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MONEY 10 SENSEX, NIFTY SETTLE FLAT AFTER HITTING FRESH LIFETIME HIGH

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NAGAL MAKES FIRST ROUND EXIT FROM WIMBLEDON 12 SPORTS

# STAMPEDE KILLS OVER 125 IN HATHRAS

## Tragedy follows satsang CM orders probe, announces ex-gratia; rushes officials to monitor medical aid

PNS ■ HATHRAS/LUCKNOW

Over a 125 devotees died while nearly 150 were injured in a stampede that broke out at satsang event in Phulrai village under the Sikandraro Kotwali limits in Hathras on Tuesday evening.

According to inputs, the stampede happened in the evening soon after 'Bhole Baba' (Baba Narayan Hari) was escorted out of the venue, at the conclusion of the satsang. Unconfirmed reports said many devotees fainted at the venue due to heat and humidity. In a stampede which followed, many were trampled to death as the exits were narrow. The satsang was being organised in a field.

### PM expresses sorrow, announces ex-gratia for next of kin of dead

New Delhi (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed profound sorrow over the stampede in Hathras and announced Rs 2 lakh ex-gratia for the next of kin of the dead and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

Amidst his reply to a two-day debate on the motion of thanks on the President's address to both Houses of Parliament, Modi condoled the death. "In the midst of discussions, I have also been given sad news. It has come to my attention that there have been many tragic deaths in the stampede in Hathras, UP," PM Modi said in Lok Sabha. "I express my condolences to those who lost their lives in this incident. I hope for the speedy recovery of all the injured," he said.

The PM Office (PMO) announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each deceased in the mishap in Hathras. "The injured would be given Rs 50,000," the PMO said in a post on X.

sitting among five or six bodies in a truck. Another picture showed a man and a woman lying lifeless in another vehicle. Etah Chief Medical Officer Dr. Umesh Kumar Tripathi, earlier confirmed that of the 27 bodies brought to the post-mortem house, 25 were that of females. The state government sprung into action once news of the tragedy reached Lucknow. The State Government announced ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of those killed and Rs 50,000 for those injured in the stampede accident. A team of ADG Agra and Aligarh Commissioner has been formed to probe into the incident and submit a report in 24 hours.

"The loss of life in the unfortunate accident in Hathras district is extremely sad and heart-wrenching. My condolences are with the bereaved family," the CM said. He added that instructions have been given to the concerned officials to conduct relief and rescue operations on a war footing and to provide proper treatment to the injured. The CM asked ministers Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary and Sandeep Singh to visit the spot immediately and directed the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of the State to reach the incident site. Ambulances were rushed to the venue later as the administration swung into action. Medical facilities in Aligarh, Etah, Kasganj and Agra had been alerted to provide timely medical aid.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, SP leader Akhilesh Yadav and several other leaders condoled the loss of lives and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"The news of the death of many devotees, including women and children, in the accident in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh is heart-rending. I express my deepest condolences to those who lost their family members and pray for the speedy recovery of those injured," President Murmu said in a post on X in Hindi. The Uttar Pradesh government said an FIR will be registered against the organisers of the programme, permission for which had been granted by the local administration. The real name of Bhole Baba is said to be Baba Narayan Hari, who belongs to the Bahadur hamlet of Patiyali Tehsil in Etah. He was an employee in the Intelligence Bureau but left the job 26 years ago to turn towards spirituality. His followers hail from Western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttarakhand. The posters put up at the venue showed the names of organisers as Devprakash Madhukas (engineer), Mahesh Chandra, Anar Singh, Sanju Yadav, Chandradev, and Ramprakash.



## Outside Hathras hospital, bodies lay on the floor, loud wails pierce the air

PTI ■ HATHRAS

Bodies lay scattered at a medical centre in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district on Tuesday as people milled around them, wiping away tears and consoling one another. The heartbreaking scenes unfolded outside the district's Sikandra Rao Trauma Centre, where victims, dead or unconscious, of the stampede that occurred at a 'satsang' in Phulrai village, were brought in ambulances, trucks and cars. A woman sat crying among five or six bodies in a truck, urging people to help her get the body of her daughter out of the vehicle. A video clip showed a man and a woman lying lifeless in a different vehicle. Many of the injured were seen lying near the entrance of the local government hospital surrounded by anxious relatives. Locals blamed the administration's negligence for the tragedy.

As the hours went by, the official estimate of the fatalities jumped and the crowds outside the trauma centre and the mortuary swelled. According to a senior district official, 50 to 60 people, mostly women, are believed killed in the stampede and several more injured. "There are almost 100-200 casualties and there was only one doctor at the hospital. There was no facility for oxygen. Some are still breathing but there are no proper treatment facilities," an agitated youth said outside the hospital. Eyewitness Shakuntala Devi told PTI Videos that the stampede took place while people were leaving the venue at the end of the 'satsang'. "Outside, there was a road built on a height over a drain. People fell atop each other," she said. The stampede apparently occurred due to overcrowding, the Sikandra Rao police station

SHO said. According to officials, the government has formed a team comprising the Agra additional director general of police and the divisional commissioner of Aligarh to probe the incident. Speaking to media persons, District Magistrate Ashish Kumar said it was a private function for which the permission was granted by the sub-divisional magistrate. The local administration provided security outside the venue while the internal arrangement was to be looked after by the organisers, he added. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath The Uttar Pradesh government said an FIR will be registered against the organisers of the programme. Adityanath also directed the district administration to arrange for proper treatment of those injured and immediately take them to hospitals. He wished them a speedy recovery.

### CM likely to visit Hathras today

Lucknow (PTI): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is likely to visit Hathras on Wednesday in the wake of the stampede during a religious congregation in which over 50 persons have lost their lives, a senior government official said.

The official said the UP chief minister is taking stock of the situation round the clock. UP Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh and DGP Prashant Kumar have reached the spot.

The statement also said the chief minister is holding a meeting with senior officials at his residence. Adityanath is in constant touch with three ministers, the chief secretary and the DGP, and sent them to the spot, it said.

# Modi takes 'balak buddhi' jibe at Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said people have given his Government a mandate for stability and continuity for the third consecutive term after seeing its work of 10 years and accused the Congress of trying to build a narrative that it has defeated the BJP-led NDA in the Lok Sabha polls.

Replying to a two-day debate on the President's address to both Houses of Parliament, he also accused the Congress of working towards creating economic anarchy in the country. Modi also condoled the loss of lives in Hathras in between his speech. Modi singled out Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, saying the House witnessed the wailing of a person with "balak buddhi (childish behaviour)" who tried to gain sympathy without disclosing the wrongs he had committed. "Images of our Gods cannot be used for personal political interests. They coined phrases like 'Hindu terrorism', their ally likened this religion to dengue; country will never forgive them," Modi said taking a swipe on Rahul's speech, the content of which was expunged early in the day. "This is the first time that the Congress has not crossed 100 seats for three consecutive times. Instead of conceding defeat, they are being arrogant. They are trying to build a narrative that they have beaten us," Modi said in the Lok Sabha amid vociferous



Prime Minister Narendra Modi reacts as he replies to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Lok Sabha during the ongoing Parliament session, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

protests by the Opposition. The Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die after two long hours PM's speech and a resolution accepted by the Speaker moved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to condemn the continuous disruption by Opposition when the PM spoke. Modi will reply to the similar debate on thanks to President's speech in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. Before the Prime Minister's reply, Opposition members wanted Speaker Om Birla to allow the MPs from Manipur to speak in the House but he said a member from the northeastern State had

already spoken on Monday. They then trooped into the Well of the House, drawing a sharp rebuke from Birla. Modi said an attempt was made to mislead Parliament on the Agnipath scheme and minimum support price for farm produce. The PM said the people of the country had seen the dedication with which his Government served them for 10 years. "In our third term, we will work at triple the speed. Our third term means we will put in thrice the strength. In our third term, we will ensure three times the results," Modi said.

"The people of the country have given us this mandate after testing us on every criterion. The people have seen our track record of 10 years. The people have seen that we have worked with dedication for the welfare of the poor, fulfilling the mantra of 'public service is God's service'," the PM said. The Prime Minister said he can understand the pain of some, who despite spreading lies and misleading the people, had to face a massive defeat in the Lok Sabha elections. "People have chosen us in this biggest election exercise. I can understand the pain of

some people that despite running falsehoods, they were comprehensively defeated," he said, amid chants of "justice for Manipur" by Opposition members. The Prime Minister said India's prestige has increased and the country is being looked up to by the world. Modi said before 2014, people had lost self confidence. "When there is a lack of confidence, it becomes difficult for the person and the country to stand up. The common people used to say this country cannot achieve anything. Only news of scams prevailed," the PM said.

# Rahul urges Speaker to restore expunged remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The expunging on Tuesday of certain remarks laced with controversial religious references made by Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi during his fiery speech in the Lok Sabha a day earlier, targeting BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, prompted Rahul to urge Speaker Om Birla to restore the expunged statements. "This selective expunging defies logic, Rahul stated." Certain remarks the Congress leader made during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Lok Sabha on Monday have been expunged. A defiant Rahul said truth can be expunged in the world of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but not in reality, hours after significant parts of his Lok Sabha speech were deleted by the Chair. "Whatever I had to say, I have said and that is the truth. They can expunge as much as they want, but the truth will prevail," Rahul told reporters in Parliament complex.

In a letter to Birla, Rahul has stated that removing his considered remarks from records goes against the very tenets of Parliamentary democracy and that they should be restored. Rahul cited BJP MP Anurag



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, in New Delhi on Tuesday

## LoP for debate on NEET in House

New Delhi: In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi requested the Government to facilitate a debate on NEET in the House on Wednesday. "I believe it would be fitting if you were to lead a debate on NEET in students' interest," Rahul

Chair to take cognisance of her notice. Under Direction 115 of the Speaker, a member wishing to point out any mistake or inaccuracy in a statement made by a Minister or any other member can, before referring to the matter in the House, write to the Speaker pointing out the particulars of the mistake or the inaccuracy and seek permission to raise the issue. The member may place before the Speaker such evidence as she or he

He said the Opposition's request for a discussion on NEET was declined in both Houses of Parliament on June 28 as well as on Monday, and added that the Speaker had assured the Opposition that he would discuss the matter with the Government. PNS

Continued on Page 8

# Shopowner booked for abetment to suicide

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A case of abetment to suicide has been registered in connection with the incident where Sanjay Kumar Agrawal, a shopowner in Aminabad, committed suicide. A spokesman from the media cell of Lucknow police commissioner stated that the case was filed against Dhruv Kumar Sahu on Monday based on a complaint from the deceased's family. The case has been registered under Section 108 of BNS (equivalent to section 306 of IPC).

