monday said, "About 240 km of Kanwar Yatra route falls in the district. All the eateries, including hotels, dhabas and carts, on the route, have been asked to display the names of their proprietors or those working on these shops." Not only from the opponents, the BJP ruled Uttar Pradesh government also received a drubbing from its NDA allies like Janata Dal (United) which demanded immediate withdrawal of such a discriminatory order which could cause communal tension. Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the Muzaffarnagar police's order asking eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route to display their owners' names

is a "social crime" and asked the courts to take suo motu cognisance of the matter. Slamming the Uttar Pradesh police, AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi likened the move to "apartheid" in South Africa and "Judenboycott" in Hitler's Germany. "As per the order of the Uttar Pradesh Police, now every food shop or cart owner will have to put his name on the board so that no Kanwariya buys anything from a Muslim shop by mistake," Owaisi tweeted. Congress also slammed as "an assault on India's culture". Hitting out at the BJP-RSS, the Congress also said the intention of such an order was to normalise economic boycott of Muslims. Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said the intention behind this is to find out who is a Hindu and who is a Muslim.

# Insult to India's dhoti...

From Page 1

At one point Minister Suresh sought directions from the chair or the House so that all malls and clubs don't restrict entry to those who wear the "cultural attire of the state." Ashoka, responding to it, said, "ultimately the order has to be issued by whom? The government.... You are in the government, you are the Urban Development Minister, you have to issue the orders... Such incidents should not happen again." When some MLAs suggested that a House committee be formed and based on its report action be taken, senior BJP MLA Suresh Kumar and Ashoka said: "several committees have been formed in the past and no action has been taken on their report so far."

# Army prepares for long haul...

From Page 1

According to reports the attack took place around 2.00 a.m. The soldiers were camping inside Zadan Lower Government High School, Kashtigarh, Doda when they were targeted by the terrorists. Swift retaliation by the army troops forced the terrorists to flee the area. A defence spokesperson said

one of the critically injured soldiers was evacuated to Udhampur-based command hospital by an advanced light helicopter (ALH) despite challenging weather conditions. "Swift action by ALH from Air Force Station, Udhampur saved a critically injured soldier's life in Doda (J&K). Despite challenging weather, the evacuation was successful, ensuring timely medical care at Command Hospital, Udhampur. Kudos to the team for their dedication & bravery," PRO Defence Jammu posted on X.

Separately, security forces guarding a forward post opened fire after observing suspicious movement near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Sunderbani sector of Rajouri district late Wednesday night. The officials said the area was searched on Thursday morning but nothing linked to suspicious movement was found on the ground. In Doda, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Doda-Kishtwar, Ramban range, Shridhar Patil told reporters in Kastigarh, "All security forces

on the ground are engaged in a well-coordinated operation against terrorists with whom we had contact yesterday and today as well. The operation is under progress and we will get success soon," However, he refused to share more details citing the continuation of the operation. Heavy rains and dense fog added to the challenge as the security forces continued their manhunt for the fleeing terrorists - who are believed to be the same group that killed four army personnel.

# Express coach derailment in UP leaves two...

From Page 1

The rescuers cordoned off the area and were seen entering the damaged coaches to ensure that no passenger was left behind. The district administration also arranged for buses to take the passengers to their respective places. Senior railway and local administration officials reached the spot, about 150 km from Lucknow, to oversee rescue operations. Pathak said

that currently their priority is to save lives of the injured and give them the best treatment. "Train number 15904 Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express that left Wednesday night from Chandigarh derailed near Gonda Junction station between Motiganj and Jhilahi railway stations at around 2:37 pm on Thursday under the jurisdiction of North Eastern Railway (NER)," Sabyasachi De, Chief Public Relations Officer,

Northeast Frontier Railway, said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took cognisance of the incident and has directed local administration to provide assistance to the affected passengers. The Chief Minister has asked the officials to ensure proper medical treatment of the passengers injured in the accident. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said no casualties from his state were

so far reported in the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derailment in Uttar Pradesh. In the wake of the derailment, Congress demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw must take responsibility of the "massive lapses" and the Kavach anti-collision system should be installed expeditiously on all routes. Congress president

Mallikarjun Kharge said the derailment of Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express in Uttar Pradesh is yet another instance of how the Modi Government has "systematically jeopardised" rail safety. Kharge pointed out that the Commissioner of Railway Safety has stated that the accident was "waiting to happen". Trinamool Congress also blamed Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for the

derailment of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express in Uttar Pradesh. While the party's Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sushmita Dev said the railways, which serves as the primary mode of travel for millions, is no longer safe, TMC Krishnanagar MP Mahua Moitra commented that the railways appeared to have entered an "emergency room" phase after 10 years of the Narendra Modi Government.

# SC directs NTA to upload NEET UG results on its portal by July 20th

From Page 1 During the hearing, the CJJ addressed the admitted leaks at Patna and Hazaribagh and stressed the need to determine if the breach was widespread. He also acknowledged that students are at a disadvantage by not knowing their results. The CJJ suggested masking student identities while displaying center-wise mark patterns to ensure transparency and maintain integrity in the examination process. "Students are at a handicap because they do not know the results. We want the students' identity to be masked.... but let us see,

centre-wise, what was the mark pattern..." the court explained. The bench commenced the crucial hearing on a batch of petitions linked to the NEET-UG 2024. It rejected the submission of the petitioners that they were handicapped as the CBI's status report filed in the court was not made available to them. "This is not a sealed cover procedure and we are all for transparency. What the CBI has told us, if it is revealed, probably the investigation may get scuttled. The investigation is going on as of today. The people will become wise," the CJJ said. Hearing a clutch of petitions

on the NEET-UG case the Supreme Court on Thursday observed that any order regarding conducting the medical exam again must have a "concrete footing" that the sanctity of the entire exam had been affected. During the day-long hearing, the bench asked the counsel for the aspirants to establish their claim about extensive irregularities in holding the examination, including leak of question paper, warranting cancellation and a re-test. The court asked the petitioners to prove that the paper leak in the NEET-UG exam was systematic and affected the entire examination process,

warranting the cancellation of the medical entrance exam. "We will open the case today. Lacks of young students are waiting for this, let us hear and decide," the court said as the hearing began. "Re-examination has to be on concrete footing that the sanctity of the entire test was affected," the CJJ said. The bench said the CBI is probing the paper leak. The court said it prima facie appeared that the question paper leak was limited to Patna and Hazaribagh, and nothing of this sort can be said to have happened in Godhra in Gujarat. The court raised doubts over

the stand of the Union and the NTA that the paper leak happened only about 45 minutes before the start of the exam in certain centres. The Court orally remarked that the hypotheses that the question papers were leaked, solved and given to students to memorize all within 45 minutes on the morning of the exam date, appeared to be "too far-fetched." The CJJ wondered if all the 180 questions could have been solved within 45 minutes, given that the examination started at 10.15 AM. SG replied that there were seven persons in the gang who divided the questions among themselves.

"The whole hypothesis that the entire paper was solved in 45 minutes and given to students is too far-fetched," CJJ remarked. Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that while the results can be published, doing so centre-wise is riddled with severe problems. "There are coaching centres, there are several problems," Mehta told the bench also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. In Patna and Hazaribagh, the question papers allegedly got leaked, while in Godhra there were claims that a person involved in holding

the test took money for filling up the OMR sheets of certain candidates. Questioning the claims about leak of question paper on social media platform "Telegram," the bench said, "You have to bear in mind that the idea of somebody doing this was not to make a national charade. People did it for money. So, it was not to bring disrepute to the exam and somebody was doing it to make money which is evident. Mass leakage requires contacts also at that level so that you connect to all such key contacts in different cities." The bench asked the petitioners to show that the

paper leak was "systemic" and affected the entire examination, warranting cancellation. During the hearing, Senior Advocate Narendra Hooda pointed out that the number of candidates in the 550-720 range of marks has increased fivefold. In response, the CJJ questioned if this could indicate a paper leak, to which Hooda responded that it is a red flag and asked for further investigation. On the issue of the ongoing probe, the bench said, "The CBI probe is on. If what the CBI has told us is revealed, it will affect the investigation and people will become wise."



# Judge's messaging app hacked, friends duped of ₹1.10 lakh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An additional sessions judge has filed a police complaint alleging that cyber criminals took control of one of his messaging applications for nearly six hours and also made calls from it to dupe his friends of Rs 1.10 lakh, officials said on Thursday.

The judge of the Rohini district court has also requested a probe to ascertain why no one from the messaging platform attended to his complaint and how his mobile service provider forwarded calls from his number to an unknown number, they said.

The FIR in the case has been registered by the Rohini district cyber police under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 318(4) and 319(2) that pertain to cheating through dishonestly inducing a person by delivery of a property and impersonation.

In his complaint, the judge said



at 12:35 pm on July 11, he received a call from the unknown number on his mobile-phone, and was told that a "courier boy" was waiting outside his house to deliver bank documents.

The additional sessions judge (ASJ) was asked to call the "courier boy" to allow him to handover the documents to the security guard at his house and a number was sent to his phone through SMS, according to the FIR shared by the Rohini cyber police.

The ASJ said he was expecting some documents and as he was

"busy with his judicial work", he fell into their trap and called the number, the FIR stated. The judge has a screenshot of the SMS.

When he called the number, his messaging application account "immediately got registered on another device for which I received an SMS. My calls and SMS were diverted to the alleged (unknown) number", the FIR read.

"In the meantime, I came to know that a person has started demanding money using my messaging account. I immediately called the police official

from the cyber police station in Rohini," it read. The judge also got his bank account blocked.

He could re-access his messaging application around 5.20 pm with the help of a cyber police team, the officials said, citing the FIR.

They said it was found that his messaging account was last accessed from a location in Siwan in Bihar and the 12:35 pm call was traced to a place near Jamshedpur in Jharkhand. The ASJ said before he could re-access his messaging account, he "came to know that two of my friends transferred Rs 1.10 lakh".

A complaint was also raised with the messaging application support service from "my device through email which was received by the support service", he said in his complaint. "The nodal officer of the messaging service was also contacted but he did not pick the phone and an investigating

officer of the Delhi Police also sent an email through his government email address," the FIR read.

The judge told police that even after sending emails and mentioning that a financial fraud has happened, the messaging application failed to suspend his account.

"It is requested that the role of that messaging application may also be investigated (on) why they did not accept my request despite my specific complaint. Later on I realised that the accused persons has used forwarded my calls to his number," read the FIR.

"It is surprising that the mobile network service provider did not even ask whether I was sure about it and in micro seconds forwarded my call to some unknown number which was not even in my contact list," it said.

The judge said the issue will also be raised with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

# HC reserves order on Kejriwal's plea for additional meetings with lawyers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday reserved its order on a plea by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, arrested in Delhi excise scam cases, seeking additional virtual meetings with his lawyers, a move both the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Bihar jail authorities contested while insisting the law was equal for all.

The AAP leader's counsel submitted he was facing around 35 cases across the country and, for a fair trial, he required two additional meetings with his lawyers via video conference to discuss the issues.

Opposing Kejriwal's petition, Bihar jail authorities contended there are many prisoners who have 100 cases pending against them and they are allowed only two meetings with their lawyers but are still managing with it. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) alleged that Kejriwal was



using his meetings with lawyers for sending out instructions to the ministers of the Delhi government. Having heard the contentions of the parties, Justice Neena Bansal Krishna said she was reserving the order which will be passed in chambers.

While opposing Kejriwal's petition, the counsel for the jail authorities said he initially sought only two additional physical meetings with his lawyers and now he wanted two more virtual meetings. The change of mode cannot change the rule which allows a prisoner to have only

two meetings with his advocate every week.

The ED's counsel said similar prayers were made before a division bench of the high court in a public interest litigation but the prayer was rejected. The Delhi prison rules are far more liberal as compared to rules elsewhere in the country, the lawyer said, adding all prisoners in Delhi jails are treated equally and all get to meet their lawyers twice every week. He said no material fact put forth by Kejriwal demonstrated how the legal meetings and interviews were inadequate.

# City to soon get new trauma centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Victims of accidents, falls and other injuries will soon have access to a new trauma centre at the Delhi government-run Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital which is likely to be functional from September this year.

The hospital will have "the country's largest trauma centre" with 362 beds, including 39 ICU beds. It will also have six modular operation theatres, said an official of the Public Works Department.

"The building is complete. Now the work of putting up furniture is being carried out," the official said.

"We plan to hand it over to the health department by the end of this month," he added. Built at a cost of Rs 117.78 crore, the trauma centre has missed many deadlines.

It was supposed to be completed in May this year but officials are confident that the centre will be ready by July 31.

S K Kakraan, Medical Superintendent of the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, said the construction work of the trauma centre was sped up in the last few months.

"We have asked the PWD to hand over the hospital by the end of this month. After that it will take around a month to arrange for equipment and staff," Kakraan said, and hoped that the centre would be operational from September. The construction work for the trauma centre started in September 2019 after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal laid the foundation stone.

It was expected to be ready in 2021 but the construction work got delayed due to the

COVID-19 pandemic and the deadline was pushed to 2022. According to officials, workers left during the pandemic and even after the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, there were delays due to the curbs implemented under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to control pollution in Delhi.

Last year, during a surprise inspection, Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj had flagged the slow pace of construction of the trauma centre. The Minister had emphasised that the new trauma centre, once built, will benefit people in and around the area.

Due to the scarcity of trauma centres in Delhi, people often have to transport patients to distant facilities after an accident, resulting in treatment delays and higher chances of fatalities, Bharadwaj had said.

# Atishi meets over 200 principals from Government schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Atishi on Thursday met with over 200 principals from state government and its aided schools at Kalkaji's Veer Savarkar Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya in a bid to elevate education standards in the schools in the current session.

During the meeting, the principals shared how they increased the attendance of children in their schools by adopting unique methods, improved the results of children by giving individual attention, worked to change their habits, guided teachers and created a great learning environment in the school, and made parents partners in the studies of children.

Addressing the principals, Atishi affirmed, "The biggest change in any school can be brought about by the principal there. The changes in the school will be seen in the direction in which the principal leads the school.



School's environment is similar to the personality of a principal." She mentioned that Delhi government schools have come a long way in the last 10 years. "Be it infrastructure or teaching environment, everyone is aware of the changes in our schools. All these changes have come due to the hard work of our education team and as a result, today Delhi government schools have emerged among the top schools in the country and now our target should be to put our schools among the top schools

in the world," she affirmed.

Atishi shared that to achieve this target, all the principals will have to ensure that every child coming to their school gets a quality education and that every child in the school performs better. The minister directed the officials that if there is a shortage of teachers in any school in the new session, it should be resolved immediately. "No compromise will be tolerated regarding the education of children in Delhi Government schools," she asserted.

# BJP slams Atishi over failure of more than 17,000 students to clear Class IX exam

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva on Thursday hit out at the Delhi Education Minister Atishi for regarding the news of more than 17,000 students failing for the second time in class nine results of Delhi government schools and claimed that it has exposed the claims of giving world-class education by her. Sachdeva alleged that the Delhi government schools are a purpose failing large number of students in class nine and 11 to show better results for class 10 and 12. He claimed, "The BJP has been consistently saying that the education level in Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's government schools is deteriorating and that the government

deliberately fails a large number of weak students, especially in classes 9 and 11, so that fewer students take the class 10 exam and the government can show better results for classes 10 and 12."

He said the Delhi government has degraded the standards of school under its control. "But now the figures of Class 9 that have come out clearly show that removing thousands of teachers from teaching duties and assigning them to administrative and other tasks by the government has completely degraded the school standards," he asserted, adding that it is shameful that instead of encouraging students to study regularly in school and pass, the Delhi government is forcing students to go to open school.

# NCRTC to provide parking facilities for 8,000 vehicles for Vande Bharat commuters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) on Thursday announced providing extensive parking facilities to the commuters of Vande Bharat trains along the entire Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor which can accommodate more than 8,000 vehicles at the RRTS stations.

A statement by the corporation said, "With an intent to promote use of public transport, NCRTC is taking various initiatives to provide best-in-class first/last mile connectivity. In this direction, it has provided ample space for commuters to park their personal vehicles at the station parking area and enjoy the comfortable, safe and reliable ride of Vande Bharat."

The move aims to not only significantly reduce the load of private vehicles on the Delhi-Meerut route, but also save

road accidents and help in reducing air pollution. "It is estimated that with the implementation of entire Delhi - Meerut corridor the share of public transport will increase from the current 37 per cent to 63 per cent," an official said.

The entire corridor's parking facilities will accommodate more than 1,600 cars and over 6,500 two-wheelers. "At present, there are no parking fees for the commuters coming for pick and drop only as they can park their vehicles free of cost for first 10 minutes. Beyond that, a fee structure will be applicable, which is, for up to six hours, five rupees for bicycles, 10 rupees for two-wheelers, and 25 rupees for cars; for six to 12 hours, five rupees for bicycles, 25 rupees for two-wheelers, and 50 rupees for cars; and after 12 hours until the end of RRTS operation hours, 10 rupees for bicycles, 30 rupees for two-wheelers, and 100 rupees for cars," it read.

# BJP attacks Pathak, calls him frustrated

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP on Thursday attacked the AAP Konduki MLA Durgesh Pathak and called him frustrated over his comments blaming the city BJP MPs for the demolition of slums.

Earlier, AAP leader alleged, "Houses were demolished illegally in Civil Lines and people living here since independence were made homeless. Now the railway has given a notice to demolish the slums of Brar Square on July 22, but even after a week, BJP MP from New Delhi Bansuri Swaraj has not gone there to meet the people."

Attacking the AAP MLA who contested unsuccessfully in the Lok Sabha 2024, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "The AAP and its leaders now understand well that Delhi residents, especially the economically weaker sections living in unauthorized colonies, slums, and rehabilitation settlements, have

decided to reject AAP and will choose BJP and development in the January 2025 Assembly elections."

Further, Kapoor claimed that the AAP leader is frustrated and said, "The AAP MLA is completely frustrated, and this is his desperation, as instead of answering the questions posed by BJP on Wednesday, he has repeated his earlier press statement word for word today."

Earlier, he raised questions about BJP MPs Praveen Khandelwal and Bansuri Swaraj but he should know that not just these two MPs, but all seven MPs, have been continuously dealing with the drinking water crisis caused by the Kejriwal government's incompetence, followed by the waterlogging crisis. "They resolved the issue of 5,000 teachers in Delhi and are now working on solving the problem of the Kejriwal government not doing anything for the rehabilitation of a single slum dweller in the past ten years," he said.

# LG reviews status of afforestation in last two years in Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Thursday held a detailed review on the status of afforestation and greening of spaces in the national Capital in the last two years and instructed officials with regards to the future course of action.

"With LG's direct intervention, while 48 lakh trees and shrubs were planted across Delhi during 2022-23, the number rose up exponentially to 89 lakhs during 2023-24. Of these, the figures for DDA alone stood at 14.61 lac trees during the same period," a statement by the Raj Niwas said.

Further, it stated that 67 lakh trees and shrubs were planted during the current year, "despite scarcity of land in the Capital". LG directed the officials in the meeting to explore all possible ways further, including creation of layered plantations, Miyawaki forests and aquatic forests to increase the green assets.