Sanjay Agrawal, a grocer, allegedly took his own life after enduring prolonged harassment and bullying from another shopowner Dhruv Kumar Sahu. According to his family, Dhruv was involved in a business committee where traders pooled money for business expansion and related expenses, but he allegedly withheld money owed to Sanjay. The family claimed Dhruv exerted pressure on Sanjay, threatening him and refusing to return money he had taken. They also mentioned Dhruv forced Sanjay to provide a blank cheque and filmed the incident. Sanjay, described as a person who easily got nervous during confrontations, was allegedly coerced by Dhruv not to demand repayment of the BC money.

Sanjay Agrawal (54), a resident of Model House locality, was found hanging from the ceiling

A SPOKESMAN FROM THE MEDIA CELL OF LUCKNOW POLICE COMMISSIONER STATED THAT THE CASE WAS FILED AGAINST DHRUV KUMAR SAHU ON MONDAY BASED ON A COMPLAINT FROM THE DECEASED GROCER'S FAMILY

of a room with a dupatta around his neck around 5 am on Monday. His brother Arun Agrawal and other family members brought him down and rushed him to Civil Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. In his police complaint, Arun stated that a suicide note was recovered from Sanjay's pocket. "Sanjay wrote in the suicide note that he was ending his life following harassment and bullying by shopowner Dhruv Kumar Sahu, and that his family was not responsible for any money Dhruv claimed from me," Arun said. He further explained that Sanjay mentioned in the note how Sahu intensified the harassment and threatened dire consequences. "My brother was severely stressed due to Sahu's harassment, which led him to take this extreme step. He clearly stated in the note that it was

due to Sahu's harassment and threats," Arun claimed.

## YOUTH DIES IN MISHAP

A youth was killed, and his friend sustained critical injuries in a road mishap in the Sushant Golf City police station area. The incident occurred on June 15, but a case was registered on Wednesday after the deceased's family filed a complaint.

According to reports, Ajay Singh Rawat (22) of Telibagh, along with his friend Arsha, was travelling to Chinhat on a scooter. They took the Kisan Path route and near Indira Dam, a speeding four-wheeler knocked their scooter from the opposite direction. The car driver fled the scene after the collision, leaving the victims unattended and bleeding from their wounds. Some time later, passersby noticed the victims and rushed them to a hospital, where Ajay was declared dead. Arsha was admitted to a private hospital in Gomti Nagar. The police registered a case under relevant sections of the previous IPC, as the incident occurred before July 1.

In another incident, an unidentified man, aged around 45 years, was found dead under the flyover near Naka crossing in the Naka police station area on Wednesday. Police said the deceased was Muslim. They sent the body for autopsy. They believe the man was a beggar who frequented the area and are making efforts to ascertain his identity.

# Car mechanic electrocuted at garage

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A mechanic at a car garage in Thakurganj police station area was electrocuted while attempting to switch on a fan. The victim, Ayush (18) from New Haiderganj, worked at a garage owned by Iliyas. While repairing a car, he tried to switch on the fan. In the process, a wire touched his hand, resulting in a fatal electric shock. Despite efforts to intervene, Ayush could not be revived. He was rushed to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. Ayush, originally from Gorakhpur, had recently passed High School and left studies to work at the garage to earn a living.

In another incident, a labourer working at a house construction site suffered a fatal electric shock after accidentally touching an overhead wire of an LT line. Amrendra, from Kakori, was installing shuttering for roof laying work on the first floor of the house when the incident occurred. He was immediately taken to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. Amrendra's brother alleged negligence on the part of the house owner for not moving the LT line from the vicinity of the construction site or covering it with a plastic pipe.

## DUPED

Unidentified miscreants defrauded a scientist from the Forensic Science Laboratory of Rs 40,000 by swapping his ATM card in Gudamba. A case was registered on Tuesday. Reports indicate that the scientist, Anoop Kumar of Gudamba, had gone to withdraw cash from an ATM booth and found two youths present inside. The youths told him he had not completed his transaction and asked him to cancel it by inserting his ATM card again. "I didn't suspect their mala fide intentions and inserted the card four times. I did not get any money but later received a message about the deduction of Rs 40,000," he said. The police have registered a case and started an investigation. In another case of monetary fraud, a man was duped of over Rs 1 lakh in Nagam. The victim, Shyam Kumar of Khargapur in Nagam, reported receiving messages about the withdrawal of the said amount through 19 transactions. "My SIM malfunctioned on June 24, and my mobile was not working that day. Later, the SIM's functioning was restored, and I received these messages. I went to the bank to inquire and was told that a sum of Rs 1.08 lakh was withdrawn from my account," he said. A case has been registered in this regard and investigations are on.



BJP workers protesting Rahul Gandhi's remark on Hindus near the Congress office in Lucknow on Tuesday

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# LDA issues directives to safeguard properties during construction

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) on Tuesday issued directives to developers and property owners to take adequate measures while digging the ground for new foundations to prevent damage to people or nearby structures. This was announced by Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi. The decision follows the VC's ban on basement construction, imposed on July 1 until further notice, to protect pub-

lic safety and prevent property damage. The VC also instructed zonal officers and executive engineers to inspect ongoing construction sites to ensure developers are implementing safety measures. He emphasised that strict action, including blacklisting, should be taken against those who fail to comply. Developers have been directed to install sandbags and RCC retaining walls around their proposed foundations to prevent rainwater stagnation and soil erosion.

The VC stated that it is the responsibility of the development authority to protect others' properties by enforcing strict measures to curb the arbitrary actions of builders. He noted that in the past, foundations of existing buildings or houses were damaged due to developers' failure to take basic precautions during excavation or basement planning. This is the first time the VC has issued directives specifically to prevent soil erosion, water stagnation, and to safeguard public interest.

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

Inform that by mistake my son's name was wrongly mentioned in some documents as Shivansh Kumar but his actual name is Shivansh Chaudhary. In future he will be known as Shivansh Chaudhary son of Ajay Kumar R/O 42B, Nr. Sai Chetna Mandir, Sant Puram, Indiranagar, Lucknow

NOTICE

I have changed my name from SANTOSH KUMARI ARORA ALIAS CHANCHAL to CHANCHAL KUMAR. In future I shall be known as CHANCHAL KUMAR. W/o Prem Nath Kumar, 111A, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Near KP College, Prayagraj

सूचना

सूचित करती हूँ कि पहले मेरा नाम साहिया साजिद खान था। अब मुझे साहिया खान के नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाये। साहिया खान पुत्री मो. साजिद खान निवासी 258/31 नाना महल रोड समद पहलवान का अखाड़ा लखनऊ

NOTICE

I, SMRITI PANDEY W/o Army No. 15186299A Rank NK(RST) SUSHIL KUMAR PANDEY Unit 641 (SATA) BTY of C/o 56 APO. I have changed my name from SMRITI KUMARI to SMRITI PANDEY due to wrong declaration signed. Both name SMRITI KUMARI and SMRITI PANDEY pertains to one and the same person.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Mohd. Jafar to Mohd. Zafar Ansari. In future I shall be known as Mohd. Zafar Ansari. Mohd. Zafar Ansari s/o Mohd. Aslam, 17/131, Ram Narayan Bazar, Kanpur.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Mohammad Rehan to Mohammad Rehan Shamsi S/o Mohammad Iqbal Shamsi R/o 16/17-D, Civil Line's Kanpur nagar-01. In future I would be known & recognise by this name only.

NOTICE

I, Mrs. Uma Gupta, 11/6 Juhl Safed Colony, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur. My husband Sanjay Gupta had FDR no. K/P 3253269 & K/P 3491247 of HDFC Bank, Padam Tower, civil lines, Kanpur Nagar is Lost in which I Uma Gupta is nominee. Anyone who finds it should submit it within 14 days to my address Raman House, H.T. Parekh Marg, 169 Backway Reclamation, Church Gate, Mumbai - 400020

# Growing number of e-rickshaws add to traffic chaos

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

The Polytechnic crossing, one of the city's key intersections, is a hive of traffic chaos, particularly during peak hours. This crossing connects Gontinagar, Munshipulia, Faizabad Road, and Indiranagar, and endures significant traffic congestion. Efforts by various government departments have slightly alleviated the traffic snarls that once plagued the area, but the growing number of e-rickshaws is now exacerbating the problem.

A glance reveals e-rickshaws clustered near the rotary, waiting for passengers instead of maintaining the mandatory 50-metre distance from the crossing. A traffic constable stands by, making no attempt

to redirect them. Notably, the Polytechnic-Indiranagar road prohibits e-rickshaw movement, yet these vehicles navigate it with ease, ignoring regulations. Barriers have been installed on two sides, primarily towards Faizabad Road and Munshipulia Road, to organise autos/tempos, but no such measures exist on the Gontinagar and Indiranagar sides. Consequently, vehicles are parked haphazardly, adding to the chaos.

The construction of a flyover a few metres from the crossing towards Munshipulia further complicates the traffic flow. Pedestrians contribute to the disorder, walking through traffic instead of using the foot overbridge built for their safety. Although the number of vendors selling food and water

near the rotary has decreased, their presence still encroaches on the space intended for traffic movement.

Expressed frustration over the e-rickshaws, a regular commuter remarked: "They are everywhere on the road and cause significant problems. Earlier, auto-rickshaws cluttered the turning from Gontinagar to Indiranagar, but fortunately, a one-way system has eased traffic at that point."

On why no efforts were being made to remove e-rickshaws from the rotary, a traffic official cited their overwhelming numbers.

"Their numbers are too high. As soon as we ask them to move, others take their place. We have implemented barriers on two sides as a pilot project to streamline them, but their

sheer numbers are staggering. Running e-rickshaws has become a booming business, with some owners operating 10-12 vehicles," he explained. DCP, Traffic, Kamlesh Dixit acknowledged that e-rickshaws and roadways buses contribute to the snarls. He noted that efforts are underway to regulate e-rickshaw movement. "There are 50,000 e-rickshaws in the city, and we are working to reduce their numbers and define their routes. However, their increasing numbers pose a significant challenge. The public prefers e-rickshaws for their convenience and last-mile connectivity. We have requested the ARTO to halt further registrations of e-rickshaws. Additionally, while we are implementing route regulations, many e-rickshaw drivers have gone to court, claim-

ing harassment due to their economic status," he added. He also mentioned that roadways and private buses contribute to the issues at the crossing, with solutions yet to be implemented.

Meanwhile, a meeting was convened in the Smart City Auditorium and chaired by Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob on Monday with the objective of ensuring a robust system for pothole-free roads and smooth traffic. The divisional commissioner emphasised that as per government instructions, the roads in all districts of the division should be made pothole-free, and the work on roads under construction should be carried out as part of a campaign. She stressed that all the officials concerned must ensure prompt action in this regard.