"More than nine lakh trees of these were planted under Saxena's direct supervision. These include 5.50 lakh trees at Asola Bhati Mines in July 2023, a lakh each by MCD and DDA in their specific plantation drives in the parks under their jurisdiction. Apart from this, 83,500 bamboo and flowering trees were planted at Garhi Mandu and about 20,000 trees that include bamboo, were planted along roadside in the run up to G-20 Summit," the

statement said, adding that a triple grid layered of 11 kms plantation was planted at Garhi Mandu. Saxena launched a first of its kind initiative to introduce new varieties of flora in Delhi's Ecosystem. For the first time, saplings of Cherry Blossom, Chinar, Green Apple, Water Apple and Sandalwood were planted at different locations including the Raj Niwas. Green Apple and Water Apple planted at Raj Niwas around September 2022, bore the first

fruits in just 08 months. On the other hand, saplings of Cherry Blossom, Chinar and Sandalwood have been flourishing well ever since they were planted in May 2023. The excellent growth of these flora has busted the myth that these plants and fruits cannot be grown in Delhi.

Saxena directed to make the future layout plan with set targets under the Green Layout Plan 2024-25 more comprehensive while directing the officials to plant along the boundary walls of school and other institutional premises.

Officials of the DDA were directed to launch a special drive in the Narela-Bawana area. He instructed the DDA and Forest Department to plant fruit bearing trees in Ridge and asked them to avoid plastic bags for keeping and distribution of saplings.

"Saxena also directed for seamless coordination between DoEF-GNCTD, DDA, MCD and NDMC for carrying out and sustaining the plantation drives," it stated.

# Twelve men snatch ₹3.5 crore at gunpoint; arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested twelve men for allegedly stealing 3.5 crore from a transporter's office at gunpoint in north Delhi's Gulabi Bagh area.

According to the police on Thursday, the incident took place in the Kishanganj area last week when a few persons entered the transporter's office and robbed him at gunpoint.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (north) Manoj Kumar Meena said that the police has recovered 1.5 crore and while eight people were arrested on Thursday in connection with the robbery, four were nabbed earlier.

"On July 11, a PCR call was received in Police Station Gulabi Bagh regarding robbery of cash at a transport



company office in Kishanganj area. On enquiry it was found that July 11 at about 10:45 pm about seven to eight persons having their faces muffled and carrying guns and knife, forcefully entered office of Bikaner Assam Roadlines India Ltd and surrounded present staff in the office. They snatched keys of the safe and robbed 30 lakhs kept in the locker and fled from the spot," the DCP stated.

The information for the cash kept in the office was shared by a 36 year old Upendra who worked in the company previously as a driver.

He passed the information to the other accused namely 33 year old Ankush and 30 year old Pramod who hatched the conspiracy along with Tanzim and Dev, alias Himanshu. Accused Pramod and Ankush arranged vehicle for the heist and Tanzim and Dec arranged other gang members.

All accused used to recce the office and nearby area of the company.

The police analysed cctvs of more than 200 cameras and vehicle used in office were identified. Two vehicles used in the offence were also recovered.

A case under 331(6), 310(2), 311, 3(5) of the BNS and 25 and 27 of Arms Act was registered at Police Station.

# Mexican delegation meets Mayor

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A delegation of the State Government of Mexico's Guanajuato led by the Ambassador of Mexico in India on Thursday met the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Mayor Dr. Shelly Oberoi at Civic Centre in New Delhi.

The delegation of Guanajuato Government was led by the Ambassador of Mexico in India Federico Salas Lotfe and General Coordinator of Social Communication of Guanajuato (virtual elected representative) Alan Sahr Marquez Becerra who met Oberoi at her chamber at the Civic Centre.

The delegation showed keen interest in knowing how the local body is maintaining parks, tree plantation, development and management and how the use of technology is being implemented in government services. They also discussed how the tourism



between India and Mexico can be made easier.

The MCD mayor informed the delegation about the role of MCD in the city. She said that the civic body has the primary responsibility to maintain the cleanliness of the city, provide primary education, primary health services to citizens, maintenance of more than 1000 parks and other such work.

She also told the delegation that MCD is making more

rigorous efforts in solid waste management to make city cleaner and greener while stating that the tourism and IT comes under the state government and therefore MCD has nothing much to comment on these proposals.

The Mayor and delegation assured each other of mutual co-operation between the two cities i.e. Delhi and Guanajuato in the field of development of infrastructure and civic services.

# Pollution has become severe in city: Vijender

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former BJP State President and MLA Vijender Gupta has written a letter to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena expressing concern over the severe pollution crisis in Delhi. The pollution in Delhi has become so severe that it has reached the level of a public health emergency.

Gupta stated that the deteriorating air quality has severely impacted the health of our citizens, causing a continuous decline in the quality of life. In the letter, Gupta mentioned that despite the gravity of this crisis, the Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi has failed to propose or implement any effective solutions. Instead, they have been busy blaming the BJP, completely neglecting their responsibilities towards the people of Delhi. Over the past decade, there has been a complete lack of constructive

strategies to tackle this problem.

Citing an RTI, Gupta wrote that shocking information has come to light regarding the status of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC). The RTI revealed that by June 2024, the number of DPCC employees had reduced to 107 regular employees and 87 contract employees, significantly lower than the previous year's figures. Last year, there were 111 regular employees and 122 contract employees.

Noting the significant reduction in staff, Gupta stated that this means the DPCC is currently operating with only 54 per cent of its sanctioned capacity, severely hampering its ability to effectively address serious pollution challenges in the city. The people of Delhi are bearing the brunt of this, with pollution-related diseases such as asthma, cough, and allergies making life difficult.



Congress remarks often incite violence against Modi: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday accused the Congress of often using remarks, which incite violence, against Prime Minister Narendra Modi...

maintain decorum and seriousness in its political discourse as the use of such inciteful words have a psychological impact in society...

spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi cited a write-up of a former IPS officer to highlight that rhetoric used for short-term political benefits at times incites violence...



nalised as throwing of some article at Modi's convoy during the poll campaign as an evidence of people's fear of the Prime Minister ending.

Gandhi who had used "maut ka saudagar" barb against him in 2007 when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat, Trivedi said.

case, saying the CBI, which reports to the central government, changed its first affidavit that called her a terrorist for political reasons as she was targeting Modi.

APPENDIX IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property. E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY. FLAT NO. FF - 04, PLOT NO. C - 198, FIRST FLOOR, REAR RHS, VILLAGE SADULLABAD, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201102.

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.sammaancapital.com...

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/12/2024-25, Dtd: 17-07-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

Brief Description: (1) Bogie Load Testing Machine as per specification No. COFMOW/BLT-507/2021 (Rev-01) [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:2; Tender No.: 60/23/5065A/OT/91/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 26-07-2024.

Brief Description: (1)Grit/Shot Blasting Plant for Bogie frame (Airless Rotary Type) Machine. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:3; Tender No.: 62/24/5013C/OT/93/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 05-08-2024.

Brief Description: HYDRAULICALLY OPERATED KNUCKLE BOOM CRANE FOR UTILITY with installation and commissioning in Utility vehicle-36 Machine...

SI.No.:4; Tender No.: 79/24/0985/OT/94/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 05-08-2024.

Brief Description: Pillow cover Polyvastra 65 cm x 38cm(white), Specification as per Annexure - A.

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY. Serving Customers With A Smile.

APPENDIX IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property. E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY. FLAT NO. 103, GROUND FLOOR, MIDDLE LG, PLOT NO. MM - 122, SAI APARTMENT - I, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201101.

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.sammaancapital.com...

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/12/2024-25, Dtd: 17-07-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

Brief Description: (1) Bogie Load Testing Machine as per specification No. COFMOW/BLT-507/2021 (Rev-01) [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:2; Tender No.: 60/23/5051A/OT/92/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 12-08-2024.

Brief Description: (1)Grit/Shot Blasting Plant for Bogie frame (Airless Rotary Type) Machine. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:3; Tender No.: 62/24/5013C/OT/93/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 05-08-2024.

पंजाब एण्ड सिंध बैंक Punjab & Sind Bank. Notice under SECTION 13(2) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002.

APPENDIX IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property. E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY. FLAT NO. UGF - 4 ON UPPER GROUND FLOOR, ADMEASURING 5.09 SQ MTRS. BUILT UP ON PROPERTY / PLOT BEARING NO. D-922, AREA MEASURING 393.06 SQ. MTRS. SITUATED AT RESIDENTIAL COLONY KNOWN AS DLF ANKUR VIHAR, LONI, DISTRICT GHAZIABAD - 201102, UTTAR PRADESH.

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.sammaancapital.com...

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/12/2024-25, Dtd: 17-07-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

Brief Description: (1) Bogie Load Testing Machine as per specification No. COFMOW/BLT-507/2021 (Rev-01) [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:2; Tender No.: 60/23/5051A/OT/92/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 12-08-2024.

Brief Description: (1)Grit/Shot Blasting Plant for Bogie frame (Airless Rotary Type) Machine. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:3; Tender No.: 62/24/5013C/OT/93/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 05-08-2024.

पंजाब एण्ड सिंध बैंक Punjab & Sind Bank. Notice under SECTION 13(2) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002.

PUBLIC NOTICE. Notice is hereby given regarding property bearing address Hotel "The Ornate" situated at Commercial Plot Sector- 04, Vaishali Ghaziabad UP - 201010 belonging to the Company M/s Unnati Fortune Hotmrt Pvt. Ltd...

Adv. Aakriti Bhatnagar - 380, Ground Floor Haveli Haider Quli, Chandni Chowk, Delhi, India-110006. Mobile: 9873548050

APPENDIX IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property. E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY. PLOT NO. F - 35, F. NO. FF - 2, FIRST FLOOR, FRONT RHS, SLF VED VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201101.

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.sammaancapital.com...

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/12/2024-25, Dtd: 17-07-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

Brief Description: (1) Bogie Load Testing Machine as per specification No. COFMOW/BLT-507/2021 (Rev-01) [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:2; Tender No.: 60/23/5051A/OT/92/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 12-08-2024.

Brief Description: (1)Grit/Shot Blasting Plant for Bogie frame (Airless Rotary Type) Machine. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]...

SI.No.:3; Tender No.: 62/24/5013C/OT/93/2024-25; Closing/Opening Date: 05-08-2024.

पंजाब एण्ड सिंध बैंक Punjab & Sind Bank. Notice under SECTION 13(2) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002.



# Karnataka CM to go slow on private sector job quota Bill

**PTI ■ BENGALURU**

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said his government has decided to withhold the bill mandating job reservation for Kannadigas in private sector due to "certain confusion".

He said the bill will be taken up for discussion in the next cabinet meeting to clear the doubts. "On Monday, complete discussion (on the topic) could not take place in the cabinet meeting. By then reports had appeared in the media," he told the Karnataka assembly.

"There was some confusion. We will clear those confusions in the next cabinet meeting. Let's have a detailed discussion." The CM was replying to Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka's demand to clarify the state government's stand on the bill. He said the Chief Minister changed his message on 'X' thrice. Ashoka recalled that Siddaramaiah in his first post said that the cabinet has decided 100 per cent reservation for Kannadigas in the private sector and then deleted it. The Chief Minister then posted another message saying that there will be 50 per cent reservation in the management category and 70 per cent in non-management category for Kannadigas. "Finally, you announced putting the bill on hold. There appears to be a Tughlaq government in Karnataka," he said. In his reply, the Chief Minister said, "There is no Tughlaq



government, but Siddaramaiah government. We will take up the bill in the next cabinet meeting." The state cabinet had on Monday cleared the Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, which makes it compulsory for private firms to reserve jobs for Kannadigas.

"Any industry, factory or other establishments shall appoint fifty per cent of local candidates in

**किच्छा शुगर कम्पनी लिमिटेड, किच्छा**  
उत्पन्न-संरक्षण विभाग (उत्तराखण्ड)  
Maha No. 839292228/839292250 Email: purchase@kiccha.com

ई-निविदा सूचना (Re-Tender) दिनांक - 18.07.2024

बिडिंग पर्यंत 2024-25 के लिए विभिन्न स्तरों पर जीवित करंट हेतु GST के अनुरूप निर्माण/अधिकृत विकास/समान केन्दनों से उत्तराखण्ड और प्रविष्टि (प्रैक्टिस) निव्यवली 2017 में निर्दिष्ट प्रावधानों के अंतर्गत दो निविदा प्रणाली (Two Bid System) के अंतर्गत ई-निविदा पर [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर आमंत्रित की जाती है।

[www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर प्राप्त निविदा ही मान्य होगी, अन्य माध्यम से प्राप्त निविदा स्वीकार्य नहीं होगी। आवश्यक होने पर नेगोशिएशन L-1 (प्रथम सूचन) एवं सामग्री विक्रय हेतु H-1 (प्रथम उच्चतम) दर दाता से किया जाएगा। विस्तृत सूचना मिल की वेबसाइट [www.kicchasugar.com](http://www.kicchasugar.com) पर भी उपलब्ध है।

अधिसूचना निदेशक

Office of the City Magistrate | Marriage Officer, Gautam Budh Nagar (ST-CM) Marriage ability Certificate/2024  
Date: 05/07/24

**NOTICE**

Ms. Amila James D/o Late S.D. James R/o A-47, Nayabans, Sector-15, Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) have applied for "Marriage ability Certificate" for her, objections, if any to the issuance may be filed on any day upto 18-07-2024 in the office of the undersigned.

City Magistrate/Marriage Officer, Noida Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.) India.

**CCL Central Coalfields Limited**  
"A Miniratna Company"  
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

**NOTICE**

All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd. [www.coalindia.in](http://www.coalindia.in) / respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, [www.centralcoalfields.in](http://www.centralcoalfields.in)), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in> in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Priya Panjwani d/o Kundan Gangaram Jaisinghani R/o 290 Supreme Enclave, Mayapuri Vihar 1, Delhi 110091, have purchased a property viz. 3202 NE CENTRAL, Project 'North Eye, Sector 74, Noida UP', with her daughter Ms. Madhur Panjwani, do/vijay Panjwani. She has lost the Original file containing all Original documents viz. Allotment Letter, Agreement, Payment Receipts of the above said property. They have requested MS Superch Ltd to issue the duplicate Allotment Letter, Agreement and receipts of the said property, if anybody or financial Institutions have objection, he/she may contact MS Superch limited office Plot No-C-2, Sector 96, Noida 201303 UP, within fifteen days.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform the public at large that Mr. Ravinder Chauhan has acquired 3rd Floor area measuring 100 sq. yards. Southern side/rear portion, Built on Plot No. B-43, Kharsa No. 75B, situated at Vishwakarma Colony, M.B. Road, New Delhi vide Regd. SPA dt. 09.07.2024 along with Regd. Will executed by Mr. Anish V. Cherian and Mrs. Sojimal, Now Mr. Ravinder Chauhan is the undisputed owner of above said property.

Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance whatsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Giri (Advocate) "H No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi 110024"

management categories and seventy per cent in non-management categories," the bill read.

If the candidates do not possess secondary school certificates with Kannada as a language, they should pass a

Kannada proficiency test as specified by the 'Nodal Agency,' it added.

The nodal agency will have powers to call for any records information or documents in the possession of an employer or occupier or manager of an

establishment for the purpose of verifying the report. The government may appoint an officer not below the rank of Assistant Labour Commissioner as the authorised officer for the purposes of compliance of the

provisions of the Act. Any Employer or Occupier or Manager of an Establishment, who contravenes the provisions of this Act should be liable for a penalty between Rs 10,000 to Rs 25,000. The move drew flak from the

industry. NASSCOM even cautioned that the companies will move out of Karnataka. Ministers quickly issued a statement assuring companies that their interest will be protected.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Ranbeer, Mr. Rajbeer and Mr. Vinod Kumar s/o Rati Ram who are owners of Property area measuring 5 Marla 4 Sarsal (60 sq. yds.) out of 95 Marla 12 Marla (Kita-16) comprised in Khatwa/Khata No. 1179, situated at Village Bhandoli, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana vide Sale Deed dated 11.06.2020 (vide Document No. 400) at Sub-Registrar-Sohna and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Protium Finance Limited, that 1. Initial Sale Deed in the name of Mrs. Mukesh Devi and 2. Sale Deed dated 24.04.2012, document No. 580 are Lost/Misplaced/Not available. To comply the requirements of BANKNBT-C, we give this public notice that if any person having any type of claim right/lien/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, liens etc. Lucern Legal LLP Plot No. 136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049 Contact: 011-40046316

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**  
Builder Cancellation

This is to bring to your notice that Harish Singh/ Tanuja (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBDEL00004422437 located at Flat No. 604, 6th Floor, Tower No. F, Amaara Homes, Plot No. GH, 02C Sector-10, Greater Noida West, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement. The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated July 14, 2020, informing that NANDI INFRA TECH PVT. LTD. has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication.

Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.

Dated: July 19, 2024 For ICICI Bank Limited Place : Delhi/ NCR

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**  
Builder Cancellation

This is to bring to your notice that Amrita Devi/ Pradeep Kumar (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBDEL00004865125 located at Flat No 12-007, Ground Floor, Tower/ Block 12, Serenas, Sector 36, Sohna (With Two Wheeler Open Parking Site & The Pro Rata Share In The Common Areas) Gurgaon 122103. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement. The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated Jan 11, 2023, informing that STERNAL BUILDCON PRIVATE LIMITED, has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication.

Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.

Dated: July 19, 2024 For ICICI Bank Limited Place : Delhi/ NCR

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

CHANGE OF NAME

**Jyoti Mitra S/o Prof. Raghuvansh, R/o 49-B, Pocket-C, Gangotri Enclave, Alaknanda, Delhi-110019, have changed my name from Jyoti Mitra to Jyotimitra Raghuvansh for all future purposes.**

PD(600)A

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform to all concerned that Mr. Raghuv Ver, Sh. Shyamji & Sh. Ram Pal a/o Late Sh. Nathu R/o Vill- Yakubpur, Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.), who is the joint owner of Residential Plot No.YP-035, Vill- Yakubpur, Sector-86, Noida (U.P.), WILL was executed on in favour of Ranjana D/o Faguni Ram R/o 2A, MIG Block-B, Sector-99, Noida (U.P.). Which is registered at Sub Registrar Office-II, Noida Bahi No.3, Jild No. 314, Serial No.829, 830 & 832 Page No.51-60, 61-70, 81-90, & Dated 27.05.2011. So it is informed to all concerned that the said Property is going to be transferred in favour of Ranjana D/o Faguni Ram R/o 2A, MIG Block-B, Sector-99, Noida (U.P.) on the basis of registered Will. If any one has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. Ranjana

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform general public that Institute of Environment and Management has acquired the Flat No. 378-A, on Ground Floor, having area of 367.7 Sq. Mts. situated in the Group Housing Scheme Shriya Sun City, Indirapuram, Ghazabad, U.P. by way Lease Deed dated 30.12.2003. Doc. No. 294658. Documents related to the above said property has been misplaced i.e. Original Lease deed executed by GDA in favour of Institute of Environment and Management, through its authorized representative Mr. N. C. Srivastava in respect of the said Property, vide Document No. 294658, in Book No. 11, Volume No. 3678, Page No. 69 to 90 on 30.12.2003, which you find the said documents shall handover the same to the Manager of Kumar Singh (Advocate), Acculaw Source LLP, Unit No. S-2-U, 2nd Floor, built on Plot no. 4 and 5, Ansal, Utiya Commercial Complex, Vihar, New Delhi-110063 of contact: +91 9663099003 (M)

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**  
Builder Cancellation

This is to bring to your notice that Vinay Kumar/ Jyoti (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBGH20002206043 located at Flat No-2648, 25th Floor, 16th Park View, Tower-F, Gaur Yamuna City, Pocket-3, Mirzapur Site, Sector-19, Yeida Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Noida. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement. The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated July 04, 2024, informing that GAURSONS REALTECH PRIVATE LIMITED, has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication.

Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.

Dated: July 19, 2024 For ICICI Bank Limited Place : Delhi/ NCR

**POWERGRID**

**NOTICE**

1. The Petitioner above-named has filed a petition before the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, New Delhi for determination of Tariff from DOCO to 31-03-2029 for Petition-1: Transmission Assets under 'Scheme to relieve High Loading of WR-NR Inter Regional Corridor (400KV Bhimnal- Zerdia line) in Northern Region'.

2. The beneficiaries of the Transmission system are: (a) Ajmer Vidyt Vitran Nigam Ltd. (b) Jaipur Vidyt Vitran Nigam Ltd. (c) Jodhpur Vidyt Vitran Nigam Ltd. (d) Punjab State Electricity Corporation limited (e) Haryana Power Purchase Centre (f) Jammu & Kashmir Power Corporation Ltd. (g) Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (h) BSES Yamuna Power Ltd. (i) BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. (j) Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd. (k) Chandigarh Electricity department (l) Uttaranchal Power Corporation Ltd. (m) North Central Railway (n) New Delhi Municipal Council. (o) Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board. (p) Central Transmission Utility of India Ltd.

3. Capacity of the generating station/ line length, number of bays of the transmission system: Reconductoring of 400KV Jodhpur (Surapur) (RVPN) - Kankroli S/c (twin moose) line with twin HTLS Conductor along with OPGW installation.

4. Approved capital cost of the project (Rs. in lakh) - FR: Rs.18241.66 Lakhs, RCE: N.A.

Authority which has approved the Capital Cost: Committee on Investment on projects.

5. Scheduled date of commercial operation- 14.05.2024

6. Actual date of commercial operation: 20.04.2024

7. Capital cost on the date of commercial operation (Rs. in lakh): Rs. 16333.62 Lakhs

8. Details of tariff (Publish only applicable portion): (Rs. in lakhs)

Petition	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Petition-1	2085.29	2379.63	2394.19	2359.45	2301.58

4. A copy of the petition made for determination of tariff is posted on the website [www.powergrid.in](http://www.powergrid.in)

5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the petition may be filed by any person, including the beneficiary through the e-filing portal of the Commission, with a copy to the Petitioner within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: Gurugram Shri V.C. Sekhar  
Date: 12.07.2024 Senior General Manager (Commercial)

**POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED**  
(A Government of India Enterprise)  
Registered Office: B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi 110 016  
Corporate Office: Sauramini, Plot No.2, Sector-29, Gurugram, Haryana - 122 001

**A MAHARATNA PSU**

REGD A/D/DASTI/AFFIXATION/BEAT OF DRUM  
OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER  
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI,  
4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001.

**SALE PROCLAMATION**

R. C. No. 234/2018 ICICI BANK LTD. Vs. MUKLESH DATT RISHI AND ORS.

**PROCLAMATION OF SALE UNDER RULE 38, 52(D) OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS DUE TO BANK AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ACT, 1993.**

(CD1) MUKLESH DATT RISHI S/O BRI/ OMBATT RISHI, R/O A-403, ATS FIRST SECTOR-50, NOIDA- 201 301. ALSO AT: PLOT NO. 201, TYPE E, 2ND FLOOR, ROYAL RESIDENCY, PLOT NO. D-11, SECTOR-50, NOIDA- 201 301.

(CD2) AARTI KUMARI/ AARTI SHROFF, R/O A-403, ATS FIRST SECTOR-50, NOIDA- 201 301. ALSO AT: PLOT NO. 201, TYPE E, 2ND FLOOR, ROYAL RESIDENCY, PLOT NO. D-11, SECTOR-50, NOIDA- 201 301.

1. Whereas Recovery Certificate No. 234/2018 in OA No. 334/2015 dated 19/06/2018 drawn by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal-I for the recovery of a sum of Rs. 1,36,52,344.20/- along with costs and future interest @ 12% p.a. with quarterly rests, from the date of filing this OA i.e. 9/09/2015, till its realization along with cost and charges as per certificate, from the Certificate debtors together with costs and charges as per recovery certificate.

2. And whereas the undersigned has ordered the sale of property mentioned in the Schedule below in satisfaction of the said certificate.

3. And whereas there will be due there under a sum of Rs. 1,36,52,344.20/- along with costs and future interest @ 12% p.a. with quarterly rests, from the date of filing this OA i.e. 9/09/2015, till its realization along with cost and charges as per certificate. Notice is hereby given that in absence of any order of postponement, the property/properties to be sold by e-auction and bidding shall take place through "On line Electronic Bidding" through the website <https://bankauctions.com> on 30.08.2024 between 12.00 pm and 01.00 pm with extensions of 5 minutes duration after 01.00 pm, if required.

4. The description of the property proposed to be e-auctioned is as follows:

S. No.	Description of property	Reserve Price	EMD
1.	PROPERTY BEARING NO. FLAT U.P. 201, TYPE E - 2ND FLOOR, ROYAL RESIDENCY, PLOT NO. D-11, SECTOR-44, NOIDA- 201 301	Rs. 1,52,00,000.00/-	Rs. 15,20,000.00/-

5. The EMD shall be paid through Demand Draft/Pay Order in favour of Recovery Officer, DRT-I, Delhi-A/C R.C. No. 234/2018 along with self-attested copy of identity (Voter-I card/Driving license/passport) which should contain the address for future communication and self-attested copy of PAN Card must reach to the Office of the Recovery Officer, DRT-I, Delhi latest by 27.08.2024 before 05:00 PM. The EMD received thereafter shall not be considered. The said deposit be adjusted in the case of successful bidders. The unsuccessful bidder shall take return of the EMD directly from the Registry, DRT-I, Delhi after receipt of such report from e-auction service provider/bank/financial institution on closure of the e-auction sale proceedings.

6. The envelope containing EMD should be super-scribed "R. C. No. 234/2018" along with the details of the sender i.e. address, e-mail ID and Mobile Number etc.

7. Interested bidders shall hold a valid Login Id and Password to participate in the E-Auction email address and PAN Number. For details with regard to Login Id and Password, please contact M/S C India Pvt Ltd, Udyog Vihar, Phase 2, Building No. 301, Gurugram, Haryana- 122 015 Tel: 7291981124/25/26, Contact Person Mr. Vinod Chauhani Mobile No. 9813887931, Email: delhi@cindia.com and support@bankauctions.com.

8. Prospective bidders are required to register themselves with the portal and obtain user ID/password well in advance, which is mandatory for bidding in above e-auction. From M/S C India Pvt Ltd., (bankauctions).

9. Details of concerned bank officers/Helpline numbers etc. are as under:-

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Anshul Gupta is the owner of Flat No. 302 on 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, super area 1400 sq. ft., i.e., 130.111 sq. meters, on Plot No. B-3 & B-4, out of Khata No. 000127, Kharsa No. 73-M, situated in Bhangel Begumpur, Sec-106, Noida, Tehsil Dadri, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. through Sale Deed dated: 11.07.2012 as doc. No. 3634 executed by M/S Nirman Construction through its Prop. Mr. Manu K. Kumar Sachin in favour of Mr. Anshul Gupta in respect of said property.

Mr. Anshul Gupta intends to transfer the ownership by way of Sale Deed of aforementioned Flat to Avdesh Kumar Tripathi. Subsequently Avdesh Kumar Tripathi is in the process of mortgaging the said SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd.) Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client.

If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 07-day period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline (+91) 120-3101663; e-mail: [accounts@lvnorth.in](mailto:accounts@lvnorth.in)

**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI**  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

TA 614/2022

**PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK** vs. SHRI DEVENDER SINGH AND ORS

...Applicant vs. ...Defendants

(1) SHRI DEVENDER SINGH AND ORS., 3/115 FIRST FLOOR RAJENDRA NAGAR SAHIBABAD, GHAZIABAD U.P.-201301

(2) SMT. NEETU DHAMA, W/O SHRI DEVENDER SINGH, 3/115 FIRST FLOOR RAJENDRA NAGAR, SAHIBABAD, GHAZIABAD, U.P.-201301

(3) AJAY TIAGI S/O SHRI C. TIAGI R/O SHALIMAR GARDEN EXTN-I, SAHIBABAD, GHAZIABAD-UP

(4) M/S SHRI BALAJI HI-TECH CONSTRUCTION PVT LTD R/O AT- D-3, VIVEK VIHAR DELHI-110095

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs.25,98,633.00 (Rupees Twenty-Five Lakh Ninety-Eight Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Three Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before DRT-I, Registrar on 03.08.2024 at 10:30 AM. For further details kindly visit DRT website [www.drttribunal.gov.in](http://www.drttribunal.gov.in) Phone Number: 011-23748473.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:- (i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application/Software, (ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing case to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-I and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "https://drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice, (iii) In any exigency qua that the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748473. Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 20th May, 2024.

By order of this Tribunal Respondent may contact under mention Phone number for further enquiry. Ld. Registrar, DRT-I, Phone No: 011-23748473, Email: [drt1delhi-dfs@nic.in](mailto:drt1delhi-dfs@nic.in)

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system**

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. NO	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	19240688	DRIVER SEAT AND PEDESTAL ASSEMBLY	642 SET	12-08-24
02	09242131	KNUCKLE FOR BCNHL	16073 NOS	12-08-24
03	12241232	JUMPER CABLE 19 CORE, 750V, ELESTROMERIC CABLE 4 SQ. MM	1609 MTR	12-08-24
04	09243284	FABRICATED SIDE STANCHION	2074 NOS	19-08-24
05	09242030	BALL BEARING	2242 NOS	19-08-24
06	02241954	MICROPROCESSOR CONTROLLER FOR ROOF MOUNTED AC PACKAGE UNIT	462 NOS	19-08-24
07	15245119	BAGGAGE SCANNING MACHINE	05 NOS	20-08-24
08	09242270	KIT OF AUTOMATIC TWIST LOCK	24429 SET	20-08-24
09	77245433	SUPPLY OF 1 SET OF 300-TU RAIL FASTENING SYSTEM	01 SET	22-08-24
10	09242120	STRIKER CASTING	567 NOS	26-08-24

NOTE -1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained. Tender Notice No. 33/2024-2025 Dated: 18.07.2024 2182/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd., Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	Shashi Kala/ Keshav Kumar/ LBDEL00004205111	Flat No- T1-204, 2nd Floor, Tower 1, Global Hill View, Sector- 11, Sohna, Gurgaon- 122103/ July 12, 2024	January 17, 2024 Rs. 12,59,178/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Harish Kumar Saini/ Savita/ LBDEL00004566695	Flat & Unit No. J-1203A, Project Name-Mahira Homes, 13th Floor, Tower J, Situated at Sector-68, Village Badshahpur, Gurgaon Haryana- 122018/ July 12, 2024	February 23, 2024 Rs. 18,83,759/-	Delhi/ NCR

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: July 19, 2024 Place: Delhi/NCR

Sincerely Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

**SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY**

Lot No.	Description of the property to be sold with the names of the co-owners where the property belongs to the defaulter and any other person as co-owners.	Revenue assessed upon the property or any part thereof	Details of any encumbrance to which property is liable	Claims, if any, which have been put forward to the property, and any other known particulars bearing on its nature and value.
1.	PROPERTY BEARING NO. FLAT NO. 201, TYPE - E, 2ND FLOOR, ROYAL RESIDENCY, PLOT NO. D-11, SECTOR-44, NOIDA - 201 301		No information received.	

Given under my hand and seal on 26/06/2024.

RECOVERY OFFICER  
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI

**NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.in](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.in)

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPJLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.in](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.in) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

(A)	Description
(1)	13/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2024-25, M/o W/s (P/L 200 mm dia Water line and Replacement of old Chocked and Damaged water line in Model Village-Bishanpura), Noida. Cost Rs. 57.11 Lacs
(2)	14/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2024-25, M/o Sewerage (Two Year Repairing, Raising, P/F Manhole Cover Frame and Cleaning of Sewer Line Manholes in Network Sector-151 to 154) Noida. Cost Rs. 37.08 Lacs
(3)	18/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2024-25, M/o Water Supply (Two Year Annual Repairing of V.T. Motor, Starter, TP/MO, Transformers etc. of Network- 17, 18, 19, 27, 104, 105, 108 & Village-Atta & Hazipur), Noida. Cost Rs. 90.11 Lacs
Which can be uploaded by date 01.08.2024 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on date 02.08.2024 at 11.00 AM.	
(B)	Description
(1)	47/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2023-24, M/o W/s (Two year maintenance of PVC water line and Sluice Valve, Reflex Valve in Network Village-Salarpur, Bhangel, Nagli Wazidpur, Sector-132 & 135) Noida. Cost Rs. 52.97 Lacs
(2)	51/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2023-24, Equipment and Machinery (Two Years Annual Repairing of Sewer Cleaning Machines in Jal Div-I) Noida. Cost Rs. 38.48 Lacs
(3)	01/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2024-25, M/o W/s (Two year R/O Bowl Assly, Tube Shaft and Column Pipe for UGR's and TW's in Network Sector-132, 135, 130, 162, and Village-Gulavali, Mohiyapur, Yakootpur, Nagla Nagli, Nagli Sakhpur, Rohillapur) Noida. Cost Rs. 42.00 Lacs
(4)	16/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2023-24, M/o Sewerage (Two Year Repairing, Raising and Cleaning of Sewer Line Manholes in Sector-62, Rajat Vihar), Noida. Cost Rs. 37.06 Lacs
(5)	03/S.M.(JAL)-II/E.T./2024-25, M/o W/s (Rewinding of 40 HP V.T. Motor, 100 HP Booster, Transformer, TP/MO, Fuse Set, Cable, Lighting and other allied work in Network Sector-75, 116, 117 & CGR-31), Noida. (For Two Years) Cost Rs. 98.02 Lacs
(6)	14/S.M.(JAL)-O.A./2023-24, M/o UGR S.T.P. (Annual Cleaning and removal of existing Desilting/Debris/Silt rubbish/Bio Mass/Grit & Sediment Material from covered UGR including cleaning of all wall/floor/ceiling by Super Sucker Machine/Mechanical Cleaning machine/chemical cleaner in S.T.P. Compound 34 MLD UGR at Sector-50) Noida. Cost Rs. 31.00 Lacs
Which can be uploaded by date 25.07.2024 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on date 26.07.202	





www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Bill of woes

### Karnataka Govt puts local job quota bill on hold after the State's IT industry reacts strongly

The Karnataka government has put on hold a bill requiring reservations for locals in the private sector following significant backlash from the industry. The Government will reconsider the bill before presenting it to the state Assembly. This decision came just hours after the state cabinet approved the bill, which proposed reserving 50 per cent of management positions and 75 per cent of non-management positions for Kannadigas in the private sector. The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories, and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, was to be presented in the Assembly on Thursday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with his ministers, praised the bill, emphasising their "pro-Kannada" stance and stating that their main priority is to "ensure the welfare of Kannadigas." However, the bill met with tough resistance from the IT industry that criticised the bill, arguing that it would hinder the growth of the tech sector in Bengaluru and negatively affect the IT industry in Karnataka. The rationale behind the bill was to address the high unemployment rates among the state's residents and to ensure that local talent is given priority in job opportunities within Karnataka.



But industry leaders felt that a quota system for locals would hinder the ability of companies to hire the best talent available, potentially compromising their competitiveness and productivity. Besides, if implemented this bill would have legal and constitutional issues. The bill could violate the right to equality and freedom of movement, as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and could face significant hurdles in courts, leading to prolonged legal battles. Furthermore, the proposed bill raised concerns about increasing regionalism and social tensions. It was feared that such a policy could create divisions between locals and non-locals, leading to a less cohesive society and potential conflicts. According to a report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI), Karnataka's overall unemployment rate is 2.7%, which is lower than the national average of 4.2%. But these figures hide the low employability of the local populace. But to correct it with populist measures is not the best solution. Instead of mandating job reservations, the Government should focus on improving education and skill development programs for locals. Enhancing the quality of education and providing better vocational training could empower local youth to compete effectively in the job market. Now that the bill has been withdrawn it could come back later in a different form. The decision to put the bill on hold has significant political implications. The Karnataka Government has averted a standoff with the IT industry and other businesses but it may disappoint its support base which was expecting job opportunities. Nonetheless, suspending the bill will likely reassure businesses and investors. But the Government will have to focus on providing employable skills to locals, so that they could get employment in Karnataka's IT industry.

bill raised concerns about increasing regionalism and social tensions. It was feared that such a policy could create divisions between locals and non-locals, leading to a less cohesive society and potential conflicts. According to a report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI), Karnataka's overall unemployment rate is 2.7%, which is lower than the national average of 4.2%. But these figures hide the low employability of the local populace. But to correct it with populist measures is not the best solution. Instead of mandating job reservations, the Government should focus on improving education and skill development programs for locals. Enhancing the quality of education and providing better vocational training could empower local youth to compete effectively in the job market. Now that the bill has been withdrawn it could come back later in a different form. The decision to put the bill on hold has significant political implications. The Karnataka Government has averted a standoff with the IT industry and other businesses but it may disappoint its support base which was expecting job opportunities. Nonetheless, suspending the bill will likely reassure businesses and investors. But the Government will have to focus on providing employable skills to locals, so that they could get employment in Karnataka's IT industry.

### PICTALK



Shia Muslim mourners participate in an Ashura (10th Muharram) procession, in Mirzapur. PFI

# Religion and politics in modern India



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

### Today, as memories of Partition fade with each passing generation, the intertwining of religion and politics continues to shape the nation's discourse

A community is also known for the issues it raises and seeks to debate. The national narrative over the last 100 years or more has been severely overloaded with religious contention. India is probably the only country in the world that got its independence with conditions in which the imperial power worked assiduously to debate/impose decisions in areas that were subjected to be tackled with the investiture of independence. The open threat and use of bloodshed in many parts of the sub-continent while sorting out such issues in the days preceding independence made the matter particularly gory. It was in many ways reminiscent of a civil war instigated for various reasons. Perhaps it will take still more time to coolly reflect on what happened, where and how, and indeed if it was at all avoidable. Interpersonal relationships, intertwined with religious overtones spilt over the streets and private homes in a matter which still makes one wonder how a noble cause of independence could so inextricably get mixed up with pre-disposed religious zeal and interpretation. Experience showed that partition did not solve the problem but only split the problem into two pieces. The two independent states of India and Pakistan are still to rise beyond the echoes of what happened. The price paid at the human level cannot be comprehended through the aid of books, cinematography, or visuals. As the generation that experiences it gradually passes away, the tremors of partition remain. This cannot be done well as a method of problem-solving for contentious issues. One wonders if the realization is sufficiently around to the effect that 'enough is enough'. The hatchet needs to be buried before the agony continues to reign with many real forms of misery. The subject is not just one of emotions, but how it has affected the very concept of nation-building in many ways, big and small. This cannot be the place to hope



for some permanent therapies or solutions. That may well prove to be more than a lifetime and generational effort. However, what can be done is to create certain awareness, which helps to restore a greater sense of balance and strengthen sanity all around. Election after election and contention after contention somehow veers around to undertones of communal issues. This is avoidable if a consensus can be built up not to go public with statements and actions on issues that are essentially communal. Many countries of the Third World broke away from the yoke of imperialism through the 20th century and beyond. In many cases, there was an undertone of violence that persisted. There was violence over race, there was violence over ideology, there was violence over the protagonist of the Cold War, but nowhere in the world was the post-independence issue so intertwined as an undercurrent with communalism as in the case of the sub-continent. Even a casual look at much of the media and listening to much of the media's drumming up of concerns shows how much of communication time is spent on overtones of communal concern. This is



A LEGITIMATE QUESTION THAT NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD IS WHETHER ANYONE GAINING BY BRINGING RELIGION SO WIDELY INTO THE POLITICAL PROCESSES. IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE RELIGION BE A MATTER OF FAITH AND POLITICS A MATTER OF CONTROL OVER GOVERNANCE?

avoidable because it does not help development and it does not strengthen equity. Indians are known to be bright, intelligent, and have long traditions of intellectual excellence, which many parts of the world have not only recognized but gained strength from. To put it simply, a broad question can be asked: is it possible to freeze all talk from communal concerns as a public issue and let the concerns embedded in it be tackled only at the inter-community level? This needs to be done without blowing it up as a regional or national issue which begs support from communities that may not have even understood what was being debated. Whether Faizabad election results were determined by the nature and quantum of compensation to the communities is something on which the jury is still out. This issue needs to be understood in greater depth. However, one can avoid converting these concerns into fanning communally backed political support. In other words, can one simply delink religion from politics so that religion remains a matter of faith and politics deals with the struggle for control of the decision-making process?