# Two brothers killed in house wall collapse

**Lucknow:** Two brothers lost their lives when the wall of a house collapsed due to heavy rains at a village in Payagpur area in Bahraich, police said on Tuesday. Vishram (16) and Aman (10) were killed when the wall of a house collapsed at around 5 am in Parsoli Trikoli village, they said. Payagpur SHO Karunakar Pandey said the two bodies were taken out from the debris and sent for post-mortem. The victims' family will be given due financial assistance, said an administration official. Meanwhile, two brothers were electrocuted and their granddaughter was injured after they came in contact with a live wire near a farm in Sultanpur on Tuesday, police said. The incident occurred in the Chanda

area of Sultanpur district. Circle Officer (CO) Abdus Salam said Chhote Lal Yadav (60), a resident of Sonawa village, had gone to his farm in the morning and came in contact with an electric wire hanging from a pole nearby. Hearing Chhote Lal's screams, his younger brother Ramdin Yadav (55) and granddaughter Archana (17) rushed to the spot and tried to save him. In the process, Ramdin and Archana also came in contact with the electric wire, the CO said. While Chhote Lal and Ramdin died on the spot, Archana was rushed to the community health centre and her condition is stated to be critical, he added. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem, police said. **PTI**



Singar Nagar society president Sanyukta Bhatia inspecting the open gym set up at children's park on Tuesday

Pioneer

## CITYBRIEFS

### PANEL FOR SMART CITY DIGGING WORK FORMED

Under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar, a meeting of the Vyapar Bandhu Committee was held on Tuesday. The meeting saw participation from numerous trader organisations, discussing various issues they face. During the meeting, a coordination committee for the Smart City project's digging works was formed under the district magistrate's direction. It was mandated that the committee will meet online every 15 days to review progress, ensuring timely completion of tasks by the concerned departments including Jal Kal, Lucknow Nagar Nigam, and LESA through their respective contractors.

The district magistrate emphasised the need to resolve the city's waterlogging issues promptly and directed the concerned departments accordingly. Furthermore, to address encroachments around Talkatora Industrial

Estate, the district magistrate instructed a joint meeting involving traders, police department, PWD, Lucknow Development Authority, and Municipal Corporation officials from Talkatora Road Eveready crossing to Balaji Temple. Actions were directed towards the removal of encroachments in this area. Additionally, directives were issued for the cleaning of the city's sewer lines and removal of network cables and internet wires from electricity poles by LESA. Regarding other trader-related issues, departmental officers were instructed to address them systematically and within designated timelines.

### NER SAFETY TEST

To upgrade passenger facilities and ease train operations, the administration of North Eastern Railways (NER), Lucknow division, will conduct a safety test of the third rail line section of the Gonda Kachhari-Karnailganj section (23.65 km) with

a new traction line of 25,000-volt AC capacity. This test is scheduled for July 3 and July 4, as part of the first phase of the third rail line's construction. The test will be conducted by Railway Safety Commissioner, Northeast Zone, Pranjeev Saxena. The railway safety commissioner will inspect the curves, points and crossings, railway line fittings, signals, level crossing gates, and panel and relay rooms between the Gonda Kachhari-Karnailganj section. After the inspection, a speed trial will also be conducted by a special train in this section.

Meanwhile, in a function organised at the Multipurpose Hall of the Divisional Railway Manager's Office, North Eastern Railway Lucknow Division, on Tuesday, Divisional Personnel Officer Basant Lal, in the presence of Divisional Finance Manager Umesh Kumar, gave a warm farewell to 59 railway employees upon their retirement.

# UP court asks Rahul Gandhi to appear in person on July 26

**Sultanpur (PTI):** An MP-MLA court here on Tuesday asked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to appear before it on July 26 in a defamation case filed against him for alleged objectionable remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Gandhi was supposed to appear before the court on Tuesday but could not do so due to the ongoing parliament session. Gandhi is the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha. Gandhi's lawyer Kashi Prasad Shukla, who was present in the court, sought a fresh date for hearing the matter. Considering his application, Judge Shubham Verma asked Gandhi to make a personal appearance on July 26, Shukla said. A defamation case was filed against Gandhi in 2018 over his alleged objectionable remarks against Shah. The defamation complaint against the Congress leader was filed by BJP leader Vijay Mishra. Gandhi had halted his "Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra" in Amethi on February 20 this year and appeared in court, which had granted him bail.

# IIM-L researchers publish insights on forest and mineral resource mgmt

**Lucknow (PNS):** Indian Institute of Management (Lucknow) researcher Prof Priyanshu Gupta, assistant professor of business sustainability, collaborated with Prof Rajesh Bhattacharya from IIM-Calcutta, to publish a groundbreaking paper in the journal, 'Land Use Policy'. Their study explores the challenges and conflicts involved in managing India's forests and mineral resources. The research team focused on analysing India's Go-No-Go policy, initially aimed at identifying forests for protection and expedited mining clearances for less critical areas. India's mineral wealth is predominantly located under dense, biodiverse forests that are home to numerous tribal communities. This situation often leads to conflicts between mining activities, environmental conservation, and the rights and development of tribal populations. The central dilemma revolves around prioritising the use of forests. Introduced in 2009 and later renamed the Inviolable Areas policy, the Go-No-Go policy aimed to address these conflicts. Its goal was to conserve ecologically significant forests while facilitating faster clearances in less critical areas. The researchers reviewed the policy's evolution and the challenges it

has faced. The research utilised extensive government documents obtained through India's Right to Information Act 2005 (RTI), supplemented by interviews with senior bureaucrats, policy-makers, and experts. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the policy development process. Prof Priyanshu Gupta highlighted, "The rights over different uses of forest resources are fragmented across stakeholders. For instance, mineral development is overseen by the government, environmental conservation by the ministry, and local communities have rights to forest produce and manage local resources. This fragmentation often causes conflicts and delays, prompting calls for faster clearances and mechanisms like single-window clearances to resolve resource-related trade-offs. The Go-No-Go policy was one such attempt. However, designing such mechanisms is challenging due to inter-ministerial conflicts within India's democratic framework. Despite its implications, the policy remains un-notified." The study challenges the idea that resolving policy decisions without politics is possible, asserting that public policy inherently involves political considerations and requires input from all stakeholders.

# SGPGI gets 4 additional OPD HRF counters

**Lucknow (PNS):** Four additional counters of OPD HRF (Hospital Revolving Fund) have been made operational on the second floor of the new OPD at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences. Director Prof RK Dhiman inaugurated these counters by cutting the ribbon. The counters will facilitate patients' families in obtaining prescriptions for medicines prescribed during OPD visits and enable them to make necessary deposits.

"With the opening of these additional counters, the time taken to procure medicines during peak hours can be reduced, and crowd management can be improved," the director stated. The inauguration ceremony was attended by chief medical superintendent Prof Sanjay Dhiraj, medical superintendent Prof VK Paliwal, chairman of HRF Prof Aditya Kapoor, and senior store purchase officer Abhay Mehrotra.

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# Special investment regions to make UP \$1-trillion economy

Cabinet approves Nodal Investment Region for Manufacturing Act

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Dedicated to transforming Uttar Pradesh into a trillion-dollar economy, the Uttar Pradesh government approved the special investment region act during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Lok Bhavan on Tuesday.

The Nodal Investment Region for Manufacturing Act (NIRMAN) aims to attract major investors from both within India and around the world to invest in Uttar Pradesh. The government's move is likely to promote 'ease of doing business', boost economic development, and create new employment opportunities for the general public. Providing details about the decisions made by the UP Cabinet, Principal Secretary (Infrastructure and Industrial Development) Anil Kumar Sagar stated: "This Act has been created to develop special investment regions in the state. Similar acts are currently in place in three states: Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Karnataka. With this, UP will become the fourth state to implement this Act." He explained that special investment regions are large investment areas where cluster development occurs, and the powers usually held by the state government or other departments are decentralised to the authority level.

"This decentralisation has two main benefits: first, any changes needed in the master planning



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath chairing the Cabinet meeting in Lucknow on Tuesday

can be done there itself. Second, all the NOCs and clearances that usually require state-level approval are also decentralised. According to the 'ease of doing business' concept, the more decentralised the process, the better we can serve the investors," he added. Sagar stated that the purpose of the new Act is to establish large investment regions and provide them with legal protection. He emphasised that creating such significant investment areas is crucial for Uttar Pradesh to achieve its goal of becoming a one trillion dollar economy. He further said, "Right now we have not fixed the minimum limit of land for investment in the Act. However, similar to the Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority, which has an area of 5,000 hectares, the special investment regions will also cover large areas."

He also said that the proposal includes the creation of at least four special investment regions in Uttar Pradesh, each located

in one of the state's four geographical areas. "We have a substantial land bank available, with approximately 20,000 acres ready for allotment," he pointed out. In another decision to foster a conducive environment for industrial investment in the state, the UP Cabinet also approved a proposal to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) and MSMEs. Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said: "Similar to the Bharat Mandapam in Delhi, a large convention centre or multipurpose hall of this calibre will be established in Lucknow and Varanasi. This facility will allow MSMEs to showcase their products, promoting both industrial investment and providing encouragement to those involved in MSMEs."

He emphasised that this initiative would significantly enhance MSME production in Uttar Pradesh. The Bharat

Mandapam in Delhi, developed by ITPO, is renowned for its excellent infrastructure and hosts national and international trade fairs regularly. Now, similar events will be feasible in Uttar Pradesh as well. The UP Cabinet also approved the proposal to temporarily employ more than 2,200 teachers, who were removed from service in 2023 on the instructions of the Supreme Court, on honorarium in non-government aided secondary schools. Khanna explained, "There are vacant teaching positions in non-government-aided secondary schools, adversely impacting educational operations. To ensure smooth functioning of education, these 2,200 teachers, released from service as per the Supreme Court directives in 2023, will be temporarily re-appointed. Those teaching in classes IX and X will receive Rs 25,000 each, while those teaching in classes XI and XII will receive Rs 30,000 each as honorarium."

# BJP's BL Maurya likely to be elected MLC unopposed

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party candidate for the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council by-election Bahoran Lal Maurya on Tuesday filed his nomination papers in the presence of state's top BJP leaders, including Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his Cabinet colleagues. Tuesday was the last day for filing nominations for the Legislative Council. The BJP had announced Maurya as its candidate for the Legislative Council elections on Monday. The tenure of this seat ends in July 2028. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed confidence that Maurya would win the by-election and effectively address the issues of the common people in the Legislative Council. In addition to Yogi, other prominent attendees included BJP state president Chaudhary Bhupendra Singh, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, and ministers Suresh Khanna, Swatantra Dev Singh, JPS Rathore, Kapil Dev Aggarwal, and Baldev Singh Aulakh. Maurya is likely to be declared elected unopposed on Wednesday, the day of scrutiny of nomination papers, as the Samajwadi Party has decided against fielding its candidate. Maurya was elected to the UP



Bharatiya Janata Party candidate for Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council by-election Bahoran Lal Maurya on Tuesday filing his nomination papers in the presence of state's top BJP leaders, including Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

Legislative Assembly from Bhojipura constituency in Bareilly district twice in 1996 and 2017. In the 2022 Legislative Assembly elections, he lost to Shazil Islam of the SP by a margin of over 9,400 votes. The by-election was necessitated by the resignation of SP MLC Swami Prasad Maurya in February earlier this year. Swami Prasad Maurya left the

BJP and joined the Samajwadi Party before the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections and unsuccessfully contested from Fazl nagar, Kushinagar district. Later, the SP made Swami Prasad Maurya a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council. However, there was opposition within the party over his tirade against Ramcharitmanas, Lord Ram

and Sanatan Dharma, after which he broke ties with the SP and formed the Rashtriya Shoshit Samaj Party. The notification for the Legislative Council bypoll was issued on June 25, and July 2 is the last day of making nominations, while scrutiny will be held on July 3. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is July 5.

# SDM suspended for ignoring farmer's plaint

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ignoring a farmer's complaint led to the suspension of the sub-district magistrate (SDM) of Khaga Tehsil in Fatehpur district of Uttar Pradesh. The SDM was suspended on Tuesday, following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's

instructions to this effect. During the suspension period, the SDM will be assigned to the Lucknow office of the commissioner and secretary of the Revenue Council, and departmental action will be initiated against him. Ravikaran Singh, a farmer from the village of Pai in Fatehpur,

had submitted a complaint letter regarding a land dispute to SDM Atul Kumar on June 15 during 'Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas'. Despite the seriousness of the matter, SDM Atul Kumar allegedly did not address the complaint promptly with seriousness. As the officer failed to

resolve the issue facing the farmer, the matter was probed by the Prayagraj divisional commissioner and the inspector general of police, Prayagraj zone. Notably, both officials found SDM Atul Kumar guilty in their investigation reports. Consequently, CM Yogi suspended Kumar.

# Dialogue most powerful tool in democracy: Yogi Adityanath to trainee IAS officers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met the 2023-batch trainee officers selected for the Indian Administrative Service, Uttar Pradesh cadre, at his official residence on Tuesday. The CM extended his best wishes to the officers and provided guidance. He emphasised the importance of maintaining effective communication, exhibiting good conduct, and upholding integrity in their work, stating that these qualities would help them overcome all problems. The CM also inquired about the fieldwork the officers carried out during their training and encouraged them to add novelty to their work to excel in their careers. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, "Dialogue is the most powerful tool in a democracy." He advised the officers to establish communication with the common people whenever they visit the field. "A lack of dialogue can lead to public discontent. Treat people well and maintain integrity in your work to build a unique and admirable reputation," he said. The CM added, "No problem of the common man should be considered small, as it holds importance to those affected. Solving these problems is not just a duty, but a way to earn



the trust of the public. Always stay connected with people at the grassroots level and address issues promptly through dialogue, preventing them from escalating." The CM also urged the trainee officers to engage in dialogue with public representatives. Yogi advised against procrastination, emphasising its negative impact and potential to cause dissatisfaction. He urged the officers to listen to victims' grievances and develop the habit of making timely decisions. The CM said, "The complaints received by the IGRS-CM Helpline often reach the higher authorities because they are not addressed adequately at the local level. Therefore, it is crucial to listen to the victims and resolve their issues promptly."

Yogi also recommended dedicating one hour daily to listening to the public and addressing the concerns of public representatives and local organisations. He advised the trainee officers to cultivate a habit of continuous learning and reading. He stressed the importance of personally reading government orders (GOs) issued rather than relying on others, as this will provide a unique perspective and help translate knowledge into actionable results. The CM encouraged them to set a positive example as administrative officers to motivate their subordinates. He urged the officers to make villages self-reliant and consider developing model villages. Engaging with villagers and prioritising tasks through com-

munity labor can achieve significant results, he pointed out. The CM emphasised the importance of making municipal bodies, tehsils, police stations, and blocks self-reliant. He also instructed the officers to maintain a distance from negative influences, suggesting they hold meetings in their offices instead of their homes to ensure professional boundaries. The officers present at the meeting included Anubhav Singh, Deepak Singhwal, Gunjita Agarwal, Ishita Kishore, Kavya C, Mahendra Singh, Chaluva Raju, Narayani Bhatia, Nitin Singh, Rinku Singh Rahi, Sahil Kumar, Sai Ashrit Shakhmuri, Shishir Kumar Singh, Smriti Mishra, Swati Sharma, and Vaishali.

# All HC: Religious congregations where conversions take place must be stopped

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court has observed that if religious congregations where conversions take place are not stopped immediately, the country's majority population will become a minority one day. Justice Rohit Rajan Agarwal made the observation while rejecting the bail application of one Kailash, who is accused of being involved in the religious conversion of several people from a village here. "The word 'propagation' means to promote, but it does not mean to convert any person from his religion to another religion," the court said. "In the instant case, there are serious allegations against the

applicant by the informant that her brother, along with several others, were taken from their village to attend a gathering in New Delhi and converted to Christianity. The brother of the informant never returned," it said. "If this process is allowed to be carried out, the majority population of this country would be in the minority one day. Such religious congregations should be immediately stopped where conversions are taking place," the court observed. In its order passed on Monday, the court said that the statements recorded by the investigation officer clearly revealed that Kailash had been taking people to attend religious congregations in New Delhi where

they were being converted to Christianity. "It has come to the notice of this court in several cases that unlawful activity of converting SC/ST people and other castes, including economically poor persons, to Christianity is being done at rampant pace throughout Uttar Pradesh. "This court, prima facie, finds that the applicant is not entitled to bail. Hence, the bail application of the applicant involved in the aforesaid case crime is hereby, rejected," it said. A case under Section 365 (abduction) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3/5(1) of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act was lodged against Kailash at

Maudaha police station in Hamirpur district in 2023. According to the FIR, Ramphal, brother of the informant Ramkali Prajapati was allegedly taken to Delhi by Kailash to attend a social gathering. Several others from the village were also taken to such gatherings where all of them were converted to Christianity. The applicant had promised the informant that her brother who was suffering from a mental illness would be treated and would return to the village within a week. However, when that did not happen, she asked Kailash about her brother but did not get a satisfactory reply. She then approached the police.

# Rahul Gandhi as LoP should put factual things in LS: Anupriya

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Union minister Anupriya Patel said on Tuesday that being the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi should put factual things in the House. In his first speech on Monday as the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha, Gandhi had launched a no-holds-barred attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing the leaders of the ruling party of dividing people on communal lines. Asked about Gandhi's speech in Parliament, Patel said, "He is voice of the opposition. He is the Leader of Opposition. He should put in the House things which are factual." The union



minister was talking to reporters here on the sidelines of a programme. On Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's statement in Lok Sabha on EVMs, Patel said, "Our party believes in the Constitution of India, which says EVM produces [Rajaru]



janservak' (King-type public servant)," without further elaborating. Participating in the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address on Tuesday, Yadav said, "I did not trust EVMs yesterday, I don't trust them today. And even if I win all 80 seats,

I will not trust EVMs." The issue of EVMs is not dead and the Samajwadis will remain adamant on it, Yadav said. On Yadav's comment that the BJP's defeat in Faizabad seat of Ayodhya, where the Ram temple has been built, shows the wisdom of voters, Patel said, "The entire opposition should accept that people of the country expressed confidence in the leadership of Narendra Modi for the third time." "NDA has made a hat-trick. The fact should be accepted by the opposition as soon as possible," she added. Patel was here to attend a programme organised by her party Apna Dal (Sonelal) to celebrate the birth anniversary of Sonelal Patel.

# CPI (ML) flays govt for Hathras incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The CPI (ML) held the UP government responsible for the large number of deaths in Hathras. "When people were dying, where was the administration?" the CPI (ML) asked. The party expressed grief over the incident. Also, it demanded a high-level investigation, strict punishment to the culprits, free treatment of the injured and adequate compensation to the families of the deceased. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said on Tuesday that prima facie, the deaths in Hathras appear to be a fallout of the administrative lapse. "Permission was granted for such a big event but no concrete arrangements were made. There are reports of over a 100 deaths in the stampede," he said. "According to reports, around 20,000 people had gathered in the satsang. There were a large number of women, children and men at the venue but why were proper exit arrangements not made? What were the police and administration doing? The state government will have to take responsibility for the failure," Yadav said. Meanwhile, member of the national executive of the Communist Party of India Dr Girish expressed grief over the

stampede that took place in Hathras. "There are more women and children among the dead. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of deceased. There is chaos at the incident spot, district hospitals of Hathras and Etah, and Aligarh Medical College. The matter is about the shortsightedness of the government and the failure of the administration," he said. Demanding an inquiry by a High Court judge, Girish said: "The deceased and the injured belong to the poor sections of society. Therefore, the government should provide adequate funds to the affected families. It should be guaranteed that the bodies are handed over to their respective families." National spokesperson of Rashtriya Lok Dal Anil Dubey said the news coming from Hathras was extremely horrifying. "The scenes of the accident are extremely heart-rending," he said. Expressing condolences to the bereaved families, Dubey urged the UP government and administration to make arrangements for proper treatment of the injured on a war footing and provide immediate compensation to the families of the victims. Dubey appealed to all the officials and workers of RLD to help the victims as much as possible.

# Criminal carrying ₹1-lakh reward killed in encounter

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A criminal carrying a reward of ₹1 lakh on his head was killed in an encounter with police, police said on Tuesday. Submit Singh, aka Monu Chavanni, was wanted in over two dozen criminal cases. He was gunned down by a joint team of the Special Task Force (STF) and local police in the Badlapur area, according to Superintendent of Police Ajay Pal Sharma. Singh had a total of 24 criminal cases registered against him across Ghazipur, Ballia, and Jaunpur districts in Uttar Pradesh, as well as in some districts of Bihar. A reward of

₹1 lakh had been announced for his arrest. Sharma stated that the Special Task Force and police received information about Singh's presence in the Badlapur area. When the joint team arrived and attempted to stop him, Singh opened fire. In the retaliatory exchange, Singh was injured by a bullet and was taken to a nearby health centre where doctors declared him dead. The police seized an AK-47 rifle and a pistol, although two of Singh's accomplices managed to flee. A search is ongoing to apprehend them, the Superintendent of Police added.