A legitimate question that needs to be understood is whether anyone gaining by bringing religion so widely into the political processes. Is it possible to have religion be a matter of faith and politics a matter of control over governance? All political talk needs to avoid reference to religion, if for nothing better than avoiding emotiveness and irrelevant dissipation of energy. Political discourse can deal with economics, sociology, even history, and more, anthropology can be brought in, and so can industrialization and agriculture, but avoid drawing in religious loyalties, and emotions. Attempts to draw upon eschewed fervour with self-defeating orientation need to be stopped. An attempt to eliminate communalized political narratives and contentions may be an option worth considering. Some nations have successfully achieved this, and while they may be experiencing various forms of violence, violence stemming from religious loyalties is not their failing. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### A CALL FOR ACTION

Madam — It is disheartening to note that four army personnel sacrificed their lives fighting terrorists in Doda district, Jammu. This cowardly attack must be condemned in the strongest terms. Our intelligence sources seem unable to effectively address the challenges in Jammu & Kashmir, leading to repeated attacks on our army. Despite the brave efforts of the army in counterinsurgency operations, the situation is worsening, with increasing casualties. This raises serious questions about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's abrogation of Article 370, which was intended to bring peace to the valley.

There is a clear lack of coordination between the State and Central governments, and a trust deficit between local people and the army, contributing to these escalating attacks. It is high time for Prime Minister Modi to act decisively rather than relying on empty assurances, as ground realities are more precarious than they appear. This failure is not only an intelligence issue but also deeply demoralizing for our armed forces, who are currently engaged in counterinsurgency operations while also keeping vigil over Ladakh's sovereignty. The increasing attacks are eroding the morale of the troops and causing immense grief to their families. The government must prioritize tangible actions over rhetoric to ensure the safety and security of our soldiers and restore faith among the local population.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Japaiguri

#### DO NOT IGNORE ENGLISH

Madam — Encouraging the use of one's mother tongue and regional languages is important, but it's equally crucial to ensure that English education is not neglected from childhood. English provides citizens, regardless of age, gender, or profession, with global opportunities in education, employment, business, and services. No state should impose any regional language on

### Age-defying sportspersons



If technology is rapidly transforming our lives, can we overlook the role of competitive sports? Uncertainty is the only constant in world-class sporting events. Recent years have shown that age is no barrier to success.

Athletes like Serena Williams, Novak Djokovic, MS Dhoni, Tiger Woods, Rohan Bopanna, James Anderson, and recently, Lionel Messi, continue to outperform younger competitors. Their success can be attributed to advancements in medical science, financial support, rest, temperament, a balanced diet, exercise, a positive attitude, and a relentless passion for their sport. Lionel Messi, despite participating in four major tournaments including the 2016 Copa America without victory, finally triumphed in this year's final, proving his skill and defying age. He has recreated the magic that Diego Maradona brought to soccer. We hope he continues to adapt and maintain his enthusiasm and spirit.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

#### SC'S BENCH FOR MONEY BILLS

Madam — It's good that the Supreme Court has accepted to form a constitutional bench to look into the controversial issue of money bills in parliament. The money bills do not need to get approval of Rajya Sabha as they may be connected to urgent financial affairs of the country. Of late, it has become a practice for the Government which doesn't have majority in Rajya Sabha to introduce and get passed some bills as financial bills in parliament in order to bypass the close vetting by Rajya Sabha. The Aadhaar Act and Prevention of Money Laundering Act have been passed in that manner, attracting criticism from many. Now the highest judiciary would step in to clear the air in this regard. The executive should respect the constitutionally mandated role of the legislature in true spirit. This move is essential for maintaining the delicate balance of power.

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The harsh reality of child labour in rural Bihar



NISHA SAHANI

### Despite Government efforts, the economic realities force families to make children work, often resulting in their exploitation

Baiju (name changed), an 11-year-old boy from Telia village in Kudhni block, 22 km from Muzaffarpur in Bihar, wakes up every morning like other children. However, instead of going to school, he heads off to work as a labourer, a burden he has borne for the past three years. Baiju, who belongs to the Mahadalit community, used to attend school. Life changed after his father's death, as he was forced to drop out of school and start working to support his family. He explains that his mother's meagre income is not enough to sustain the six members of their family. Consequently, he had to give up his education and begin working. She does not have enough money to educate her children, forcing her to send Baiju to work.



Children can be found working in domestic services, tea shops, and brick kilns. In India, child labour is more prevalent in rural areas compared to urban ones. Children from socially and economically disadvantaged communities are often compelled to work in these areas, stripping them of their fundamental right to education and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. This not only obstructs their education but also hampers their overall development. Children should be in school and playing, not toiling as labourers. Pinki Devi (name changed), a 45-year-old resident of Telia village, has two children who have left school to work as labourers. She explains that her husband, a daily wage labourer, is often ill. In such a situation, it became impossible to support the family with his income

alone, forcing her to send her children to work. Social worker Phuldev Patel points out that children from the most economically vulnerable Dalit and Mahadalit communities are predominantly involved in child labour. The dire economic conditions of their households compel them to abandon their education and start working. He asserts that the actual number of child labourers is significantly higher than what official statistics reveal. The government provides free books, notebooks, uniforms, and mid-day meals under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education to encourage children to attend school. However, the harsh economic realities overshadow these provisions, pushing children into labour. He further notes that human traffickers exploit this vulnerability, selling children as labourers in other states. Local journalist Amritanjali observes that, like Telia village, there are numerous remote rural areas in Muzaffarpur where children work as labourers. He notes that the government may not have official statistics

on this issue because it is carried out in a highly systematic manner. Although the strict child labour laws and the vigilance of the local administration have reduced the rate of child labourers in recent years, it has not been entirely eradicated. Even today, children can be seen working in brick kilns, tea shops, grocery stores, construction sites, and as domestic helpers. As in previous years, this year too, the World Day Against Child Labor was observed on June 12 in India and around the world. When children in a society begin working as labourers at a young age instead of attending school, it prompts deep introspection within that nation and its society. They must confront why a child is forced to abandon books for labour. When a child's right to childhood, is denied, and they are thrust into labour, they endure physical, mental, and social exploitation, transforming their childhood into one marred by labour—an ordeal known as child labour.

(The author is a grassroots writer from Bihar. Views expressed are personal. Charkha Features)





## FIRST COLUMN

## FALLOUT OF TRUMP'S ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

It could have far reaching implications for the US presidential elections and the US politics



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

A week is a long time on the volatile chessboard of global affairs, however, the recent assassination attempt of former United States of America President Donald Trump would leave a deep impact on future courses of action. While several European leaders and some in the Middle East have been subjected to violent life-threatening attempts in the recent past, the bullet grazing past former president Trump's ears has left a shrill range of questions for world leaders. It may be too early to predict whether the assassination attempt would translate into a landslide victory for Donald Trump who is facing a rematch with current President Joe Biden in the November polls.

The Democrats in the US are a divided lot, with many leaders, internally questioning President Joe Biden's pitch for a second shot to the Oval Office, given his several public gaffes related to his age. Most of the public debates in the US and several other think tank zones across the world, have been debating President Biden's mental alertness and, if elected for a second time he would be able to complete his full four-year term. Any midway change due to a severe illness, which is being anticipated, would be a dampener for the US President's bid for a second run. Much like in every significant democracy, including India, the electorate in the US is a divided lot, with a deep gorge running right through the middle of the supporters of Trump and Joe Biden. The Democrat's attack on Trump and his supporters has been on the lines similar to what the opposition parties in India rallied around, during the recently concluded parliamentary elections.

The key message to their voters is to save the country from dictatorial forces (Trump/PM Modi), who will upend the constitution under their larger-than-life cult status leaders. This created a rift in the electorate, in an already ruptured society, constantly fed with an ocean of information primarily on social media, sending conflicting versions of the same events. Politics and rhetoric apart, it would be an interesting prism to watch the social messaging playing out with Trump coming back to the battlefield (election campaigns), after, he left the stage in Pennsylvania, with an iconic raised fist, and the US flag flying in the background. The pic-



ture is likely to define the resilience of the US democracy for a long time to come. Mr Trump in his few interviews, seems to have humbled down from the life-altering event, where he almost ended up being in the coffin rather than the Oval Office. It would be worthwhile to watch out if the former President sobers down on some of his key manifesto items such as immigration and freedom to choose (including the right to possess firearms for self-protection).

Immigration would be a closely watched topic from a global perspective, including India, where the largest chunk of immigrants land on US shores through legal or illegal routes. Donald Trump's Vice President choice JD Vance has a spouse who is a PIO. His wife's parents are immigrants from Andhra Pradesh and in a way, the choice defines the pluralistic nature of American Society. It would be a long shot to assume that if Trump gets a second term, his views and policies on immigration would be sobered due to his VP. Similarly, a Trump comeback could have a far-reaching impact on bilateral trade relations especially with India.

One may argue that India has bipartisan support in Washington DC on several defence and technology partnerships, carefully nurtured over a decade by PM Modi. PM Modi is perhaps the only PM, who has worked with three US Presidents in the last decade and is likely to see one of his former friends either Trump or Biden coming back in November. It may be uncertain times, however, the past relationships and promise for securing the future of the Indo-Pacific should be a super glue to hold India's US relationship under a new regime.

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

## Rising political violence and struggles in the US



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

The attack on Donald Trump underscores the nation's turbulent political climate raising concerns about the stability of American democracy and society.

Is the United States hurtling towards an internal civil war? Alex Garland's recent film 'Civil War', which premiered earlier this year, depicts a fictional yet chillingly plausible scenario of such a conflict. This leads us to consider whether the repercussions of US-initiated wars in recent decades, aimed at maintaining supremacy, now echo ominously at home, haunted by the spectres of those who perished globally. That is the inexorable wheel of karma. The shocking assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, thrusts this issue into stark relief. In the aftermath, numerous conspiracy theories swirled around the incident, casting a spotlight on secret agencies whose heads have publicly voiced criticism against Trump. A police sniper had photographed the shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, just half an hour before the 20-year-old opened fire on Trump during the rally, suggesting multiple missed opportunities to prevent the attempted assassination, as reported. Despite the attack, Trump's political stature has only strengthened, evidenced by his selection of Republican Senator JD Vance as his running mate for the 2024 presidential election. Once a vocal critic of Trump, Vance now stands as a staunch ally, vigorously defending him and endorsing his policies. The incident, which reshaped Trump's political narrative—where a bullet grazed his ear—left him wounded but resolute. This assault, though shocking, accentuates a longstanding history of political violence in the United States, a phenomenon entrenched since the nation's inception. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president, was the first to be assassinated, shot by John Wilkes Booth in 1865. Lincoln's support for Black rights during the Civil War, marked by the Emancipation Proclamation, has been cited as a motive for his assassination. Subsequent presidents, including James Garfield, William McKinley, and John F. Kennedy, also fell victim to such violence, with Garfield being shot in 1881, McKinley in 1901, and Kennedy in 1963.

Each of these assassinations profoundly impacted the nation and its political structure. Political violence has not been confined to presidents alone. Presidential candidates like Robert F. Kennedy and George C. Wallace were also targeted, with Kennedy being killed in 1968 and Wallace being left paralyzed in 1972. Presidents like Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan survived assassination attempts, highlighting the persistent threat of violence in American politics. The United States today exemplifies how a state structure can deteriorate when policymakers focus more on external affairs, neglecting internal issues. For instance, the fentanyl crisis devastates U.S. communities, with toddlers and infants increasingly falling victim to the potent opioid, which is 50 times stronger than heroin, according to public health experts. While adults account for the majority of fentanyl-related deaths, more children under 5 are either dying or ending up in emergency rooms after testing positive for the drug, due to accidental ingestion or exposure at home. The number of child overdoses has surged even as overall drug overdose rates in the country have declined recently. California leads in total fentanyl deaths, with 6,473 reported in 2022, while West Virginia has



the highest death rate per capita. This is a prime example to understand how the internal structure is falling apart. This cannot be stopped by exporting ammunition stocks and advanced weaponry to Ukraine and Israel through front channels while to other proxy wars in Africa and elsewhere through back channels. In societies, the root issue often isn't just institutions but the erosion of core values. Without a cohesive value system, managing politics becomes daunting.

This dilemma arises: while progress demands new values, preserving core societal values is crucial for stability and harmony. Neglecting this balance risks societal chaos and moral crisis. The inevitable decline, akin to the setting sun, cannot be halted by force alone. The political climate in the United States reflects the consequences of its global actions, suggesting a looming downfall through unpredictable events. Trump is a product of long-standing policies that have often ignored domestic ramifications.

He represents a symptom, not the cause, of the systemic issues within American politics, stemming from a history of exploiting other nations at the expense of the American public. Needless to say, engaging in political violence is fundamentally misguided and counterproductive. What Americans are slowly leading into what American decision-makers have executed throughout the world in recent history at the expense of unarmed civilians. Taking someone's life, regardless of their role or perceived wrongs, is morally indefensible. Whether it's a political adversary, a troublesome neighbour who's pushed you to the edge, a stranger evoking fear, or anyone else who has crossed your path, resorting to violence only perpetuates harm and suffering without resolution.

However, the Trump assassination attempt raises numerous unanswered questions. There is no indication that gunshot detectors were in use at the rally, although

such detectors can rapidly triangulate and locate a shooter. The shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, used a gun that was legally purchased by his father, which he had access to at a gun range the previous Friday. Questions arise about whether the gun was bought specifically for him, as Pennsylvania law allows 20-year-olds to buy guns. Reports state the shooter was identified by DNA, suggesting family members provided samples. Additionally, the reports suggested that no effort was made to obscure the gun's serial number, and the shooter had recently purchased 50 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition.

Preliminary acoustic evidence suggests the potential involvement of multiple shooters in the incident aimed at Trump. Initial gunfire originated from the shooter's position, with subsequent bursts detected from unidentified sources, as reported by news sources. Despite Secret Service snipers reportedly firing a single shot to neutralise the threat, discrepancies with acoustic evidence persist, necessitating further scrutiny of ballistic recordings for clarity. Questions arise over security failures allowing a 20-year-old to breach measures and reach a rooftop near Trump, firing multiple shots. Thomas Matthew Crooks, identified as the primary shooter, raises speculation about a potential second shooter. Described as a loner without a social media presence, Crooks' unexpected role and the presence of explosives in his vehicle suggest possible exploitation.

Criticism of rally security focuses on inadequate building coverage, allowing the shooter an unimpeded view of Trump, and exposing significant security vulnerabilities. These shortcomings emphasise systemic flaws in pre-event security protocols and the need for rigorous reforms. Political violence, however, has rarely solved the issues it aims to address, often creating a climate of fear and leading to further crackdowns on dissent. Historically, such violence

has only resulted in cycles of disaster, undermining the causes it purported to support. What we can see is that nihilism pervades American culture, dealing a fatal blow to its cultural and spiritual development. This decline in values undermines democracy itself. Democracy, while liberating individuals from traditional constraints, necessitates self-judgement—a task hindered by the erosion of traditional Western values. Without a genuine guiding societal value system, the state structures of any nation inevitably falter in fulfilling their role in shaping individual decisions.

The collapse of collective ideas correlates closely with societal institutions and behaviours. As Wang Huning, a leading Chinese political theorist, argued in his book "America Against America," "The American spirit confronts profound challenges, compounded by the younger generation's unfamiliarity with traditional Western values. This spiritual shift raises critical questions about its impact on societal development and governance." The viability of any social system hinges not solely on legal frameworks but on collective belief in fundamental values guiding behaviour. If these values falter, the sustainability of the social order is called into question. The attempt on Trump's life demands a reevaluation of rhetoric and policies that normalise political violence. The incident calls for a reevaluation of gun laws and the broader societal acceptance of violence as a means to resolve conflicts. All sides of the political divide must recognise the danger of escalating violent rhetoric and its potential to incite further violence. This incident serves as a wake-up call to address the deeper issues within American society and politics, emphasizing the need for a shift towards reasoned discourse and humane policies. Ironically, America has been compelled to a point where it can't afford to lose Trump.

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views are personal)



THE ATTEMPT ON TRUMP'S LIFE DEMANDS A REEVALUATION OF RHETORIC AND POLICIES THAT NORMALISE POLITICAL VIOLENCE. THE INCIDENT CALLS FOR A REEVALUATION OF GUN LAWS AND THE BROADER SOCIETAL ACCEPTANCE OF VIOLENCE AS A MEANS TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS

## RTI implementation faces challenges as the CIC is short of staff

Despite the formation of a new government, vacancies remain unfilled, exacerbating delays and overwhelming the few remaining commissioners

On September 13 last year, the Central Information Commission (CIC) admitted a second appeal from this columnist under Section 19(3) of the RTI Act, 2005. The appeal, apart from seeking imposition of penalty on the CPIO, for denial of information, also contained a few relevant suggestions for better implementation of the Act. However, on November 6, Ms Saroj Punhani, the Information Commissioner who dealt with cases for that particular ministry retired at the end of her tenure. On the same day Uday Mahurkar, another Information Commissioner retired, whereas their colleague Suresh Chandra had retired two days earlier. Several other



PRIYADARSHI DATTA

Information Commissioners like Ms. Vanjana N. Sarna, Neeraj Kumar Gupta and Dr. Amita Pandove had retired earlier last year at the end of their respective tenures. Y. K. Sinha, the Chief Information Commissioner, retired on October 3 whereupon Heeralal Samariya, the Information Commissioner was elevated to the position of Chief Information Commissioner. The total strength of the

Commission plummeted to a mere three by the end of 2023, from the maximum permissible ten at the beginning of the year. Even after the formation of the new government last month, little interest has been shown in filling up the vacancies that exist.