# Two killed in wall collapse

PTI ■ BAHRAICHA

Two brothers lost their lives when the wall of a house collapsed due to heavy rains at a village in Payagpur area here, police on Tuesday said. Vishram (16) and Aman (10) were killed when the wall of a house collapsed around 5 am in Parsoli Trikoli

village, they said. Payagpur Station House Officer (SHO) Karunakar Pandey said the two bodies were taken out from the debris and sent for post-mortem examination. The victims' family will be given due financial assistance, said an administration official.

# Water level of Ganga, Yamuna increases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The effect of monsoon rains is visible in the twin rivers — Ganga and Yamuna. Due to heavy rains, the water level of Sangam increased for the first time this year. The water level of Yamuna in Naini increased by 27 cm in the last 24 hours (from 8 am on Monday to 8 am on Tuesday). During the same period, the water level of Ganga in Chhatnag increased by 16 cm. Due to the pressure of Yamuna, the water level of Ganga in Phaphamau also increased by 2 cm.

According to the control room of the Irrigation Department (Flood Block), the water level of Yamuna in Naini at 8 am was 71.42 metres. The water level of Ganga in Chhatnag was 70.34 metres and the water level of

Ganga in Phaphamau was 75.72 metres.

**INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE FOOD TO DEVOTEES:** On the lines of Ayodhya, now an initiative has been taken to provide free food to the devotees coming from far off places for bathing in the Sangam. Prayagraj Mela Authority has taken this initiative. The authority has invited applications from interested organisations for this work by issuing a tender. By building a modular kitchen near Sangam, satvik food i.e. one without garlic and onion will be prepared for the devotees.

Devotees from various states, including UP, come to Sangam daily. There are some organisations that provide free food to the people but their arrangement is not permanent. In view of this the Mela Authority

is going to make this arrangement. The authority has sought applications from organisations willing to do this work. The selected organisation will be provided land on lease for 30 years. Modern machines will be installed in the kitchen, which will prepare food for 10,000 devotees daily. No fee will be charged for this. This kitchen will be opened soon. The Prayagraj Mela Authority has set the deadline for application till July 6. Devotees visiting Ram Janmabhoomi Ayodhya for darshan are being provided food in the same manner. Mela Adhikari Vijay Kiran Anand said that free food will be provided to the devotees visiting Sangam Ghat daily. Tenders have been invited for this. Satvik food will be provided to at least 10,000 devotees daily, he added.

## Dumper cleaner killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A dumper cleaner was killed while its driver seriously injured in a collision with another dumper on the Bara-Kalpi highway in Jainpur under Akbarpur Kotwali in Kanpur Dehat on Tuesday morning. The police sent the injured driver to the district hospital. The dumper driver Rahul alias Abhay of Chhiraaura Chirgan, Jhansi, was carrying pebbles to Kanpur. He was accompanied by cleaner Hargovind (45) of his village. Their dumper rammied into another dumper from behind near Jainpur on the Kalpi-Bara highway. On getting information Jainpur outpost incharge Ram Kishan Verma rushed to the spot and rescued the cleaner Hargovind trapped in the dumper but by then he had died. The police sent the injured driver to the district hospital. The dumper owner had informed the kin of the cleaner and driver.

# Two youths drown in Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two friends drowned in the Ganga on Monday evening while three others were rescued at the Chandan Ghat under Gangaghat Kotwali area, Shuklaganj, Unnao. The deceased Afroz was the eldest among his five siblings while Gulfam was the only son of his parents. The incident took place when five friends were bathing in the river and drowned. The divers and boatmen rescued three of them while two went into deep water whose bodies were recovered later. Afroz (22) of Begumpurwa, Babupurwa, along with friends Gulfam (25), Salman, Chand Babu and Lala had gone to Chandan Ghat around 3.30 pm for bathing in the Ganga. After they began to drown and raised an alarm, divers and boatmen immediately rescued Salman, Chand Babu and Lala while Gulfam and Afroz died due to drowning. The kin informed

the police around 8 pm. Kotwali incharge Ramphal Prajapati said with the help of net, steamer boat and divers, the bodies of two youths were recovered. The deceased Gulfam was employed in a chair manufacturing shop near Popular Dharmkanta while Afroz did welding job. Meanwhile Mukesh Kumar alias Lakhna (28) was run over by a speeding tractor when he fell on the road after his pant got entangled in the bike in Bilhaur police station area on Monday. Kin initially suspected it to be murder case and lodged a complaint at the Bilhaur police station. His wife Beena and other family members staged an agitation on Tuesday. But the police investigation and examination of CCTV footages ordered by the DCP (West) Vijay Dhul made it clear that he had accidentally died in a mishap. In the footages, it was found that while alighting from the bike, his pant got entangled in caus-

ing him fall on the road and was run over by the speeding tractor. DCP (West) said the body was sent for autopsy on Tuesday. In the incident, no laxity on the part of tractor driver was also found, he added. Wife Bina of Arjunpur, Shivrajpur, said on Monday, Mukesh Kumar alias Lakhna with his brother-in-law Rinku of Dasa Nivada had gone to Bilhaur on bike. They stopped at a shop there. When the pillion rider Mukesh was alighting from the bike, his pant got entangled in it. He lost his balance and fell on the road and was run over by the speeding tractor due to which he died on the spot.

**VAN CATCHES FIRE:** A van carrying children to school suddenly caught fire due to short circuit under Chhibramau Kotwali of Kannauj on Tuesday morning. The villagers safely rescued all the children from the van surrounded by fire. Three youths of the village sustained burns in

the process. By the time the fire brigade rushed to the spot, the entire van had been gutted. The van of a school situated on Tajpur road had gone to bring children from Kabriyapur village. While returning it caught fire due to a short circuit. The villagers immediately rushed to the spot and rescued all the six children. In the process Brij Kishore Kushwaha, Vipin Jatav and Udaivir Singh sustained burns in their arm. The fire gutted the van despite efforts by villagers to extinguish the fire. Later, it was extinguished by the fire brigade. The school management informed that they had bought the van fitted with LPG gas kit on July 1. It was being operated with the gas cylinder. **NOMINATED:** Dr Nidhipati Singhania and Joy Nigam have been nominated the president and secretary of the Rotary Club of Kanpur Gaurav for the year 2024-25. All the club members and their family members visited the 140-year old Shri Dwarkadhish Temple.

# Coin removed from patient's trachea after eight years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A team of cardio thoracic surgeons and anaesthesiologists from Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) led by Prof Siddharth Lakhota and Prof SK Mathur successfully removed a 25 paisa coin, once popularly known as 'chavni', which was lying in the trachea (main windpipe) for the past eight years in an adult patient aged 40 years.

Dr Siddharth said that it is very unusual for foreign bodies to go in trachea of adult which carries air to lungs, due to the presence of strong cough reflex in adults. In children this is common. "Such a case where foreign body is lying for the past eight years is very rarely reported specially

in adults", said Prof Lakhota, adding that previously one such case had been successfully treated by his team at Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH), BHU. In that case metallic key of an admiral was lying for 10 years and was then successfully removed.

"Such foreign bodies are life threatening and can cause choking of patient, can lead to pneumonia, they may migrate distally and can cause collapse of lung. Patients die due to difficulty in breathing or other complications", he said adding that the whole procedure took 20 minutes and patient is now fine and will be discharged from the hospital within one day after the procedure. Dr Amrita from the anaesthesiology department who played a key role in removing the coin

said that such procedures demand very high degree of precision and a slight degree of error can lead to life threatening complications. In this case an advanced rigid bronchoscope with light and ventilation channels was used to remove this impacted coin lying in the trachea for many years. Dr Ratnesh, a cardiothoracic surgeon in the team said that this facility for removing foreign bodies from windpipe of adults is available only in IMS-BHU in government hospitals of eastern Uttar Pradesh. He also said in case of adults the chance of foreign bodies going in the windpipe increases if a person sleeps keeping anything in mouth or is in a semi-conscious state under the effect of alcohol and drugs.

# 12 doctors, three CAs honoured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Rotary Club of New Kanpur organised Doctor's Day and CA Day here and honoured 12 doctors and three CAs. The club president Sangeeta Gupta, while welcoming the guests announced that the club will take up tree plantation and mega health camps. Chief guest DC Shukla appreciated the projects and showered his blessings on the club. Secretary Shikha Gupta, vice-president Sachin Gupta and treasurer S Gupta were present. Vinod Rishi, the charter president of the club, gave blessings to the new team. Anurag Gupta, Rajiv Mehta, Amit Jindal and Pramod Gupta were present.

# Crop Insurance Week inaugurated



Joint Agriculture Director SN Dubey inaugurating Crop Insurance Week in Varanasi on Tuesday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

For the promotion of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Crop Insurance Week (July 1 to 7) was inaugurated on Tuesday by cutting the cake by Joint Agriculture Director of Varanasi Division SN Dubey. SBI General Insurance Company Ltd has been nomi-

nated to operate PMFBY in the district during Kharif and Rabi seasons of the year 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26. Under the scheme, there is a provision to provide compensation to the insured farmers as per rules in case of crop loss due to natural disaster. The notified crops for Kharif season are paddy, maize, millet, sorghum, urad, banana and chilli. The

premium payable by the farmers is two per cent of the insured amount for paddy, maize, millet, jwar, urd and arhar crops and five per cent of the insured amount for banana and chilli. Last year, under 2023-24, 32,218 farmers of the district were covered under the scheme. This year, an awareness campaign is being run by promoting it among the farmers through regional employees to cover more and more farmers under the scheme. The last date for getting insurance in Kharif season has been fixed as July 31. All the farmers of the district are requested to take advantage of the scheme by getting their crops insured within the stipulated date.

Earlier, the government has issued an action plan for PMFBY and reorganised weather based crop insurance scheme in Kharif and Rabi sea-

sons of 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26. Giving this information, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal said that under the scheme, insured farmers are provided with insurance cover/compensation in the event of damage to crops notified from adverse meteorological conditions. The CDO said the district has a notified for insurance cover of crops. "Crop sowing/failed sowing, damage in the middle state of crop, damage to standing crops from natural disasters, diseases, pests, hailstorms, waterlogging, cloud bursting, landslides, loss of lightning, damage due to lightning, crop harvesting till the period of the crop kept for drying in the field, the risk of hail, cyclone, unseasonal/cyclonic rain has been covered", he said. According to Nagpal, this scheme has been implemented on a voluntary basis.