The reduction in the strength of the Commission has led to a proportionate overload of second appeals and complaints at CIC Bhawan. The second appeal of this columnist, already pending for ten months, is likely to see an indefinite waiting period. The outcome could hardly be compared with a long wait in the judiciary. Information is fragile, and prone to obsolescence faster than justice. This is where this columnist's suggestions would have helped. In his

limited experience as an RTI activist since 2010, he has found the CPIOs (Central Public Information Officers) generally share the information dutifully. However, where they do not, the Appellate Authority, who are generally their senior officers in the department/ministry is of little help.

They collude with their juniors to suppress the information, apparently in exchange for favours/obligations in office politics. Uday Mahurkar, as Information Commissioner, reportedly disposed of 5056 RTI appeals in 2021-22, the highest since the year of enactment of the RTI Act, 2005. However, it is equally a reflection of the utter non-performance of the Appellate Authority. Had those cases

been satisfactorily disposed at the stage of the first appeal, within the department itself, there was little need for approaching CIC with a second appeal. Information could be suppressed for a variety of reasons. In rare cases, it could be that the CPIO has committed some action in his substantive capacity (as Section Officer or Under Secretary) which he wants to be probed. In the instant case, a person has been blacklisted, on trumped-up charges, despite not having any financial dealing with the ministry.

The blacklisting order was signed, though with approval of competent authority, by the CPIO in his substantive capacity as Under Secretary. When asked to provide the file notes, complaints if any, rules posi-

tion violated he deflected the matter saying the file was under submission (there is no such ground for denying information under the RTI Act, 2005 even if the file is submitted with the PMO or Rashtrapati Bhawan).

This columnist requested the same information after the lapse of a year (thanks to the appeal pending for months in CIC) only to find that the file was still "under submission"! The conclusions are obvious. On both occasions, the First Appellate Authority, who is an IAS officer, helped the cause of suppression rather than transparency. Under Section 20(1) of the RTI Act, 2005 there is a provision for a penalty on the CPIO not exceeding Rs.25,000 for unjustified denial of information to the applicant. There

is, however, no penalty for the First Appellate Authority recognizably failing in his duty or acting in a mala fide manner. Endowing a member of the executive with quasi-judicial power without any scope of disciplinary proceedings is bait for misuse of power.

The CIC notice for hearing of appeal is sent only to the CPIO and not the First Appellate Authority. The fear of dressing down by the Information Commissioner, in front of the CPIO, who is a junior officer, will ensure the integrity of action on the part of the First Appellate Authority.

Disciplining the First Appellate Authority is the key to reducing the load of pendency at the Central Information Commission's desk. The gov-

ernment has recently decided to commemorate June 25 as "Samvidhan Hatya Divas", a queer-sounding name, in memory declaration of Emergency in 1975.

Whereas the Emergency might have been anti-democratic, it was in itself not unconstitutional being declared under Article 352. If the government is interested in deepening democracy in the 21st century then rhetoric like "Samvidhan Hatya Divas" or even "India Mother of Democracy" will not work if the CIC's strength is curtailed. The RTI Act, of 2005 was a major tool for transparency, accountability and governance. (The writer is an author, independent researcher and RTI activist based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)



# Vance promises to fight for working-class Americans

PTI ■ MILWAUKEE

US Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance praised former president Donald Trump and promised to fight for working-class Americans "cast aside and forgotten" by the Democrats, as he made his debut at the Republican National Convention.

Vance, 39, formally accepted the Republican vice-presidential nomination on the third day of the convention on Wednesday, making him among the youngest Americans to ever fill that role.

Introducing himself to millions of Americans, the Ohio Senator channelled his humble roots in the Midwest as he assailed politicians like President Joe Biden.

Trump and his running mate Vance will challenge President Biden and his Vice-President Kamala Harris from the Democratic Party in the November 5 presidential election. Vance said for the last eight years, President Trump has given everything he has to fight for the people of our country.

Trump didn't need politics, but the country needed him, he said.

"Prior to running for president, he was one of the most successful businessmen in the world. He had everything anyone could ever want in life. And yet, instead of choosing the easy

path, he chose to endure abuse, slander, and persecution," he said.

The author of the best-selling memoir *Hillbilly Elegy*, about his impoverished family, said "America's ruling class" had destroyed communities like his hometown with trade agreements and foreign wars. "From Iraq to Afghanistan, from the financial crisis to the Great Recession, from open borders to stagnating wages, the people who govern this country have failed and failed again," he said.

Trump represents America's last best hope to restore what - if lost - may never be found again, he said.

"I pledge to every American, no matter your party, I will give everything I have," Vance said. "To serve you and to make this country a place where every dream you have for yourself, your family and your country will be possible once again."

He accused "career politicians" like President Biden, 81, of destroying communities like his with ill-fated trade policies and foreign wars.

"When I was in the fourth grade, a career politician by the name of Joe Biden supported the North American Free Trade Agreement, a bad trade deal that sent countless good American manufacturing jobs to Mexico. When I was a sophomore in high school, a career politician by the name of Joe Biden gave China a sweet-

heart trade deal that destroyed even more good middle-class jobs. And when I was a senior in high school, Joe Biden supported the disastrous invasion of Iraq," he said.

"And at each step of the way, in small towns like mine in Ohio, or next door in Pennsylvania, or in Michigan and other states across our country, jobs were sent overseas and children were sent to war. Somehow, a real estate developer from New York by the name of Donald Trump was right on all of these issues while Joe Biden was wrong. Donald Trump knew, even then, that we need leaders who would put America First," he said.

Vance said Trump's vision is simple: "We won't cater to Wall Street, we'll commit to the Working man. We won't import foreign labour, we'll fight for American citizens."

The United States under the leadership of Trump will protect the wages of American workers and stop the Chinese Communist Party from building their middle class on the backs of hard-working American citizens.

He said Biden and the other out-of-touch politicians in Washington gave Americans a country that was flooded with cheap Chinese goods, cheap foreign labour and deadly Chineseentanyl.

"Joe Biden screwed up, and my community paid the price," Vance alleged.

# 'Next American pres has heart of lion'

Milwaukee (PTI): Donald Trump Jr has asserted that his father's instinct in the face of an assassination attempt has shown the world that the "next American president has the heart of a lion".

Addressing the Republican Party's once-in-four-year convention here on Wednesday night, Trump Jr, said that the assassination attempt on his father on Saturday "once seemed unimaginable became a terrifying reality." Trump, 78, survived an assassination attempt at a campaign rally on Saturday in Pennsylvania, injuring his right ear. The shooting left one spectator dead and two others critically injured. The 20-year-old male attacker was also shot and killed by a member of the Secret Service. "They say you can't truly know how you'll respond in a moment of danger until you're actually confronted with it," the 46-year-old eldest child of the former president, said.

"So what was my father's instinct, as his life was on the line? Not to cower, not to surrender, but to show for all the world to see that the next American president has the heart of a lion," he said, a day ahead of Donald Trump's acceptance speech as the Republican Party's nominee in



identical candidate "may have moved to the ground, but he stood back up." And when he did, my father raised his fist into the air. He looked out at the crowd, and what did he say?" he asked the audience. "We will fight, we will fight, we will fight with our voices," Trump Jr said, adding that they will fight with their votes in November. The Republican convention on Monday nominated Trump as the party's presidential nominee against incumbent Democratic President Joe Biden. Trump's eldest granddaughter Kai Madison Trump also spoke at the convention in support of her grandfather. In her first public speech, the 17-year-old promised to "share the side of my grandpa that people don't often see."

"To me, he's just a normal grandpa. He gets us candy and soda when our parents aren't looking," she said. She described Trump bragging when she had made the honour roll at school and peppering her with questions about her golf game.

Trump's wife, Melania, his daughter Ivanka Trump, son-in-law Jared Kushner and other family members are expected to attend the convention on Thursday in a rare show of public support for the former president as he accepts the

party's nomination for the president's post, CNN reported, citing sources.

Donald Trump takes the stage Thursday at the Republican National Convention to accept his party's nomination again and give his first speech since he was cut off mid-sentence by a flurry of gunfire in an assassination attempt at a rally in Pennsylvania. Trump's address will conclude the four-day convention in Milwaukee. He appeared each of the first three days with a white bandage on his ear, covering a wound he sustained in the Saturday shooting. His moment of survival has shaped the week, even as convention organisers insisted they would continue with their programme as planned less than 48 hours after the shooting. Speakers and delegates have repeatedly chanted "Fight, fight, fight!" in homage to Trump's words as he got to his feet and pumped his fist after Secret Service agents killed the gunman. And some of his supporters have started sporting their own makeshift bandages on the convention floor. Speakers attributed Trump's survival to divine intervention and paid tribute to victim Corey Comperatore, who died after shielding his wife and daughter from gunfire at the rally.

# 'Biden tests positive for COVID-19'

Milwaukee (PTI): US President Joe Biden has tested positive for COVID-19, halting his campaign at a critical juncture in the presidential election when he was facing increasing pressure about his health and concerns about his viability as a candidate.

"I'm sick," Biden, 81, wrote on X. Biden tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday, disrupting a key campaign event in Las Vegas meant to shore up support with Latino voters.

"He is vaccinated and boosted and he is experiencing mild symptoms, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

Biden has returned to his home in Delaware where he will self-isolate and will continue to carry out all of his duties fully during that time. The White House will provide regular updates on the president's status as he continues to carry out the full duties of the office while in isolation, she said.

The president was scheduled to speak at the Unidos event in Las Vegas on Wednesday afternoon.

"His symptoms remain mild, his respiratory rate is normal at 16, his temperature is normal at 97.8 and his pulse oximetry is normal at 97%." The President has received his first dose of Paxlovid. He will be self-isolating at his home in Rehoboth, the White House said.

"I feel good," Biden told reporters, as he boarded Air Force One in Las Vegas to fly back to his beach house in Delaware. He was not wearing a mask, nor were the people closest to him on the tarmac. It's unclear where and when the president contracted COVID-19. But the sudden diagnosis will place him behind closed doors at a time when Democratic lawmakers have been clamouring to see him out front.

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends staying home until the infected person has been without a fever - with no fever-reducing medicine - for at least 24 hours and symptoms have been improving for 24 hours. It then recommends wearing a mask for five days after.

The president's physician, Dr Kevin O'Connor, said that Biden "presented this afternoon with upper respiratory symptoms, to include rhinorrhea (runny nose) and non-productive cough, with general malaise."

The president felt okay for his first event of the day, but given that he was not feeling better, point-of-care testing for COVID-19 was conducted, and the results were positive for the COVID-19 virus, he said.

"Given this, the president will be self-isolating in accordance with CDC guidance for symptomatic individuals. PCR confirmation testing will be pending," the doctor said.

# Far-right Israeli minister visits sensitive Jerusalem holy site

AP ■ JERUSALEM/CAIRO

Israel's far-right national security minister visited Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site on Thursday morning, threatening to disrupt Gaza cease-fire talks. Itamar Ben-Gvir, an ultranationalist settler leader, said he had gone up to the contested Jerusalem hilltop compound of Al Aqsa Mosque to pray for the return of the hostages "but without a reckless deal."

Ben-Gvir said he was pressuring Netanyahu not to give in to international pressure and to continue with the military campaign in Gaza.

The move threatens to disrupt sensitive talks aimed at reaching a cease-fire in the 9-month-old Israel-Hamas war. Israeli negotiators landed in Cairo on Wednesday to continue talks.

Ben-Gvir's visit also came just days before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu leaves for a trip to the United States, where he will address Congress. Ben-Gvir last visited the site in May, to protest countries unilaterally recognizing Palestinian statehood.

Jews and Muslims both claim the Jerusalem hilltop compound, which is considered the

holiest site for Jews. Palestinians consider the mosque a national symbol and view such visits as provocative, though Ben-Gvir has frequently visited the site, revered by Jews as the Temple Mount, during tense periods. Tensions over the compound have fueled past rounds of violence.

Meanwhile, an Israeli delegation has arrived in Egypt to press ahead with cease-fire talks, as Israel and Hamas consider the latest proposal.

That's according to three Egyptian airport officials, who did not provide further details. International mediators are pushing Israel and Hamas toward a phased deal that would halt the fighting and free about 120 hostages held by the militant group in Gaza.

Talks were rattled over the weekend when Israel said it targeted the Hamas military commander in a massive strike. His status remains unclear.

Hamas' Oct. 7 attack sparked the war when militants stormed into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people - mostly civilians - and abducting about 250. Since then, Israeli ground offensives and bombardments have killed more than 38,600 people in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry. It does not

distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. Two international courts have accused Israel of war crimes and genocide - charges Israel denies. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people are crammed into squalid tent camps in central and southern Gaza. Israeli restrictions, fighting and the breakdown of law and order have limited humanitarian aid efforts, causing widespread hunger and sparking fears of famine.

Jerusalem - Israel's parliament extended a temporary law which allows the country to shut down foreign media outlets they consider a threat to Israel's security. In a marathon session that lasted until early Thursday morning, the parliament gave final approval to extend the emergency law until Nov. 30.

Israeli officials used the new law on May 5 to close Qatar-based Al Jazeera within Israel, confiscating its equipment, banning its broadcasts and blocking its websites.

Under the law, Israel's Communications Ministry also briefly seized AP broadcasting equipment from southern Israel after accusing it of violating a new media law by providing images to Al Jazeera. The government returned the

equipment to AP several hours later.

A bill that would make the emergency legislation permanent is currently making its way through the Israeli parliament. The draft said a permanent bill is needed because Israel "has faced serious security threats since its establishment and is expected to continue to face them in the future, possibly even more severely." Critics say the measure passed earlier this year is undemocratic and a threat to press freedom.

Israeli strikes kill at least 11 people in central Gaza

Deir Al-Balah - Overnight Israeli strikes Thursday in central Gaza killed at least 11 people, including women and children.

Early Thursday an Israeli strike hit a house in central Gaza, killing at least six people, while another strike later hit a car, killing at least three. The dead were taken to the Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where an Associated Press journalist counted the bodies. Among the six killed in the early strike in Zawaida were two children and two women. The area struck is close to Deir al-Balah, where many Palestinians displaced from across the war-torn Gaza Strip have fled.

# Public failed by UK gov't, finds damning COVID inquiry

London (PTI): The British public was failed by the government's planning and processes when the COVID pandemic hit the country in early 2020, a damning independent public inquiry concluded on Thursday and called for "radical reform" for future civil emergencies. In the first of nine reports to be published by the 'UK COVID-10 Inquiry', chair Baroness Heather Hallett said the government prepared for the "wrong pandemic" and called for "radical reform" of the state of the UK's structures and procedures to prepare for future civil emergencies. The UK officially recorded more than 2,35,000 deaths involving COVID-19 up to the end of 2023 and the inquiry report finds that some of that "human cost" may have been avoided had the country been better prepared for the deadly outbreak.

"Never again can a disease be allowed to lead to so many deaths and so much suffering," said Hallett.

"I have no hesitation in concluding the processes, planning and policy of the civil contingency structures across the UK failed the citizens of all four nations.

# Court: Closing arguments in espionage trial of WSJ reporter will be Friday

Yekaterinburg (Russia) (AP): Closing arguments in the espionage trial of US journalist Evan Gershkovich will be held Friday, a Russian court said, as the proceedings picked up speed in a case that has seen the reporter held in pre-trial custody for over a year.

Gershkovich attended a trial session for a second day behind closed doors on Thursday, the court said. He faces charges that he, his employer and the US government vehemently deny.

Unlike previous sessions in which reporters were allowed to see Gershkovich briefly before the proceedings began, there was no access to the courtroom and he was not seen, with no explanation given. Espionage cases are typically shrouded in secrecy.

Gershkovich, 32, was arrested on March 29, 2023, while he was on a reporting trip. Authorities claimed, without offering any evidence, that he was gathering secret information for the US. The American-born son of immigrants from the USSR, Gershkovich is the first Western journalist arrested on espionage charges in post-Soviet Russia.

The US State Department has declared him "wrongfully

detained," thereby committing the government to assertively seek his release. Gershkovich faces up to 20 years in prison if found guilty, which is almost a certainty. Russian courts convict more than 99 per cent of defendants, and prosecutors can appeal sentences that they regard as too lenient. They even can appeal acquittals.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Wednesday at the United Nations that Moscow and Washington's intelligence services are discussing an exchange involving Gershkovich, according to Russian state news agency Tass. Russia has previously signalled the possibility of a swap, but it says a verdict would have to come first. Gershkovich's trial began June 26 in the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg after he spent about 15 months in in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison.

At the trial's first day, the court said it was adjourning until mid-August. But Gershkovich's lawyers asked for the second hearing to be held earlier, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti and independent news site Mediazona reported Tuesday, citing court officials. The Russian Prosecutor

# S Korea's top court recognises some rights for LGBT community

Seoul (AP): South Korea's top court ruled Thursday that same-sex couples are eligible to receive the same health insurance benefits as heterosexual couples, a landmark verdict hailed by human rights groups. The Supreme Court said it ruled that the state health insurance agency's refusal to provide spousal insurance coverage for gay couples was an act of discrimination that violates the constitutional principle of equality. Thursday's ruling is final and cannot be appealed.

"Today's ruling is a historic victory for equality and human rights in South Korea," Amnesty International said in a statement. "The court has taken a significant step towards dismantling systemic discrimination and ensuring inclusivity for all." A legal battle between a gay couple, So Seong-wook and Kim Yong Min, and the National Health Insurance Service began after the insurance agency revoked So's registration as a dependent of Kim, prompting So to file an administrative suit. In 2022, the Seoul Administrative Court ruled in favour of the insurance agency. But in February 2023, the Seoul High Court overturned the earlier verdict, saying that denying So's spousal coverage rights without reasonable grounds was discriminatory because such benefits are given to heterosexual spouses.

# Starmer begins post-Brexit 'reset' with EU

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed leaders from the European Union to Oxfordshire in south-east England to initiate a "reset" with the 27-member economic bloc, which the UK is no longer a member of since a referendum in favour of leaving it in 2016. At a meeting of the European Political Community (EPC) in Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Britain's war-time prime minister Winston Churchill, Starmer sought to set a new direction for his Labour Party government's post-Brexit ties with Europe to align on issues such as illegal migration and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Distancing his new government from the previous Conservative Party policies,



the Labour Leader reiterated that the "unworkable" scheme of deporting illegal migrants to Rwanda had been "scrapped" and that the UK will never withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). "The EPC will fire the starting gun on this government's new approach to Europe, one that will not just benefit us now, but for generations to come, from disman-

tlng the people smuggling webs trafficking people across Europe to standing up to [Russian President] Putin's barbaric actions in Ukraine and destabilising activity across Europe," said Starmer. "I take a practical view of how the UK can meet this moment. I'm not driven by ideology - but by what is best for my country. So we will strengthen our existing relationships and we will build new ones. This includes resetting our relationship with the EU... and this summit is an opportunity to set a new path on illegal migration; to transform the way that we work together on border security and law enforcement," he said. Starmer then joined the EPC's Migration Working Group, which included leaders from Italy, Albania, Germany, Malta, Denmark, Hungary, the

Netherlands and Slovakia. Downing Street said the government is redeploying more than 100 Home Office staff from the Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP) to a new rapid returns unit to take control of the country's borders. This will mean asylum applications from designated "safe" countries, such as India, will be speedily processed and illegal migrants returned to their country of origin.