# MoEFCC approves production of Nano Urea Plus fertiliser in Phulpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, has approved the production of 'Nano Urea Plus' fertiliser in IFFCO Phulpur unit, Prayagraj, manufactured by IFFCO. Nano Urea Plus is a new version of Nano Urea to meet the nitrogen requirements of the crop at critical growth stages. IFFCO's Nano Urea Plus is an advanced formulation of Nano Urea with redefined nutrition to meet the nitrogen requirements of the crop at critical growth stages. It is used in place of traditional urea and other nitrogenous fertilisers to promote soil health, farmer profitability and a sustainable environment. It also increases the availability and efficiency of micronutrients. It is a chlorophyll charger, which increases yields and helps in climate-smart farming. Nano Urea Plus will be available in 500 ml bottles at the rate of Rs 225. Nano Urea Plus will help in plant growth without

harming the environment. Its objective is to benefit the farmers of the country and promote self-reliant India and self-reliant agriculture. This information was given by Senior Executive Director (Unit Head), IFFCO Phulpur Unit, Sanjay Kudesia. **CAMPAIGN:** Inmates in Naini Central Jail serving sentences for murder, robbery, dacoity, theft and other serious crimes have started studying in the jail itself. These prisoners want to do something different for the society by getting educated. Their aim is to leave the path of crime and do something better for their life after being released from jail. Among them, many prisoners are studying from IGNOU to get graduation and many are studying for post graduation degree. These include both male and female prisoners. The capacity of keeping prisoners in Naini Central Jail is about 2,000. At present, there are about 1,700 prisoners in the jail. The jail administration sees how educated the prison-

ers are. According to that, they are counselled. Among them, many prisoners are ready for further studies. As per the degree, they are admitted to school or university. Among them, there are 57 prisoners who had filled the form for getting graduation and post graduation degree in IGNOU. Now their examination has started from June 6. The examination going on in two shifts is to continue till July 13. The examination is being conducted under strict supervision of the jail. Naini Central Jail Superintendent, AK Pandey said that a campaign to make prisoners literate is also being run by Shiv Nadar Foundation in Naini Central Jail. Till now, prisoners in two batches of 24-25 have been given literacy certificates. While the studies of a batch of 25 prisoners are going on. To complete the 45-day course with computer and projector, classes are held for two hours every day from Monday to Saturday. These include prisoners aged 18 to 80 years. A total of 74 male and female prisoners have been identified in three batches.

# More coaches to be added in many trains

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

For the convenience of passengers, Railway administration has permanently increased the number of coaches in many trains including 15103/15104 Banaras-Gorakhpur-Banaras Express and 15125/15126 Banaras-Patna-Banaras Express. As a result of increasing two coaches of general second class permanently from Banaras and Gorakhpur in 15103/15104 from July 7, the revised rake structure will be a total of 22 coaches, including one coach of generator cum luggage vehicle, one coach of LSLRD, seven coaches of general second class, 10 coaches of general second class chair car and three coaches of AC third class chair car. As a result of increasing one coach of general second class chair car, four coaches of general second class and one coach of AC third class chair car on a permanent basis in 15125/15126 Banaras-Patna-Banaras Express from July 15, the revised rake structure will be of 20 coaches which include one, coach of generator cum luggage van, one coach of LSLRD, 10 coaches of general second class, six coaches of general second class chair car and two coaches of AC third class chair car. Similarly, in 15054/15053 Lucknow Junction-Chhapra-Lucknow Jn Express as a result of increasing one coach of general second class permanently from Lucknow Jn from July 1 last, and from Chhapra from July 4, the revised rake structure will be a total of 22 coaches including one coach of generator-cum-luggage vehicle, four of general second class, six of sleeper class, eight of AC third class, two of AC second class and one coach of LSLRD. Besides, in 15083/15084 Chhapra-Farrukhabad-Chhapra Express as a result of adding one general second class coach permanently from Chhapra from July 2 and from Farrukhabad from July 3, the revised rake structure will be of a total of 22 coaches which include one generator cum luggage van, four general second class, six sleeper class, eight AC third class, two AC second class and one LSLRD.

# NCR GM inspects construction works

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The new General Manager of North Central Railway (NCR) Ashok Kumar Verma inspected the ongoing construction works under the station redevelopment at Prayagraj Junction and gave necessary guidelines to the officials concerned. He also reviewed preparations for Kumbh here. The GM was accompanied by



The Divisional Railway Manager (DRM/Prayagraj), Himanshu Badoni, station

master of Prayagraj Junction, VK Dwivedi and senior officials of the Construction department during the inspection. The GM instructed the officials to take special care of the standards in all construction works while taking stock of the ongoing development work on platform number 4/5. On the occasion detailed information about the ongoing work of station redevelopment was

given to the GM by the officials of the Construction department. The GM also inspected the city side area of the station in view of the preparation for the upcoming Kumbh -2025. He also held discussion with the DRM and the officials present as to how arrangements like mob management, ticket distribution, security arrangements will work in Kumbh -2025.

# 31 Railway employees retire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 31 employees of Varanasi Division, North Eastern Railway (NER) retired and they received their due amount of ₹13.42 crore. On the direction of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava, a function was held at Premchand Auditorium Room, DRM Office here on Monday under the chairmanship of ADRM (Infra) Roshan Lal Yadav in which 31 employees retired on June 30 were paid their due amount. On this occasion, Divisional Personnel Officer (DPO) Vivek Mishra, Assistant Divisional Personnel Officer (ADPO)

Ramesh Upadhyay, Assistant Divisional Finance Manager Sanjay Miksa along with inspectors and employees of Accounts and Personnel Department were also present. Addressing the function, ADRM (Infra) Roshan Lal Yadav said in his presidential address that the railway employees have an important role in all the records being established on Indian Railways today. He advised the retired employees that they should do regular exercise, yoga etc to stay healthy and spend remaining time in fulfilling their social and moral obligations. According to him, all the

employees retiring from Varanasi Division of NER for the past years are paid their dues on the day of their retirement and this is possible due to mutual coordination and hard work of the officers and employees of the Accounts and Personnel departments. He also gave service medals to all the retired employees and wished them good luck for their future life and expressed gratitude for their long and remarkable services. DPO Vivek Mishra honoured all the retired employees by garlanding them. On the occasion, while wishing the retired employees Mishra said the retired employees in detail

about all the documents related to I Card, Service Certificate and PPO and explained to them that they should use their receipts very thoughtfully and should not give it to the wrong person by getting influenced by any person or organisation or by getting carried away by emotions. He cautioned that many people are in search of such opportunities and trap money of retired personnel by giving various kinds of temptations. "Be cautious, this is the capital of your life, spend it only when it is very necessary, try to keep your receipts safe as much as possible", he added.

# IM-BHU students earn successful placements

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University (IM-BHU) celebrated an outstanding placement season despite the global economic headwinds and the difficult conditions in the Indian placement market, with students securing coveted roles at leading corporates, which includes the highest offer of Rs 23.5 LPA (lakh per annum) from Nuveo Wellness. IM-BHU has been consistently ranked among the top B-schools in the country as evident from the exemplary performance witnessed during the current placement season. Placement Coordinator at IM-BHU Dr Ashutosh Mohan said that the students from MBA, MBA (International Business) and MBA (Agribusiness) earned successful placements, with an incredible average package of Rs 11.1 LPA among the 181 offers received by 165 students, establishing a new

benchmark for the forthcoming year. The recruitment spectacle featured a stellar lineup of over 65 companies including Infosys, Genpact, Cognizant, Mahindra Finance, Adani Wilmar, Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicle, Reliance Retail, Federal Bank, IDBI Bank, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank, ICICI Bank, Digit General Insurance, Visa Steel, Bajaj Asset Management, UNIQUO, Amul and Escorts Kubota. Dean and chairman (Corporate Affairs & Placement) at IM-BHU Prof HP Mathur expressed gratitude for recruiters' steadfast trust and said that 36 per cent of the students were offered the executive/management trainee role with various sub-profiles like MT-Sales & Marketing, MT-Finance, MT-Business Excellence, MT-Strategy & Projects, MT-Alliance & Electronic Payments, MT-Retail Operations etc while 21 per cent of the students secured associate/senior consultant

roles followed by 13 per cent with assistant / deputy manager roles. Officer in junior management account for eight per cent followed by seven per cent for business analyst, four per cent for business development manager, three per cent for project manager, two per cent as young professionals and one per cent as territory sales in charge. He said a large number of roles in the consultation and analytics field were offered by IT organisations like Cognizant, Infosys, Genpact, Veear Analytics, Hexaware Technologies, Acxiom Consulting, MRCC Group, and Loyalty Juggernaut. Renowned firms like South Indian Bank, Bandhan Bank, Jana Bank, SBI Life, ICICI Pru AMC and UTI Mutual Funds offered lucrative positions to students across domains such as marketing, finance, operations and HR in the BFSI sector. In the agribusiness arena, the reputed player DCM Shriram

Farm Solutions recruited several MBA (Agribusiness) students, along with a number of students earning pre-placement Offers. Godrej Agrovet, PRADAN, Jal Jeewan Hariyati Mission, L&T Finance, IFFCO Tokio, IndiaMart and Srestha Private Ltd were among the other companies recruited to add feathers to their caps. Prof Mathur also commended the student placement coordination team which consisted of Shrihan Shakraverty, Harshita Sharan Srivastava, Pranjal K Rai, Abhishek Yadav, Parul Bahotra, and Premanshu Singh for their tireless effort throughout the placement season. IM-BHU Director Prof Ashish Bajpai congratulated the placement team and emphasised the critical role of teachers in shaping students into 'business-ready' individuals. He praised students' enthusiasm and their resolve to make significant contribution to business and society in the areas of HR, Finance and Marketing.

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# Modi urges NDA MPs to follow parliamentary rules, conduct

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime BJP Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked NDA MPs to follow parliamentary rules and conduct, and learn from senior members about the best practices, comments that came a day after the ruling alliance accused Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi of making a "most irresponsible" speech.

Addressing a meeting of NDA MPs, Modi said the Opposition is upset as for the first time a non-Congress leader, that too a "chai-wala", has become Prime BJP for a third straight term, sources said.

Highlighting his humble origins, he took an apparent jibe at the Nehru-Gandhi family saying that its members used to be Prime BJP and gave little recognition to those from outside their fold, the sources said. Briefing reporters, Parliamentary Affairs BJP Kiren Rijiju said Modi asked MPs to study parliamentary issues, attend Parliament regularly and raise the matters related to their constituency effectively. Asked if Modi referred to Gandhi's Monday speech in Lok Sabha, Rijiju said he made no such mention but added that when the country's Prime BJP speaks, the message is for everyone. Union BJP and



Lok Janshakti Party leader Chirag Paswan told reporters that NDA members were concerned over Gandhi's "personal attacks" on Modi and Speaker Om Birla and his remarks which hurt the feelings of the followers of different religions. "In this context, the Prime BJP guided the newly-elected MPs on how to conduct themselves. He brings vast experiences and inspires us," Paswan said. Gandhi had launched a fierce attack on the BJP in Lok Sabha on Monday, accusing it of

practising violence and spreading hate, drawing massive protests from the treasury benches, including Modi. The Congress leader had cited religious tenets to attack the BJP. However, many of his comments were later expunged by the Chair. At the alliance meeting, Modi was felicitated by NDA leaders for his "historic" third term, Rijiju added. Sources said the Prime BJP asked MPs to study any issue before making comments on it before the media, and said they should stay in touch with

their constituencies and thank voters for supporting them. Modi also asked MPs to visit the Prime BJP Museum, noting that it documents the life journey of all Prime BJPs, something which was not done by earlier governments. The contribution of Prime BJPs who came from outside the Congress's most prominent family used to be neglected, he said, adding that he, as Prime BJP, ensured that all of them are recognised as each one made contribution to the country in one way or another.

# Arrogance of BJP leaders led to decline in Modi's magic: Opp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition members in both the Houses of Parliament on Tuesday said the "arrogance" and "vindictiveness" of BJP leaders during elections downgraded the popularity of Prime BJP Narendra Modi, who now has to depend on alliance partners to provide a stable Government.

Participating in the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, Trinamool Congress member Kalyan Banerjee said the recent Lok Sabha elections had ushered in a change in the country which now has "an unstable government and a strong opposition". Banerjee said the prime BJP now has to use two crutches — Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and Nitish Kumar's JD (U) — to run the government.

Congress leader KC Venugopal said the BJP leaders were not believers in Hinduism, but only used religion to polarise the electorate and win elections. He said the BJP projected the Prime BJP as bigger than God, which was the biggest anti-Hindu statement. "Nobody is bigger than God as per the Hindu tradition. That is why God punished you in this election," Venugopal said. Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav said the 2024 Lok Sabha polls marked the



end of communal politics in India, and were a moral victory for the INDIA Bloc. Yadav called June 4, the day the election results were declared, as the day of independence from communal politics for India. He also said that the BJP's defeat in Faizabad seat of Ayodhya, where the Ram temple has been built, shows the wisdom of voters. Questioning the authenticity of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), Yadav said, "When the Model Code of Conduct was imposed, the government and the Commission were favouring some people. I do not want to go into details". Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla later said it would be better if questions were not raised on the impartiality of the Election Commission. Senior Congress leader Pramod Tiwari accused the Narendra Modi Government on Tuesday of betraying people during its 10-year rule, saying it failed to deliver on promises, whether on bringing back black money, stopping corruption or controlling price rise.

# Fireworks in Rajya Sabha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha once again witnessed a war of words on Tuesday when chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar sarcastically said Jairam Ramesh should take the seat of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, in an effort to discipline the Congress MP. Kharge, who is also the President of the Congress, retorted by saying the chairman was trying to bring in the "Varna" (caste) system. The acrimony started when Dhankhar asked Pramod Tiwari of the Congress not to state unverified facts. To this, Ramesh said it would be authenticated.

"The senior leadership (Kharge) is here. I think you (Ramesh) should replace (Kharge)... You are so intelligent, so gifted, so talented, you should immediately come and take the seat in place of Mr Kharge because, by and large, you are doing his job," the Chairman said. At this point, Kharge retorted by saying "do not bring in the Varna system... That is why you are calling Ramesh very intelligent... And I am dull". An agitated Dhankhar accused Kharge of "twisting" his remark and said he never meant it. "Never in the history of parliamentary democracy and Rajya Sabha proceedings there has been such a disregard of the Chair," he said.

Participating in discussion in the Rajya Sabha on the Motion of Thanks for the President's address to a joint sitting of Parliament, Congress leader Pramod Tiwari said the prices of several commodities have touched a multi-decade high, but the issue found no reference in President Droupadi Murmu's speech. DMK Rajya Sabha member P Wilson urged the Central Government to either abolish medical entrance exam NEET or approve Tamil Nadu's NEET

exemption bill to exclude the state from the competitive exam.

During the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Rajya Sabha, he said the State Legislative Assembly had passed the Tamil Nadu Admission to Medical Courses Bill in 2021 and subsequently passed a resolution unanimously against the exam and to address the "NEET menace".

# SCO leaders to discuss multilateral cooperation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, India on Tuesday said the leaders of the grouping are expected to review its activities over the past two decades and discuss prospects of multilateral cooperation. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will represent India at the Annual Summit of the SCO on July 4.

The situation in Afghanistan, the Ukraine conflict and boosting overall security cooperation among the SCO member countries are expected to figure in the summit.

India's priorities in SCO are shaped by the Prime Minister's vision of a "SECURE" SCO, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. SECURE stands for Security, Economic Cooperation, Connectivity, Unity, Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity and Environmental protection. Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation to Astana for the summit, the MEA said. "At the summit, the leaders are expected to review the organisation's activities over the past two decades and discuss the state and prospects of multi-



lateral cooperation," it said. "Topical issues of regional and international importance are also expected to be discussed at the meeting," it said in a statement. The SCO comprising India, China, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is an influential economic and security bloc that has emerged as one of the largest trans-regional international organisations. Kazakhstan is hosting the summit in its capacity as the current chair of the grouping. India was the chair of the SCO last year. It hosted the SCO Summit in the virtual format in July last year.

India's association with the SCO began in 2005 as an observer country. It became a full member state of SCO at the Astana summit in 2017. India has shown a keen interest in deepening its security-related cooperation with the SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence. The SCO was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the Presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Pakistan became its permanent member along with India in 2017.

# Bihar Govt challenges Patna HC order on amended quota rule in SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Bihar government has moved the Supreme Court challenging a Patna High Court verdict that has set aside the amended reservation laws in the state, which enabled the Nitish Kumar government to increase the quotas for Dalits, tribals and backward classes from 50 per cent to 65 per cent. In its June 20 verdict, the High Court declared that the amendments, passed unanimously by the State's bicameral legislature in November last year, were "ultra vires" of the Constitution, "bad in law" and "violative of the equality clause". The state's plea has been filed in the apex court through Advocate Manish Kumar. A division bench of the High Court had allowed a bunch of petitions challenging the Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes) (Amendment) Act, 2023 and the Bihar (In Admission in Educational



Institutions) Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2023, while "leaving the parties to suffer their respective costs". In a detailed order running into 87 pages, the high court made it clear that it saw "no extenuating circumstance enabling the state to breach" the 50-per cent cap on reservations laid down by the Supreme Court in the Indra Sawhney case. "The state proceeded on the mere proportion of population of different categories as against their numerical representation in government services and educational institutions," the

high court pointed out. The amendments had followed a caste survey, which put the percentage of Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) at a staggering 63 per cent of the state's total population, while the SCs and STs were stated to have accounted for more than 21 per cent. The exercise was undertaken by the Bihar government after the Centre expressed its inability to carry out a fresh headcount of castes other than the SCs and STs, which was last held as part of the 1931 Census. Accordingly,

the reservation for the reserved category was increased to 65 percent. The decision reduced the space for those from open merit category to 35 percent. In its judgment, the High Court had reasoned that the caste survey report relied upon by the State itself revealed that backward communities were adequately represented in public employment, by virtue of reservation and also merit.

It had opined that the same was an indication of one or other caste or community having reaped the benefits of reservation and the various beneficial welfare schemes implemented by the State in achieving an element of social capital. The High Court had added that the State should introspect on the reservation percentage within the 50 per cent limit, and exclude the 'creamy layer' from the benefits. This has now been challenged before the apex court.

The Bihar government's appeal before the top court has been filed through advocate Manish Kumar.

# India, Thailand commence joint military exercise



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further enhance defence bilateral cooperation between the two countries, India and Thailand have commenced a joint military exercise Maitree at Fort Vachiraprakan in Tak province of Thailand. The drill is from July 1-15 and the Indian contingent left for Thailand on Monday, officials said here on Tuesday.

It is the 13th edition of Maitree, they said. The last edition was conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya in September 2019. The Indian Army contingent comprising 76 personnel is being represented mainly by a battalion of the Ladakh Scouts along with personnel from other arms and services. The Royal Thailand Army contingent also comprises 76 personnel mainly from 1 Battalion, 14 Infantry Regiment of 4 Division.

Aim of the exercise is to foster military cooperation between India and Thailand. The Exercise will enhance combined capabilities in executing Joint Counter Insurgency/ Terrorist Operations in Jungle and Urban Environment under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter.

The Exercise will focus on high degree of physical fitness, joint planning and joint tactical drills. Tactical Drills to be practiced during the exercise will include creation of a Joint Operation Centre, establishing an Intelligence and Surveillance Centre, employment of drones and counter drone systems, securing of a landing site, small team insertion and extraction, special helicopter operations, cordon and search operations, room intervention drills and demolition of illegal structures.

Exercise Maitree will enable the two sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures for conduct of joint operations. The exercise will facilitate developing interoperability, bonhomie and camaraderie between soldiers of both the countries.

# IAF chief inaugurates weapon systems school at Hyderabad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Weapon Systems School (WSS), which aims at recalibrating and transforming the Indian Air Force as a future-oriented force, was inaugurated in Hyderabad on July 1. This follows the approval of the Weapon System (WS) branch, a new branch of officers in the IAF, in 2022. Aimed at recalibrating and transforming the Indian Air Force as a future-oriented force, the formation of this new training establishment is a gigantic leap for the Armed Forces in general, and Indian Air Force in particular," officials said here on Tuesday.

The formation of this new training establishment is a "gigantic leap" for the armed forces in general and the IAF in particular, IAF said in a statement. A new chapter has been introduced in the history of the IAF with the inauguration of the Weapon Systems School (WSS) at Air Force Station Begumpet in Hyderabad on July 1. This follows the approval of the Weapon System (WS) branch, a new branch of officers in the IAF, in 2022. Aimed at recalibrating and transforming the Indian Air Force as a future-oriented force, the formation of this new training establishment is a gigantic leap for the Armed Forces in general, and Indian Air Force in particular," officials said.

The WSS will impart effect-based training that is contemporary in nature and prepare officers of the newly formed branch in line with the requirements of the IAF, the officials said. "With the inauguration of the WSS, flight cadets of the WS Branch will undergo their second semester of training at this institute.

The new branch will have four streams: flying stream to operate the weapons and systems in airborne platforms like the Sukhoi-30 MKI and C-130J; remote stream to operate remotely piloted aircraft; mission commanders and operators for surface to air and surface-to-surface weapon systems, and intelligence stream for handling



space-based intelligence and imagery," the statement said. During the interaction, the IAF Chief highlighted that with the creation of WS branch, operators of ground based and specialist weapon systems will come under one umbrella, enhancing war fighting capabilities of the IAF significantly. He exhorted the instructors that being pioneers in a newly formed branch, they are the pillars on which the entire edifice of the envisioned training regime will stand firmly and deliver decisive air power.