It comes after the government announced a new Border Security Bill in Parliament on Wednesday to tackle criminal smuggling gangs giving a new Border Security Command counter-terrorism-style powers to disrupt organised immigration crime and ensure smugglers can be prosecuted for preparatory offences such as

supplying materials to facilitate organised immigration crime. "Dangerous small boat crossings are undermining our border security and putting lives at risk. Criminal smuggling gangs are making millions out of small boat crossings. We will work right across Europe to tackle this problem at (the) source, going after those profiting from this awful trade and bringing them to justice," said UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper.

The EPC is a pan-European meeting of leaders, including the heads of the EU institutions and, for the first time at this EPC, leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have also been included.

# Seattle police fire officer who said Indian student killed had 'limited value' fired

New York/Seattle (PTI): A US police officer, whose insensitive comments and laughter following the horrific death of a 23-year-old Indian student had caused outrage, has been fired from the Seattle Police Department.

Jaahnavi Kandula was struck by a speeding police vehicle driven by Seattle Police Officer Kevin Dave as she was crossing a street on January 23 last year. Dave was driving at more than 119 kmph on the way to a report of a drug overdose call. Kandula was thrown 100 feet when she was struck by the speeding police patrol vehicle.

In bodycam footage released by the Seattle Police Department, Officer Daniel Auderer was heard laughing after the deadly crash and had remarked: "Uh, I think she went up on the hood, hit the windshield, and then when he hit the brakes, flew off the car... But she is dead." After making these comments, Auderer "laughed hard for four seconds," the department's Disciplinary Action Report said. Auderer's body-worn camera also captured him saying, "Yeah, just write a check. Just, yeah (laughter). USD 11,000. She was 26, anyway. She had limited value."

When asked at an Office of Police Accountability interview about his comments that Kandula had "limited value,"

Auderer claimed he was "ridiculing the city attorneys who would be tasked with litigating a potential wrongful death lawsuit."

Interim Chief Sue Rahr at the Seattle Police Department said in an internal email, seen by PTI Wednesday, that the hurt Auderer's words have inflicted on Kandula's family "cannot be erased. The actions (of) this individual police officer have brought shame on the Seattle Police Department and our entire profession, making the job of every police officer more difficult."

Rahr said that as the leader of the organisation, it is her duty to uphold the high standards necessary to maintain public trust. "For me to allow the officer to remain on our force would only bring further dishonour to the entire department. For that reason, I am going to terminate his employment," she said in the internal email.

Rahr noted that at the root of this case lies an extremely difficult judgment call of how to fairly balance "intent versus impact." "There is no doubt that the named officer's cruel comments and callous laughter about the tragic death caused deep pain to Ms Kandula's family, but also immeasurable damage to the public trust of police in the Seattle community, across the nation, and around the world," she said in the email.

# NASA cancels its moon rover mission

Washington (AP): NASA has said that it is cancelling its water-seeking moon rover, citing cost overruns and launch delays.

The Viper rover was supposed to launch in late 2023 aboard a lander provided by Astrobotic Technology, but extra testing and increased costs kept delaying the mission, threatening other projects, the space agency said on Wednesday. The rover had aimed to explore the moon's south pole. About \$450 million had been spent so far on its development,



NASA said. The announcement comes days before the 55th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission, which landed Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon on July 20, 1969. NASA said it plans to study the presence of lunar ice through other projects.

Astrobotic still plans to fly its Griffin moon lander - minus a rover - by the end of next year. The company's first moonshot ended in failure in January with a fiery plunge over the South Pacific.



# Ursula von der Leyen re-elected as European Commission pres

PTI ■ STRASBOURG



Lawmakers at the European Parliament on Thursday re-elected Ursula von der Leyen to a second 5-year term as president of the European Union's executive commission, giving her a comfortable majority and heading off a possible leadership vacuum. Von der Leyen raised both fists in victory as the Parliament President Roberta Metsola read out the result at the legislature. The re-election ensures leadership continuity for the 27-nation bloc as it wrestles with crises ranging from the war in Ukraine to climate change, migration and housing shortages. A majority in the 720-seat legislature voted for the German Christian Democrat after a speech in which she pledged to be a strong leader for Europe in a time of crisis and polarization. Von der Leyen gained 401 of the 707 votes cast. There were 284 votes against her candidacy, 15 abstentions and seven void ballots. The secret ballot came hot on the heels of strong gains by the far right in last month's election for the European Parliament. "I will never let the extreme polarisation of our societies become accepted. I will never accept that demagogues and extremists destroy our European way of life. And I

stand here today ready to lead the fight with all the Democratic forces in this house," von der Leyen said in her final pitch. If lawmakers had rejected her candidacy, it would leave leaders of the 27-nation bloc scrambling to find a replacement as Europe grapples with crises ranging from the war in Ukraine to climate change. Instead, the continent now has an experienced pair of hands at the helm. In a speech that sought to shore up support from across the political spectrum, von der Leyen pledged to strengthen the EU economy, its police and border agencies, tackle migration and pursue policies tackling climate change while also helping farmers who have staged protests against what they call stifling EU bureaucracy and environmental rules. She also took a swipe at Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and his

recent visit to Russia shortly after his country took over the rotating six-month EU presidency. "This so-called peace mission was nothing but an appeasement mission," von der Leyen said as she vowed that Europe would remain shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine. One radical right lawmaker, Diana Iovanovici-Sosoaca of Romania, was escorted out of the parliament's chamber for heckling a speaker during the debate following von der Leyen's speech. Iovanovici-Sosoaca briefly wore what appeared to be a muzzle and held up religious icons before being led out of the room. Over the past five years, von der Leyen has steered the bloc through a series of crises, including Britain's exit from the EU, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She has also pushed a Green Deal aiming to make the EU climate-neutral by 2050. As the debate ended, she told lawmakers: "I hope to have your trust and confidence for the next years. Long live Europe." Von der Leyen's election came as newly elected UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer was welcoming some 45 heads of government to discuss migration, energy security and the threat from Russia as he seeks to restore relations between the UK and its European neighbours. The lead-

ers signed off on the conservative German von der Leyen at a summit meeting late last month. The 65-year-old von der Leyen's bid was boosted when the European People's Party, which includes von der Leyen's Christian Democratic Union, remained the largest group at the EU Parliament after the elections. The German politician has been praised for her leading role during the coronavirus crisis, when the EU bought vaccines collectively for its citizens. But she also found herself receiving sharp criticism for the opacity of the negotiations with vaccine makers. The EU general court ruled Wednesday that the commission did not allow the public enough access to information about COVID-19 vaccine purchase agreements it secured with pharmaceutical companies during the pandemic. Before voting got underway, a majority of lawmakers rejected a motion from a leftist bloc in parliament calling for the election to be delayed until September in light of the court ruling. Following the elections for EU Parliament, European Union leaders agreed on the officials who will hold the key positions in the world's biggest trading bloc in the coming years for issues ranging from antitrust investigations to foreign policy.

# Bangladesh govt says ready to hold talks with quota protesters; Army deployed

PTI ■ DHAKA

The Bangladesh government on Thursday expressed willingness to hold talks with the students protesting against the quota system in jobs after fresh violence erupted across the country as they attempted to enforce a nationwide shutdown over the issue. Authorities deployed Border Guard Bangladesh personnel across the country including the capital, to maintain law and order, the official BSS news agency reported. Addressing a press conference, Law Minister Anisul Huq said the government decided to sit in for a dialogue with protesting students and entrusted him and Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury with the task of the discussion. "Whenever they agree, we will sit...it could be held this (Thursday) afternoon even," he said. "Government has agreed to hold talks with the quota reformists," he told journalists at a press briefing. He also said Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the law minister to take the initiative to hold an early hearing of the quota-related case pending with the Supreme Court. He said he has already instructed the Attorney General to take

the initiative on this, and the AG will file an appeal with the Supreme Court on Sunday seeking an early hearing of the case. The government has decided to form a judicial probe committee led by High Court Justice Khandaker Diluruzzaman to investigate the violent incidents that have claimed at least seven lives, including four students. The committee will be formed upon receiving approval from the chief justice. The law minister also requested the protesters to either end or suspend their protest as the government is ready to hold talks with them. Fresh violence erupted in Bangladesh on Thursday after an overnight lull as thousands of students attempted to enforce a nationwide shutdown. Mainstream media and witnesses said the protesters clashed with police, leaving many people injured and prompting people to stay indoors. Owners preferred to keep many shopping malls shut. According to TV footage, riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas canisters to disperse protesters while students aligned with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ruling Awami League confronted them on the

streets with bricks and bamboo sticks. Witnesses said the protesters laid a siege on the state-run Bangladesh Television Bhawan in the Rampura area in Dhaka and damaged its front side while some 1,200 staff, including journalists, were stranded inside. The protesters overnight vowed to enforce a "complete shutdown" after days of demonstrations and violent clashes that left at least seven dead. The seventh death was reported on Thursday in Dhaka. Government offices and banks were open as paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), riot police and elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) patrolled streets in Dhaka and other major cities, but the attendance appeared thin because of limited transport. Many offices asked their staff to work from home. Bus services between Dhaka and the rest of the country were also cut off, with people staying at home. Staff members at different bus counters in Dhaka's Gabtoli and Sayedabad Bus Terminal told The Daily Star that bus owners have asked them not to run any buses on the roads. Many bus counters at the terminal were closed. Additionally, buses were

seen standing idle in queues at the terminal, our correspondent reports from the spot. Local markets and shopping malls had limited entry points open. Some roadside shops were open, while others remained closed. The clashes erupted on Monday as activists of ruling Awami League's student front confronted the protesters who insist the existing quota system was largely debarring the enrolment of meritorious students in government services. Demonstrators accused the ruling party's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League of attacking their "peaceful protests" with backing from the police. Fifty-six per cent of government jobs are reserved under the current quota system, with 30 being for the descendants of the 1971 Liberation War freedom fighters, 10 per cent for backward administrative districts, 10 per cent for women, five per cent for ethnic minority groups and one per cent for the handicapped people. Every year some 3,000 government jobs open up to nearly 400,000 graduates. The protesters waged the campaign for the reform of the system, saying it was debarring meritorious students' recruitment in first-class and second-class government jobs.

# CCP endorses reforms to halt economic slowdown; emphasizes Xi's leadership

PTI ■ BEIJING



A crucial meeting of China's ruling Communist Party on Thursday adopted a resolution for comprehensive reforms to lift the sluggish growth of the world's second-largest economy by achieving socialist modernisation by 2035 and re-emphasised President Xi Jinping's "core" leadership position. Stated to be a defining moment of Xi's leadership of the party, the third plenum of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee discussed and adopted a report, presented by Xi, 71, an official communique said here at the end of the four-day meet. The plenum took place at a time when China, beset by a slowdown affected by COVID lockdowns, is struggling with various curbs and sanctions from the US and the EU, especially for its high-tech products. It is also trying to assure both foreign business and the private sector at home about the country's economic prospects to attract investments as the economic growth, in the April to June quarter, slowed to 4.7 per cent on an annual basis. Xi delivered explanatory remarks on the draft version of the resolution proposing reforms to revitalise broad sections of the economy at the meeting attended by 364 members of the CPC Central Committee, which is the top policy body of the party. Although details of the reform package presented by Xi are yet to be released, the commu-

nique said he mostly focussed on building a high-standard socialist market economy. "The overall objectives of further deepening reform comprehensively are to continue improving and developing the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernise China's system and capacity for governance," the communique said. "By 2035, we will have finished building a high-standard socialist market economy in all respects, further improved the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, generally modernised our system and capacity for governance, and basically realised socialist modernisation," it said. The reform tasks laid out in the resolution shall be completed by the time the country celebrates its 80th founding anniversary in 2029, it added. The Plenum also highlighted the "core" leadership

position of Xi, who is in his unprecedented third five-year term in power and called for improving national security institutions and the CPC's control over the military "to effectively safeguard the country's stability and security over the long term," the communique said. Aiming to achieve basic modernisation of national defence and the armed forces, the communique further urged maintaining the Party's absolute leadership over the armed forces and fully strengthening the military through reforms for a strong guarantee for realising the goals for the centenary of the People's Liberation Army in 2027. In improving the Party's leadership "we must acquire a deep understanding of the decisive significance of establishing Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and establishing the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," it said. In building a high-standard socialist market economy, the role of the market must be better leveraged, with a fairer and more dynamic market environment to be fostered and resource allocation to be made as efficient and productive as possible. Restrictions on the market will be lifted while effective regulation will be ensured to better maintain order in the market and remedy market failures, the communique said.

# Shopping mall fire in China kills 16 people

Beijing (PTI): At least 16 people were killed after a fire broke out at a shopping mall in southwest China's Sichuan Province. The incident occurred on Wednesday around 6 pm at the 14-story building, located in a high-tech zone in the city of Zigong, Sichuan province, according to Chinese state media.

Dramatic images and videos showed a huge column of black smoke billowing from the building. Several people were also seen gathered on a balcony. The rescue operation was completed on Thursday. Around 75 people who were trapped inside the building were evacuated, the local fire department said. A total of 16 people have been killed, and the rest were evacuated from the building, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. According to the preliminary investigations, the fire was caused by construction work, the report added. China's Ministry of Emergency Management and National Fire and Rescue Administration said it has dispatched a working team to investigate the incident. Fire experts from across the country will also be sent to participate in the accident investigation, the ministry said. China continues to witness major fire accidents despite the directives from President Xi Jinping to implement strict preventive measures for provincial governments.

# North Korea launches balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea

AP ■ SEOUL



North Korea resumed flying balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea on Thursday, the South's military said, days after it vowed to respond to what it called repeated South Korean civilian leafleting campaigns in the North. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the balloons were flying north of Seoul, which is about an hour's drive from the border, on Thursday afternoon. It warned the South Korea public to be cautious of falling objects and report to authori-

ties if they spot balloons on the ground. Beginning in late May, North Korea has floated numerous balloons carrying newspaper, scraps of cloth, cigarette butts

and even manure toward South Korea, saying they were in response to South Korean activists sending political leaflets to the North via their own balloons. No hazardous materials were found. In response, South Korea suspended a 2018 tension-reduction deal with North Korea, resuming propaganda broadcasts briefly and front-line live-fire military drills at border areas. Earlier this week, the powerful sister of North Korea leader Kim Jong Un vowed to respond to what she called new South Korean civilian leafleting activities. She said South

Korean balloons have been found frequently at the North Korea border and other areas. In her statement Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong threatened new retaliatory steps, saying South Korean "scum" must be ready to pay "a gruesome and dear price." That raised concerns that North Korea could stage physical provocations, rather than balloon launches. South Korea's military said Wednesday it has boosted its readiness to brace for any provocation by North Korea. It said North Korea may fire at incoming South Korean balloons across the border.

# Nepal's future is bright: Oli

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Newly-appointed Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Thursday said that Nepal's future is "bright," but its current scenario needs to be changed, amidst frequent political turmoil in the Himalayan nation. Oli, who was sworn in on Monday as the Himalayan nation's prime minister for the fourth time, said the country's current scenario is not good. The Rising Nepal newspaper reported. Addressing the Engineer Day event here, the 72-year-old veteran Communist leader said that though the country is praiseworthy, its situation does not match it. Nepal has faced frequent political turmoil as the country has seen 14 governments in the past 16 years after the Republican system was introduced. "There is an issue in the country. If a body is unwell, then it cannot be said that hands are fine. Just like when the fever comes, the whole body suffers; the situation of the country is not good overall, at least not praiseworthy," Oli was quoted as saying. "The history of our country is glorious and worth praising, just like the country is. There is no doubt that the future of our country is good, but it is, at present, not in a place of satisfaction. Therefore, it needs to

be changed," he said. He underscored that the need of the hour was to take the country towards betterment from the present deteriorated condition, Nepal's state-run RSS news agency reported. Asserting that the government was involved in resolving the country's existing problems, Oli said, "There is no condition of being satisfied. We have to change this condition. There is no doubt that the future of the country is bright." He expressed commitment that the government would advance, resolving problems surfacing in every sector. Oli, who needs to secure a vote of confidence from Parliament within 30 days of appointment, will take a vote of confidence on Sunday. PTI Meanwhile, Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Thursday expressed his desire to implement the understanding reached between the top leaders and the two countries in the past to collaborate under the China-Nepal Belt and Road Cooperation and also to promote collaboration in other areas as well. Nepal and China signed a memorandum of understanding on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a flagship initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping. Under this, the two countries are expected to focus on connectivity, trade, development strategies, and policy dialogue for cooperation in the fields of economy, environment, technology and culture, among others. Li said that he is always willing to see new progress in Nepal-China-friendly strategic partnership for attaining development and prosperity. Li also said the relations between the two countries are based on peaceful coexistence, equality and collaboration in a win-win situation. During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal in 2019, the existing bilateral relations between Nepal and China were elevated to a strategic level. It was agreed by both countries to transform the Nepal-China relationship from a "comprehensive partnership of cooperation featuring everlasting friendship" to a "strategic partnership for development and prosperity."

reached between the top leaders and the two countries in the past to collaborate under the China-Nepal Belt and Road Cooperation and also to promote collaboration in other areas as well. Nepal and China signed a memorandum of understanding on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a flagship initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping. Under this, the two countries are expected to focus on connectivity, trade, development strategies, and policy dialogue for cooperation in the fields of economy, environment, technology and culture, among others. Li said that he is always willing to see new progress in Nepal-China-friendly strategic partnership for attaining development and prosperity. Li also said the relations between the two countries are based on peaceful coexistence, equality and collaboration in a win-win situation. During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal in 2019, the existing bilateral relations between Nepal and China were elevated to a strategic level. It was agreed by both countries to transform the Nepal-China relationship from a "comprehensive partnership of cooperation featuring everlasting friendship" to a "strategic partnership for development and prosperity."

# Pak govt targets more social media platforms; FB, Insta restricted across multiple service providers

Lahore (PTI): After successfully blocking X for over six months, the Pakistan government has targeted more social media platforms — Facebook and Instagram — and restricted their access to the people, a step seen as a plan to impose a complete ban on social media. Since Wednesday, Facebook and Instagram have been restricted in Pakistan, causing users to experience difficulties accessing the social media platforms across various internet service providers (ISPs). Some users are also experiencing issues with other Meta-owned apps, such as WhatsApp. There has been no official word so far from the Pakistani government regarding restrictions placed on access to Facebook and Instagram. The ban comes amid an ongoing tussle between the superior judiciary, former premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and the powerful military establishment which is apparently running the government. The Punjab government led by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz earlier had asked the federal government to ban all social media platforms — YouTube, X, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc — from 6 to 11 Muharram (July 13 to 18) in Punjab, a province of over 120 million people, to "control hate

material, misinformation to avoid sectarian violence" during the holy month. Nayatel, a telecommunication company, said on X on Thursday: "Facebook and Instagram services have been disrupted with all service providers across the country for the last two days. This blockage is in addition to the already blocked Twitter/X. We are waiting for a reply from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority for the reasons for this blockage and when this ban will be lifted." Downdetector which tracks outages by collating status reports from several sources including users showed that user reports indicated problems in accessing Facebook. According to NetBlocks, a global internet tracking agency, "Restrictions on Facebook are in effect on multiple providers in Pakistan." X (formerly Twitter) has been banned in Pakistan since February 17, 2024, following outrage on the "stolen mandate" of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) backed candidates in the February 8 general election. Pakistan Army Chief Gen Asim Munir has already declared social media a "vicious media" and underscored the need to fight against this "digital terrorism."

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar who also has the portfolio of foreign minister has also called for placing a complete ban on social media. Both the military and the government have been receiving backlash on social media since the ouster of former prime minister Imran Khan through a no-confidence motion in April 2022. The government has arrested dozens of social media activities of Khan's party since then. After keeping mum on the ban on X for about five months, the Ministry of Interior recently told a higher court that it had taken the step as "X is a threat to peace and national security as it spreads 'misinformation and incites violence.'" The Shehbaz government also said that the ban was imposed on X "on the basis of reports from the intelligence agencies." Khan's PTI on Thursday lambasted placing restrictions on more social media apps like Facebook, saying: "After Twitter, Facebook and Instagram were also banned in Pakistan. Freedom of speech and access to information is not just a concept of the inherent human right to voice one's opinion publicly without fear of censorship or punishment, but also a right everyone's born with." The PTI further said that times like these when all tactics are

being employed to blindsides the most popular party of the country, thwarting freedom of speech even after oppression, now sounds like freedom to discriminate, by the power hub. PTI

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
MARINE DEPARTMENT  
No. MD/SHS/TECH-27/2024/786 Date: 10.07.2024  
e-Tender Call Notice (e-TCN)  
Name of the Work: Maintenance dredging of S.O Larkis M' quantity from Mahanadi River Channel for one year i.e. for the year 2024-25 including Mobilization / De-mobilization. Estimated cost : Rs. 9,35,00,000/- . Last date of submission of tender on-line bidding till 17:00 hours on 02/08/2024. The technical bids shall be opened at 16:30 hours on 08/08/2024. For further details, please log on to the website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Sd/- Deputy Conservator, Paradip Port Authority  
PPA/PR/22/2024-2025 dttd. 10.07.2024

**PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001)  
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813  
(Contact No. 96461-17606)  
**E-Tender Enquiry No.: 200/MM-ITGM-336(VIII)O&M/GHTP/2024 Dated 17-07-2024**  
Dy. Chief Engineer, Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I/GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat invites e-tender for "Cleaning of tubes of Turbine condenser of 210 MW (KWU) Unit-II and 250 MW Unit-III of GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat with Hydro Jet and water powered bullet cleaners".  
For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 17-07-2024 at 18:00 Hrs. onwards  
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
GHTP-58/24  
76155/12/3132/2023/35805 Dated CHD :- 7/18/2024

**PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001)  
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813  
(Contact No. 9646117609 E-mail: sefet-ghtp@pspc.in)  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tender Enquiry No.: 03/CE-28/FE&T/GHTP/2024 Dated: 19-07-24  
Dy. Chief Engineer / FE&T Circle GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat invites E-Tender for the work to conduct Energy Audit of GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat Unit No.1 to IV having capacities of 2x210 MW + 2x250 MW for the year 2024-25. Detailed NIT and tender specification can be downloaded from website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from dated 19-07-2024 at 17:00 hrs. onwards.  
Note: No corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Details regarding corrigendum will be seen on official website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
GHTP-59/24  
76155/12/3134/2023/35810 Dated CHD :- 7/18/2024



# FTA to boost India-Russia commerce

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Steps such as increasing exports, making local currency trading workable and a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union will help boost trade between India and Russia, think tank GTRI said on Thursday.

India should not worry over the trade deficit, as it is getting crude petroleum oil at cheaper than market rates from Russia and it is also cutting India's overall oil import bill, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

Since the Ukraine war began in February 2022 and the US imposed sanctions on Russia, the trade relationship between India and Russia has shifted significantly.

Exports during the financial year 2020-21 and 2023-24 grew by 59 per cent, while imports surged by about 8,300 per cent, the report said, adding the trade deficit rose from USD 2.8 billion before the war in 2020-21 to USD 57.2 billion at present. It said that the import surge is solely due to India's



strategic procurement of crude oil from Russia influenced by favourable trade terms and Russia's need to find new markets amidst Western sanctions. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Russia visit on July 8-9, India and Russia have set an ambitious bilateral trade target of USD 100 billion by 2030. With current bilateral trade at USD 65.7 billion in 2023-24, the target seems achievable, GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. In 2023-24, India's exports to Russia were 4.3 billion, while imports driven by crude oil stood at USD 61.4

billion. Share of crude oil and petroleum products in imports was 88 per cent. India exports a diverse range of products to Russia including smartphones, shrimp, medicine, meat, tiles, coffee, parts of airplanes and helicopters, chemicals, computers, and fruits. "India has competitive advantage in these products and hence the potential to export more to Russia. India should prepare a product-level strategy to promote exports," Srivastava said. On local currency trade, the report said that trade

cannot be settled in rupee due to limited international use of the Indian rupee and Russia's reluctance to accumulate it beyond a limit.

After the Ukraine war, the US put sanctions on Russia, not allowing it to use SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) pipeline for dollar transactions.

The key question for India is finding the best way to pay Russia the amount equal to USD 60 billion in trade deficit.

"Local currency trading would be the best solution. To facilitate this, India needs to establish a transparent and open currency exchange. This exchange would provide clear, market-determined exchange rates between local currencies like Indian rupee and other currencies such as the Russian rouble, Malaysian ringgit, Thai baht, or Chinese yuan," it said.

It added that this would not only give banks a reliable reference for issuing letters of credit but also help businesses understand currency volatility better. "Countries with currency surpluses, like Russia with

its Indian rupee surplus from oil exports to India, could exchange their surplus for other currencies more efficiently in such a multi-currency exchange platform," it said.

It also suggested making the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) functional.

The INSTC is a 7,200-kilometer multi-modal route linking India with Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe.

"When functional, it would reduce transit time between India and western Russian ports from 45 to 25 days and cut freight costs by 30 per cent compared to the Suez Canal route. INSTC, despite these advantages, has limited use due to underinvestment in infrastructure," it said.

The frequent loading and unloading of cargo along the INSTC and the involvement of sanctioned Iran also pose logistical challenges. Chabahar is a key part of this corridor. India is negotiating the 'India-Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Trade Agreement' with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, and Belarus. Formal talks for the agreement have not yet started.

# Toshiba Group to invest 10 billion Japanese yen in India to expand capacity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Toshiba Group on Thursday said it will invest 10 billion Japanese yen (over Rs 500 crore) to increase the capacity of producing power transmission and distribution equipment in India.

Toshiba Transmission & Distribution Systems (India) Pvt Ltd (TTDI) will increase its capacity of manufacturing power transformers and distribution transformers by about 1.5 times compared to FY2023, over a three-year period from FY2024 to FY2026, it stated. Toshiba Group has positioned power T&D as a focus business and will invest about JPY 10 billion (over Rs 500 crore) in TTDI to expand its capacity.

Hiroshi Furuta, Chairperson and Managing Director, TTDI, said in the statement, "Furthering our commitment to make-in-India and export-from-India, the new investment will improve operational efficiency, increase speed-to-market, and support in expanding our business in India and overseas." With this investment, TTDI will increase its assembly and test line capacity for distribution transformers and



power transformers for the transmission grids and distribution networks.

Enhanced testing capacity for power transformers will represent a significant upgrade, specifically geared towards expanding exports as well as meeting the high demand for 400kV/765kV transformers in the Indian market.

Distribution transformer expansion is aimed at creating a dedicated facility for CRGO (Cold Rolled Grain Oriented) steel processing centre in order to enhance the vertical integration facility, which would help the company reduce the process lead time and enhance quality and safety, the company said. Besides, TTDI will also build a new manufacturing facility

for surge arresters during the first half of FY24 and the products will be commercially available in the market by the second half of the year.

TTDI offers a range of innovative and reliable technologies for the renewable energy sector, including photovoltaic (PV) inverters, power transformers, gas-insulated switchgear (GIS), and inverter duty transformers. TTDI is also focusing on enhancement of GIS, transformers, control relay & substation automation system solutions to applications in energy (renewable sector), data centre for smart cities, and for industry segments like petro chemical plants, refineries and railway.

# Cybersecurity players seek digital security push in Budget for Viksit Bharat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With India looking to embrace artificial intelligence rapidly, cybersecurity players expect that the upcoming Union Budget will include measures to boost safety of the country's digital space through further allocation of funds and incentives.

Innefu Labs, CEO and Co-founder Tarun Wig said the global focus on AI presents a critical juncture for India.

"The AI and ML (machine learning) models can be trained to identify and prevent 'zero-day' attacks. But this will require support from the government (in) nurturing and retaining top cyber talent, and empowering companies to invest in training AI models for cybersecurity," Wig said.

He added that while other nations are busy building their AI infrastructure, India must prioritise on optimum use of AI which could include training AI and ML models for improving our defence and intelligence posture, and to reduce cyber crimes which are on the rise, to identify money laundering networks or using AI to take governance to the far flung villages of the country.

"Adding government support for research and development



initiatives to proven companies in the private sector and not just academia would create a win-win situation. It would attract and retain talent while enabling companies, large and small, to innovate. This, in turn, would foster a digital environment that can support future advancements in AI and other emerging technologies," Wig said. The government had announced a fund worth Rs 1 lakh crore for R&D in sunrise technologies in the interim budget for financial year 2024-25.

IIT Kanpur's Artificial Intelligence and Innovation-Driven Entrepreneurship Centre of Excellence (AIIDE-CoE) incubated Future Crime Research Foundation (FCRF), Co-Founder Shashank Shekhar said investment on cybersecurity is similar to

insurance for digital economies. He said India faces one of the highest number of cyber attacks globally every year. "While the government is making an effort to digitally empower every citizen of the country, it becomes imperative to secure them as well. We request the government to consider building Indian champions in the cybersecurity space to meet the aspiration of Viksit Bharat by 2047," Shekhar said. Futurex, South Asia-Vice President, Ruchin Kumar said it is important to increase funding for cybersecurity training programs to address the workforce skill gap.

"To achieve this, collaborations with educational institutions to develop specialized cybersecurity courses and certifications must be

fostered. We strongly recommend fund allocation specifically for protecting critical infrastructure, such as power grids, transportation networks, and healthcare systems, from cyber threats," he said.

He said that the government should also mandate and fund regular security audits and vulnerability assessments for critical infrastructure sectors. Zeron, Founder, Sanket Sarkar said the government has consistently demonstrated its commitment to this critical industry through strategic investments and supportive policies.

"Reflecting on the past years, it's clear that our digital defenses have been significantly strengthened. I am optimistic that this year's budget will further amplify this focus, with substantial allocations to enhance our cybersecurity infrastructure," he said.

Sarkar said continued prioritisation of cyber resilience and innovation is crucial for defending against evolving threats and driving economic growth. "This budget will not be merely a financial planning; it'll be a bold declaration of India's intent to become a global cybersecurity leader," he said.

# Markets turn negative after hitting fresh record-high levels

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices turned negative soon after hitting new record-high levels in a highly volatile trade on Thursday.

The 30-share BSE Sensex opened on a weak note, but bounced back later and climbed 193.9 points to hit a new record peak of 80,910.45. However, the benchmark failed to hold on to the gains and traded 151.38 points lower at 80,550.97 at 11:22 hours.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty after a weak beginning recovered the early lost ground and climbed 65.9 points to hit a fresh lifetime high of 24,678.90. The Nifty also gave up all the gains and quoted 66.35 points down at 24,546.65.

Among the Sensex pack, Adani Ports, Asian Paints, Tata Steel, NTPC, Power Grid and UltraTech Cement were the biggest laggards. On the contrary, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra and State Bank of India were trading in the positive territory.



In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai were trading lower, while Hong Kong quoted higher.

The US markets ended mostly lower on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.45 per cent to USD 85.45 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,271.45 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

The BSE benchmark climbed 51.69 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at a new lifetime high of 80,716.55 on Tuesday. The NSE Nifty went up by 26.30 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,613.

# Nokia sees double-digit fall in Q2 profit, sales in weak 5G market but sees improved 2nd half

AP ■ HELSINKI

Wireless and fixed-network equipment maker Nokia Thursday reported a double-digit fall in profit and sales in the second quarter due to a continuing weak market as clients are holding off investments in 5G technology.

The Espoo, Finland-based company reported a net profit of 328 million euros (USD 359 million) for the April-June period, down 20 per cent from 409 million euros (USD 447 million) a year earlier. Net income attributable to shareholders was 325 million euros (USD 355 million), down from 410 million euros a year earlier.

Similarly to its Nordic rival Ericsson of Sweden, Nokia has suffered in the past year from operators cutting back on investments into 5G and other telecom technology because of economic uncertainty and high financing costs.

"Our financial performance in the second quarter continued to be impacted by the ongoing market weakness with net sales declining 18 per cent year-on-year in constant currency," Nokia CEO Pekka Lundmark said in a statement. Nokia's sales were down 18 per cent at 4.5 billion euros (USD 4.9 billion)



compared with 5.4 billion euros (USD 5.9 billion) a year earlier.

The Finnish company is one of the world's main suppliers of 5G, the latest generation of broadband technology along with Ericsson, China's Huawei and South Korea's Samsung. Lundmark said that the company's sales would improve in the second half of this year, particularly in its network infrastructure business unit.

"Looking forward, we believe the industry is stabilizing and given the order intake seen in recent quarters we expect a significant acceleration in net sales growth in the second half," he said.

However, in Nokia's mobile network unit, the biggest business entity during the quarter by sales, "the market dynamic remains challenging as operators continue to be cautious" of spending in 5G technology and equipment, Lundmark said.

# Recycling industry body demands zero duty on aluminium scrap imports

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the budget, recycling industry body MRAI has urged the government to remove the import duty on aluminium scrap, saying it will help promote sustainability in the industry.

According to the Material Recycling Association of India (MRAI), the recycling process of aluminium scrap emits only 0.3 million tonnes (MT) of Co2 on per tonne of production compared to 14 tonnes of carbon emissions on the production of 1 MT of aluminium through smelters route which involves maintaining of coal-based capacities for power supply. "Among the key challenges faced by the Indian aluminium recycling industry is 2.5 per cent import duty on aluminium scrap. It is a key raw material for aluminium recycling and the government should make it to zero until the quality material (scrap) is available in sufficient quantity in the domestic market," AI said in a letter to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the full Union Budget for the



financial year 2024-25 in Parliament on July 23.

Many countries have realized the importance of scrap that it is sustainable because of recyclable in nature.

The demand driver for aluminium in the next few years is going to be substantially higher due to India's projected higher growth of GDP and ambitious infrastructure development. The production of primary aluminium metal is also associated with the consumption of large volumes of natural resources, bauxite ore and coal and the generation of large quantities of solid wastes, it noted. "Aluminium recycling has become an important part of aluminium production in India because it is much less energy intensive than the production of primary aluminium," AI said.

Lower per capita aluminium consumption of 2.5 kg in India is also a challenge against a world average of 11

kg, as the recycling industry has to rely more on imports for quality aluminium scrap to meet the shortfall.

"India's aluminium recycling industry plays a pivotal role in harmonising efforts to combat climate change and bolster environmental sustainability. Recycling helps to combat the climate crisis by limiting the use of raw materials, protecting natural resources like bauxite and reducing the waste going into landfills," AI President Sanjay Mehta said.

"We need to take decisive steps here when it comes to its goals towards sustainability and low carbon ecosystem. World over metal scrap, especially Aluminium is considered as the greenest raw material to be used for metal production.

"Having import duties on Aluminium scrap could be retrograde and would decelerate our efforts in reaching sustainability goals," said Dhawal Shah, Senior Vice President, of AI. The association has also sought zero duty on copper scrap and brass scrap which attract 2.5 per cent duty at present, and zinc and lead which have 5 per cent import duty.

# Sales of luxury homes up 27% to 8,500 units in 7 cities in January-June: CBRE

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sales of luxury housing units, each costing Rs 4 crore and above, rose 27 per cent to around 8,500 units during the January-June period across seven major cities in high demand, according to real estate consultant CBRE.

In its report 'India Market Monitor Q2 2024' released on Thursday, CBRE said that India's luxury housing (units priced Rs 4 crore and above) segment maintained strong sales momentum, registering a 27 per cent annual increase in January-June 2024.

"Total sales of luxury units during the January-June period stood at around 8,500 units compared to about 6,700 units during the same period last year," the consultant said. Delhi-NCR, Mumbai and Hyderabad emerged as prominent markets, accounting for nearly 84 per cent of the total luxury housing sales across the top seven cities. Further, Pune recorded a noteworthy increase in luxury sales activity with demand growing nearly six-fold on an annual basis to touch around 1,100



units. Sales in Delhi-NCR rose 14 per cent annually to 3,300 units. Mumbai saw a growth of 14 per cent to 2,500 units. Housing sales in Hyderabad stood at 1,300 units, up 44 per cent annually.

Pune registered sales of 1,100 units, marking a 450 per cent year-on-year increase during this period. In Chennai and Kolkata, sales of luxury housing units, each priced at Rs 4 crore and above, remained flat at 100 units and 200 units, respectively.

significant land acquisitions by developers."

These elements are expected to balance supply and demand dynamics and invigorate market activity, he added.

"The luxury housing segment, particularly for properties priced at INR 4 crore and above, is set to thrive as buyers seek homes that align with their affluent lifestyles. Capital value growth in this segment is projected to stabilise, with an increasing focus on core project fundamentals such as quality, location, and access to essential infrastructure," Magazine said.

Moreover, he said the ongoing mega infrastructure projects across the country, including transportation networks, highways, airports and metro systems, are poised to bolster real estate growth. "We foresee a strong momentum in the housing market for the remainder of the year. This optimism is driven by favourable home buying sentiments, festive season promotions, and

# Ceat net profit rises 7% in Q1; revenue increases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tyre maker Ceat on Thursday said its consolidated net profit increased by 7 per cent to Rs 154 crore in the first quarter ended June 2024.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 144 crore in the April-June period of last fiscal. Revenue increased to Rs 3,193 crore in the first quarter as against Rs 2,935 crore in the year-ago period. Ceat Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

"We are encouraged by the strong growth we've had in the replacement and export segments across all categories during the quarter," Ceat MD & CEO Arnab Banerjee said. Despite facing margin pressure from significant increases in raw material costs and ocean freight, the company is actively mitigating these challenges through strategic price adjustments, he added. "Our strategic focus on premiumising passenger car tyres has begun to yield positive results. Looking ahead, we anticipate continued momentum in volume throughout Q2 and beyond," Banerjee stated.



# FROM EXHAUSTION TO EXUBERANCE: SWIMMER NATARAJ EYES SEMIFINALS IN PARIS OLYMPICS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Standing on the 2023 National Games podium adorned with 10 medals, eight of them gold, ace Indian swimmer Srihari Nataraj was utterly exhausted.

After all, he had been competing non-stop at major events since 2017 when he was just 16, and the relentless competitive grind, coupled with the rigours of training had finally taken a toll on his body.

"I just needed time off to rest because my 2023 season was crazy and so hectic with so many races. I think if I didn't take any time off, my body would have broken down by now," Nataraj told PTI in an interview.

"And it could have led to an injury or I would have lost the drive to train. My body was under so much stress. I kind of just needed a few weeks off just to let my body rest," he added.

Refreshed after the much-needed break, the 23-year-old is ready for his second Olympics, where he will compete in the 100m backstroke event. Nataraj qualified for the Paris Games via the Universality Quota, which allows countries to recommend their two highest-ranked swimmers for the showpiece if no one makes the cut through the regulation process.

Having secured direct qualification for the previous Tokyo Olympics, the entry to the Paris Games through the Universality Quota was not ideal by Nataraj's own admission. But he has opted not to dwell on the disappointment.

"It was annoying and disappointing that I didn't get the qualifying time because I had been training really well. But I'm not really bothered about what



happened," he asserted.

"I got the quota spot. It might be a step back, but I still got the spot. And now I can spend the coming weeks either thinking 'oh, this is not the way I wanted it'. Or I can focus on what I want to do in Paris. So, I'm taking it as motivation."

Since returning from the break, Nataraj has been training better, which resulted in two silver medals at the Mare Nostrum meet in Spain and France in May.

"This season, the training's been so much better than last season. It's so good. I think it's all because of that break," he said.

There have been times when Nataraj

has come close to a podium finish but missed out by a fraction of a second. Some other times, his best performance has not come at the right time.

"I think it just hasn't clicked on race day yet," he conceded.

Nataraj has not been able to improve his best time in the 100m backstroke since 2021, when he clocked 53.77s.

However, he and his coach Nihar Ameen have been able to identify where exactly the Bengaluru swimmer has been lacking.

"I think it's just race execution. I am working on having a little more speed - front end speed and a little more natural speed so that I don't have to put in as much effort on the first 50," he

explained. He has been able to improve his first 50m and claims to have gone "fastest I've ever been" in training.

"We're doing a lot more high intensity explosive short sprints. And we're just hoping that it converts in time and I can open the first 50 a little more effortlessly."

"I've always had good capacity in good second 50m."

Nataraj, who has a season's best of 54.68s, aims to better his personal best time which would put him in semifinal contention at the Paris Games.

"I just have a goal towards trying to get a personal best. And I think if I make a personal best, it puts me in a good spot to be in the semifinals."

# Odisha FC pitted against Jordan and Singapore clubs

AFC WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian club Odisha FC were drawn alongside Ethihad Club (Jordan) and Lion City Sailors FC (Singapore) in Group B of the preliminary stage of the 2024-25 AFC Women's Champions League, following the draw conducted in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

Odisha FC, the champions of the 2023-24 Indian Women's League, will travel to Jordan to play in the preliminary stage, which will be held in a centralised league format from August 25 to 31.

Thirteen sides will contest the preliminary stage, which features four groups - one group of four teams and three groups of three. The four

group winners will qualify for the 12-team group stage, joining the other eight clubs that have qualified directly.

Should Odisha FC top their preliminary stage group and qualify for the next group stage, they will be placed in Group C alongside Urawa Red Diamonds Ladies (Japan), Taichung Blue Whale Women's Football Team (Chinese Taipei), and hosts Ho Chi Minh City Women's FC (Vietnam).

The group stage comprises three groups of four teams and will also be contested in a centralised league format from October 6 to 12.

Clubs were seeded and placed in pots for the draw according to their respective member

association rankings, based on the FIFA women's world ranking (as of March 15, 2024). The top two finishers of each group and the two best third-placed sides will progress to the quarterfinals, to be played on March 22 and 23, 2025.

A knockout stage draw will be conducted prior to the quarterfinals to determine the four pairings, which will be contested in a single-leg format, with the higher-ranked team of each tie to serve as the home side.

This will be followed by a centralised finals, which will see the semi-finals and final - all single-leg ties - being played out from May 21 to 24, 2025, to determine the first ever champions of the tournament.



# F1 driver Magnussen to leave Haas at end of this season

AP ■ KANNAPOLIS (US)

Formula 1 driver Kevin Magnussen will leave Haas at the end of the season when his contract expires, the team said on Thursday.

The 31-year-old Magnussen is competing in his seventh season with the American team, starting 135 grand prix across two spells, from 2017-20 and 2022-24.

The former McLaren and Renault driver achieved a career-high ninth in the drivers' standings for Haas in 2018. He has five points this season.

Haas did not say who is going to replace Magnussen.

"I'm proud to have raced for such a great team of people

these last few years," he said. "While I'm looking forward to the next chapter of my racing career, I remain fully focused on giving everything I've got for the rest of 2024."

On the eve of the Hungarian Grand Prix, team principal Ayao Komatsu said he hopes they can "find a way to keep working together in some capacity."

News of Magnussen's departure came after Oliver Bearman signed a multiyear deal with Haas from 2025 onward. The 19-year old British driver will take the seat vacated by German driver Nico Hulkenberg, who is joining Sauber at the end of the year ahead of its rebranding to Audi for 2026.

# Argentina tops FIFA men's rankings as Govt hits back at critics of team's racist France song

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA)

Argentina was confirmed as the world's No. 1 team in the FIFA men's rankings on Thursday, as the national government doubled down on defending the players who celebrated winning the Copa America by singing a racist song targeting No. 2-ranked France.

The fallout of the chant sung late on Sunday in Miami - which mocked the African heritage of some France players - continued four days later, including a rebuke to Argentina's critics by the vice president in its far-right government.

Argentina's government on Wednesday fired one of its leading sports officials who urged Lionel Messi and the president of the Argentine Football Association to apologize.

The sports under-secretary, Julio Garro, spoke after FIFA said it was looking into the incident and English club Chelsea started a disciplinary process



against its midfielder Enzo Fernandez. He broadcast the footage on social media from the Argentina team bus in Florida.

Fernandez later published an apology on his Instagram account, which disappeared by Thursday, saying he was "truly sorry. That video, that moment,

those words, do not reflect my beliefs or my character."

However, a defiant post by the vice president of Argentina, Victoria Villarruel, on social media hit back at the country's critics.

"No country with a colonial history is going to put us down for a song sung on

a field nor for speaking a truth that nobody wants to admit," Villarruel wrote.

"Enough of pretending to be offended, hypocrites. Enzo I am with you, Messi thanks for everything! Argentines always keep your heads high! Long live Argentina!"

Villarruel said Argentina's history had been forged by people of all races: "We never forced our way of life on anyone, nor will we tolerate that someone tries to do the same to us."

The song refers to France players being "all from Angola," having parents from Nigeria and Cameroon, and also includes an offensive reference to Kylian Mbappé.

One of Fernandez's French teammates at Chelsea, Wesley Fofana, who is Black, described the video as "uninhibited racism." France players Jules Koundé and Mike Maignan also posted critical comments about the Argentina incident.

# After no men picked for Olympics in artistic swimming, Italy's Minisini says he's ending career

AP ■ ROME

With no men picked to compete in artistic swimming at the Paris Olympics, where they are eligible for the first time, a former world champion is ending his career this week.

At the Italian national championships, four-time worlds gold medalist Giorgio Minisini said he is competing for the last time at age 28.

"Obsession is a young man's game," Minisini, who was left off the Italian Olympic team in April, wrote on his Instagram

account Tuesday. Minisini and Bill May of the United States were the two most likely Olympic pioneers aiming to be picked for Paris as the first men to compete in artistic swimming. The sport debuted at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics as synchronized swimming.

However, the 96 athletes picked by 18 different nations for the Olympics were all women.

"World Aquatics is very disappointed that no male artistic swimmers have been selected for Paris 2024," the



governing body said. "This should have been a landmark moment for the sport."

The rules change by World Aquatics in December 2022 allowed up to two men to be selected in an eight-athlete

squad for the Olympic open team event. The only other medal event in Paris is women's duet.

Minisini specializes in the mixed duet event which is not yet on the Olympic program,

and missed selection to the team event.

May was on the U.S. Team that won silver and bronze medals in team acrobatic routine at the past two world championships. At age 45, he did not make the Olympic team last month.

"All of us in the artistic swimming community need to work even harder to progress opportunities for male athletes in the sport," said World Aquatics, which hopes to add a mixed duet event for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

# Even with restrictive rules, swimsuit wars heat up in an Olympic year

PTI ■ PARIS

The iconic LZR Racer, the swimsuit that Michael Phelps wore while winning eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics, is still revered around Speedo's design center.

It serves as a reminder of just how much a suit can push a swimmer to greater heights.

"In so many ways, that was the golden era," said Coora Lavezzo, the head of innovation at Speedo's Aqualab in London. "We've got those suits upstairs, and even though I wasn't there at the time, I'm fascinated by them and just how we can get back to a smidge of that former glory."

Of course, the rules these days are much more of a hindrance to swimsuit designers, the result of a wild summer 15 years ago in which rubberized attire was all the rage, leading

to 43 world records being set at the championships in Rome.

The international governing body, now known as World Aquatics, decided the polyurethane suits - many of them covering nearly the entire body - were making a mockery of the sport. So the organization hastily imposed strict new rules requiring textile fabrics and limiting the amount of body coverage from the hip to just above the knees for men, while women's racing attire cannot extend past the shoulder or cover the neck.

For coaches such as Bob Bowman, who worked with Phelps over his entire career and was on hand in Rome for a speed show that bordered on a farce, the rules are just fine the way they are.

"Everybody is on a level playing field," he said. "We're still breaking world records in these suits. The sport is

moving forward."

But major swimsuit designers such as Speedo, TYR and arena are pushing for the guidelines to be liberalized.

They pump millions of dollars into the sport, and would love nothing more than to be allowed to come up with revolutionary new designs that lead to vastly improved performances. But as things stand now, their hands are largely tied. Faster times come in tiny increments.

The suits remain an important element for any swimmer's performance, but the impact is nothing like it was during the rubber era.

"I think a lot of our sport is just mental," U.S. Olympian Hunter Armstrong said. "It's just about feeling good in the water."

The manufacturers are desperate to do more. "When the pushback came



after those world championships in Rome, (World Aquatics) freaked out and they said we need rules quickly, we need to do something," said Greg Steyger, the head of innovation and design at Italian-based arena.

"Unfortunately, that was in such a hurry that those rules are not the right rules for sure. But they've stuck to them,

they've defended them, they've done everything to keep them." Rachel Ripley, the director of merchandising at TYR, said her company is constantly lobbying for an easing of the restrictions.

"It's been pretty status quo for 15 years," she said. "There hasn't really been much push or shake-up. It's something that I think we constantly talk

about, but it requires more than just the manufacturers to make that change happen."

Even with rules as they are, the swimsuit manufacturers say they are still able to come up with innovative creations that can make a crucial difference in a sport where races are often decided by mere hundredths of a second.

For Speedo, the new Fastskin LZR Intent and LZR Valor suits were developed through a partnership with Lamora, a company better known for protective coatings that are used to extend the life of satellites in outer space.

Then there's TYR's Vanzo suit, which is made with a frictionless yarn that evolved from military uses, most notably in socks worn by infantry soldiers who do a lot of marching.

Not to be outdone, arena has come up with the

POWERSKIN Primo that it bills as the "world's first tensoelastic suit," made of a trademarked fabric known as Hyperforce that supposedly provides the maximum amount of body compression - a key element in buoyancy - but far more flexibility than previous designs.

"You're talking about maybe a 1% difference in a race," said Olympic gold medalist Ryan Murphy, America's top men's backstroke swimmer and a longtime Speedo-endorsed athlete. "Any little thing we can get to improve times, improve body position in the water, assist your technique, you're really looking for that."

Most swimmers seem content with the state of affairs, though everyone is looking for ways to go a bit faster to gain that little extra edge.

"The innovation should be in other areas, like maybe the

starting blocks," Italian swimmer Nicolò Martinenghi said.

Sarah Sjöström of Sweden certainly had no complaints about the polyurethane suits allowed back in 2009, which she wore while winning the 100-meter butterfly in a world-record time a few weeks before her 16th birthday.

But she also remembers the downside.

"The biggest stress for me back then and as well as other swimmers was like getting the suit on," Sjöström said. "It's a lot easier nowadays to put on the suit, but they still give a good compression, which is really important to have a good feeling in the water."

She said the current guidelines also keep prices more affordable for a wider range of swimmers, though a high-tech female suit can still go for around \$650.



# INDIA BEGIN WOMEN'S ASIA CUP DEFENCE WITH CLASH AGAINST PAK

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The Women's Asia Cup is set for a blockbuster start when defending champions India take on arch-foes Pakistan in a prime-time clash here on Friday, with the eight competing teams hoping to firm up their combinations ahead of the T20 World Cup in October. Harmanpreet Kaur's India are the team to beat going into this iteration of the Asia Cup, having won the competition three out of four times in the T20 version and each of the four times in 50-overs format. Additionally, India are also the most successful team in the Women's Asia Cup T20 with 17 wins in 20 matches. They beat Bangladesh in the final of the last edition in 2022. India's record against Pakistan has also been stellar in the

shortest format with 11 wins against three defeats in 14 matches so far and Kaur's team will lean on it in addition to the rich form shown in recent outings to clinch the Group A clash here. While India are coming off a 1-1 draw against South Africa earlier this month with the second of the three T20s being washed out, Pakistan will be short on game-time as well as confidence since their last outing was in England in May when the hosts blanked them 3-0. Smriti Mandhana's rich form with the bat will be India's greatest weapon at the top of the order but the biggest gain from recent all-format outings has been the way their bowling has shaped up, with pacers and spinners putting on a combined show. India pacer Pooja Vastrakar's eight wickets across three

outings against South Africa indicate her form but additionally, Radha Yadav's successful return to the mix of spinners has been encouraging. The spin attack also includes Deepti Sharma, Sajeevan Sajana and the sprightly Shreyanka Patil. Even though Pakistan retained Nida Dar as skipper for the Asia Cup, the squad has undergone significant overhaul since the debacle in England. Three players, Iram Javed, Omaira Sohail, Syeda Aroob Shah, who have not played any matches so far this year, were included with the uncapped Tasmia Rubab while six others were dropped.

**Nepal, UAE look to make their mark**  
Also placed in Group A are Nepal and the United Arab Emirates who will face off



here earlier in the day at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium. The top two teams from the

group will play in the semifinals. While Nepal are returning to the competition for the first

time since 2016, UAE are set for their second consecutive appearance and will be high on confidence having won

more than half of their matches this year. The lack of game-time will be a concern for Nepal whose last outing was in mid February when they lost to Malaysia in the Asian Cricket Council's Women's Premier Cup.

UAE were last seen in action in May when they lost in the T20 World Cup Qualifier semifinal to Sri Lanka.

**TEAMS (FROM):**  
**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Uma Chetry (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Deepti Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, D Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajeevan Sajana.  
**Pakistan:** Nida Dar (c), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali, Najiha Alvi

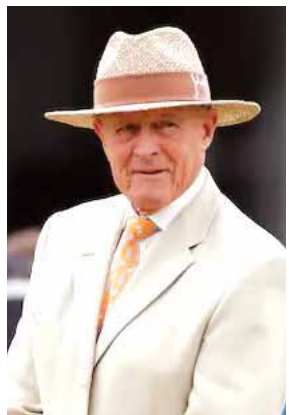
(wk), Nashra Sandhu, Omaira Sohail, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasmia Rubab, Tuba Hassan.

**Match starts at 7pm (IST)**  
**Nepal:** Indu Barma (capt), Sita Rana Magar, Rajmati Airee, Rubina Chhetry, Dolly Bhatta, Mamta Chaudhary, Kabita Joshi, Kabita Kunwar, Kritika Marasini, Puja Mahato, Bindu Rawal, Roma Thapa, Sabnam Rai, Samnjana Khadka, Kajal Sreshtha (wk).  
**UAE:** Esha Oza (c), Theertha Satish (wk), Emily Thomas, Samaira Dharnidharka, Kavisha Egodage, Lavanya Keny, Khushi Sharma, Indhuja Nandakumar, Rinita Rajith, Rishitha Rajith, Vaishnav Mahesh, Suraksha Kotte, Heena Hotchandani, Mehak Thakur, Rithika Rajith.

## Geoffrey Boycott undergoes successful surgery

PTI ■ LONDON

England cricketing great Sir Geoffrey Boycott has undergone a successful surgery to remove a tumour from his throat, his daughter Emma said. The former England batter had undergone extensive chemotherapy for the same in 2002. But in May, the 83-year-old learnt his cancer had returned.



"Just to let everyone know my Father, Geoffrey, has successfully come out of surgery this evening after a 3 hour operation to remove his throat cancer. "Yet to see him but surgeon says it went well. He asked that I post an update," Boycott's daughter Emma tweeted from the cricketer's account on Wednesday. In his illustrious career spanning 1964 to 1982, Boycott scored 100 first-class hundreds while amassing over 8,000 runs in 108 Tests at an average of nearly 48. Former Australia player and head coach Darren Lehmann reacted to the news along with ex-England players Alan Butcher and Michael Vaughan, who posted a red heart on X. "Thanks for the update,

please pass on our thoughts to the whole family and glad the surgery went well," Lehmann wrote, while Butcher wrote, 'Great news.' While announcing his diagnosis last month Boycott had said, "In the last few weeks, I have had an MRI Scan, CT Scan, a PET Scan, and two biopsies, and it has now been confirmed I have throat cancer and will require an operation." "From past experience, I realize that to overcome cancer a second time I will need excellent medical treatment and quite a bit of luck, and even if the operation is successful, every cancer patient knows they have to live with the possibility of it returning. So I will just get on with it and hope for the best," he added.



## Quintal becomes 1st Indian rider to compete at World Superbike

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rider Kavin Quintal is all set to make a historic debut at the WorldSBK SSP300 competitions and become the first Indian rider to participate in a World Superbike Championship. Thanks to the opportunity provided by the Irish team, Team#109 Retro Traffic Kawasaki and its management company Gaman Racing Global Service, Quintal's entry was accepted for the SSP event in the fourth round which begins at Most, Czech Republic on Friday. SBK, founded in 1988, is an event for heavily modified production sports motorcycles and consists of a series of rounds held on permanent racing facilities. The 19-year Chennai star, Quintal, will be filling in for the Irish team's main rider, Spaniard Daniel Mogeda, who suffered an injury after leading the Supersport 300 class, in an unfortunate crash that paved the way for the Irish team to

rope in the Indian. Quintal, a world-class rider, is currently competing in the European Stock Championship within the FIM JuniorGP and in the Asia Road Racing Championship. In the three rounds of JuniorGP, Quintal had a top-10 finish. As a rider, who took his baby steps at 13, he was the youngest to earn points in the Indian National events. He went on to win the Talent Cup twice, in 2021 and 2023, in India. Later, after the Asia Talent Cup events, he soon blossomed into a mature rider, moving to Europe. "It is a great opportunity that I will try to learn and enjoy at the same time. I will be able to show my maximum level together with a great team that surrounds this structure. I would like to thank the team for this opportunity," Quintal said. The practice sessions will be on Friday followed by a race each on Saturday and Sunday at Most, Czech Republic.

**महारा हरियाणा**  
**नॉन-स्टॉप हरियाणा**  
**हम हरियाणवी**  
**बिना खर्ची-बिना पर्ची सरकारी नौकरी पाते हैं**

अब पारदर्शी ढंग से हो रही हैं भर्तियां, ना भाई-भतीजावाद, ना सिफारिश, ना जात-पात, ना क्षेत्रवाद

पिछले 10 साल में प्रदेश के 1.32 लाख युवाओं को योग्यता के आधार पर मिली सरकारी नौकरियां

**50,000 और भर्तियां द्रुत गति से जारी**

सूचना, जन सम्पर्क एवं भाषा विभाग, हरियाणा | [www.prharyana.gov.in](http://www.prharyana.gov.in) | [Follow us on](#)