While complimenting the founding members of the WSS, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari urged all personnel to establish the School as a nodal centre for weapon systems training in the country. The creation of the WS branch was announced by the IAF chief during the Air Force Day Parade celebrations on October 8, 2022.

# CBI seizes ₹1.59 cr cash in Mumbai's Passport Seva Kendras corruption case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) seized Rs 1.59 crore cash and crucial digital evidence during its three-day search operation after busting a corruption racket in Mumbai's Passport Seva Kendras, officials said on Tuesday. After registering 12 cases on June 28 against 14 officials of Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) of Lower Parel and Malad and 18 touts and middlemen, the CBI began a massive search operation in Mumbai and Nashik, which continued until Monday.

Besides the cash, the CBI stumbled upon five diaries containing alleged details of transactions and crucial information about the bribery ring, they said. The agency has alleged that the accused officials and middlemen indulged in "collusive corruption," allowing passports to be issued based on incomplete documents or manipulating the particulars of passport applicants. The alleged activities of the officials and the middlemen were detected during a joint surprise check at the PSKs conducted by the vigilance wing of the External Affairs Ministry and the CBI. The office desks and mobile phones of the suspect officers were analysed.



"The analysis of documents, social media chats and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) ID activities of suspect public servants had revealed various suspicious transactions by some officials of PSKs indicating demand and acceptance of undue advantage through the passport facilitation agents for issuance of passports as well as to get passports issued based on inadequate/fake/forged documents," a CBI spokesperson said after the registration of the FIR. The agency alleged that the PSK officials, in connivance with touts, were allegedly receiving huge monetary undue advantages directly in their own bank accounts or in the bank accounts of their family members to the tune of several lakhs of rupees, he said.

# SC to hear NEET UGC pleas on July 8

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on July 8 a batch of pleas related to the controversy-ridden NEET-UG, including those alleging irregularities in the examination held on May 5 and seeking a direction that it be held afresh. According to the cause list for July 8 uploaded on the apex court's website, the batch of 26 petitions would come up for hearing before a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country.

The NEET-UG, 2024 was held across 4,750 centres on May 5 and around 24 lakh candidates appeared in it. Initially expected on June 14, the results were announced on June 4 due to an early completion of answer-sheet evaluation. Allegations of irregularities, including paper leaks, have led to protests in several cities and sparring between rival political parties. On June 11, hearing a plea seeking that the exam be held afresh on the grounds of alleged question paper leak and other malpractices, the top court observed that the sanctity of the NEET-



UG has been affected and sought responses from the Centre and the NTA on the petition. It, however, refused to stay the counselling of the successful candidates for admissions to MBBS, BDS and other courses. On June 20, the top court sought the responses of the Centre, the NTA and others on a slew of petitions, including those seeking the scrapping of the NEET-UG and a court-monitored probe amid a mounting outrage over the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the all-India medical entrance test. Hearing separate pleas on the exam on June 18, the apex court said even if there was "0.001 per cent negligence" on the part of anyone in the conduct of the examination, it should be thoroughly dealt with. The Centre and the NTA had, on June 13, told the court that they had cancelled the grace marks awarded to 1,563 candidates.

They were given the option to either take a re-test or forgo the compensatory marks awarded for loss of time. The NTA announced the revised rank list on Monday after issuing the results of the re-test held on June 23.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Brace for a deluge

As India transitions from the scorching summer heat to the monsoon season, a dramatic shift in weather is on the horizon

As the rumbling in clouds becomes louder and the humidity rises, it is time for monsoon. It is welcome as it brings much relief from the scorching heat and a lot of discomfort that comes with it but as the monsoon progresses it also becomes a challenge, exposing our inadequacies and unpreparedness to meet this annual phenomenon. The monsoon season, while a welcome relief from the summer heat, brings with it significant challenges. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for heavy rainfall in seven states: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Goa, and Madhya Pradesh. Residents of these areas are advised to brace for severe weather conditions, including the potential for flash floods, particularly in Uttarakhand, Goa, and Karnataka. This year's monsoon is expected to be more severe than usual. The IMD has warned of extremely heavy rainfall over the next few days, which could lead to significant disruptions and pose serious risks to life and property. It is just a matter of days before Delhi will wear a Venice look as water logging is a norm that repeats every year. The people living on the banks of Yamuna would be rendered homeless as if it were their destiny. And after the waters recede it would be life as usual for the people and the Government alike. But a lot of misery is in store for Uttarakhand where flash floods are predicted. Uttarakhand faces an elevated risk of flash floods. The steep slopes and narrow valleys can quickly channel rainwater, leading to sudden and severe flooding. Goa is also vulnerable to heavy rains and flash floods during the monsoon. The state's infrastructure can become quickly overwhelmed, leading to waterlogging and disruption of services. Karnataka is expected to experience torrential downpours. The Western Ghats, which run along the western edge of the state, can intensify the rainfall, increasing the risk of floods and landslides.



It is not just the monsoon, but its aftermath is equally challenging. The waterborne diseases and spectre of epidemics loom large while authorities watch it happening as mute spectators. Indeed it is high time authorities in the affected states take proactive measures to mitigate the impact of the heavy rains and prepare for the possible evacuation of vulnerable populations to safer areas. Issuing regular updates and warnings to keep the public informed and safe. Ensuring that critical infrastructure, such as dams and drainage systems, are prepared to handle the increased water levels. Many bridges in Bihar have collapsed even before the monsoon, airport Terminal T1 in Delhi collapsed and several highways have caved in, if these are not warning signals then what is? Blaming the monsoon is certainly lame. It is not sudden or unexpected. It happens every year yet we are ill-prepared for it. Besides, we so much depend upon it for irrigating our fields and providing drinking water. One can find so many pains when the rain is falling but then Without the rain, there would be no rainbow!

Without the rain, there would be no rainbow!

Without the rain, there would be no rainbow!

### PICTALK



Villagers use a boat to travel across a flood affected area after heavy rainfall, in Morigaon district

# Reclaiming Dehradun: Battling tourism woes



SIDHARTH MISHRA

Once an idyllic retreat and educational hub, Dehradun is now grappling with unchecked tourism, threatening its serene character

In the pantheon of the leaders belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the name of the late Manohar Parrikar would always be taken with a lot of respect. A Goan and an IITan, Parrikar was never happy with the stereotypical image of his state being a tourist destination for cheap alcohol, drugs and also sex. While Goa attracted tourists for its natural beauty and cultural magnetism, since the 1990s, there has been a noticeable increase in visitors drawn to the state for its permissive environment regarding alcohol, drugs, and sex tourism. Manohar Parrikar was vocal about his reservations concerning this shift in the tourist profile. He believed that such trends would tarnish Goa's image and disrupt the social fabric of the state once and for all. A leaf could be taken out from the books of Parrikar by the current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhama regarding a similar crisis being faced by the Himalayan state.

Take a drive from Clock Tower in Dehradun on the legendary Rajpur Road to Mussoorie, you will realise that all the cars parked on the roadside are doubling up as bars. This 'car-o-bar' would often be a vehicle with a Haryana, UP and Punjab number plate. The two days that one was in the Doon Valley recently, as these bars roared in the costly model cars, one could not find a single soul in the police uniform to check them. Somewhere it seemed that the absence of the cops on this road was deliberate to let these bars prosper. Dehradun was once known as the bakery capital of India. These bakery shops lining Rajpur Road have been overtaken by wine shops with glitzy lights announcing prominently what they sell. Well, one cannot protest about the shops but buying bottles and drinking outside on the roads have to be surely protested. Author Ratna Manucha, whose family has stayed in the valley for ages, calls these 'car-o-baris' the Aliens from the other states. "Each year the crowds coming into my



town swell. These aliens from outer states come in obscenely big cars, they drive nasty, trying to edge us locals in our sensible little cars off the road, showing the finger on occasions and mouthing expletives, throwing rubbish out of their windows, drinking on unlit highways, and then crashing their cars into unsuspecting locals," says Manucha. Things get worse during the weekends as the Rajpur road gets clogged. The 'tourists' really don't mind spending hours in the serpentine queues.

However, the residents of Doon living either on the arterial road or the smaller roads prefer staying at home lest their plan to visit somebody gets wasted in the jam. Dehradun till about 10 years back was not like this. It was still an idyllic town preferred by people to live a retired life. In broadening the roads to accommodate ever-increasing traffic flow, trees have been cut. Given the winter pollution in Delhi-NCR, a large number of people have bought apartments in Doon Valley to spend the winter months. This demand has given rise to the building of multi-storied apartments. In turn, these apartments have been built clearing the lychee orchards, which once kept the valley



DEHRADUN TILL ABOUT 10 YEARS BACK WAS NOT LIKE THIS. IT WAS STILL AN IDYLIC TOWN PREFERRED BY PEOPLE TO LIVE A RETIRED LIFE. IN BROADENING THE ROADS TO ACCOMMODATE EVER-INCREASING TRAFFIC FLOW, TREES HAVE BEEN CUT

green. Dehradun till some years back did not need the use of air-conditioners. The hotels with the ACs largely used them during the winter months for room heating purposes. But you can now see the topography of the valley with houses having air-conditioners jutting out of their windows. This 'horrorscape' is not just limited to the summer tourist season. Dehradun in the past two decades has evolved into a major centre for higher education. The large number of the colleges, both professional and general, have mushroomed along the ridges and the plains. They are not exactly home to centres for great knowledge earning but certainly, give a graduate degree for a handsome fee. Given the high fee structure, there is always a dearth of students and vacant seats. The marketing teams of these institutions scout far and wide specially looking for the youth wanting some fun with a degree as a bonus. These 'students' prefer staying in the apartments outside the campus, as it can accommodate their costly cars, as there are no restrictions on their timing to return home and none really bothered if their vehicle fell into a gorge as they drove in a drunken state. Uttarakhand

too has liberal liquor laws like Goa. Excise duty earned from liquor sales is the mainstay of the state revenue. But shouldn't Dhama be concerned about the image of Uttarakhand like Parrikar was for Goa? The late leader streamlined things in Goa without really tinkering with the existing laws. Parrikar emphasized the need for a robust law enforcement framework to tackle alcohol and drug tourism.

He increased police patrolling in tourist hotspots and enhanced coordination with central agencies. Second Parrikar pushed for regulations to control the sale and consumption of liquor in tourist areas. This included measures such as restricting liquor outlets and promoting responsible drinking through awareness campaigns. Dhama government in Uttarakhand too needs to make the presence of the cops more effective and control the misery that the residents of the city are being made to face. It's also depressing for those who regularly visit Doon to spend some time in peace who are now ending up being shoofed by the blaring horns of speeding vehicles.

(The writer is the author and president, of the Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INDIA'S PHOENIX MOMENT:

Madam — India's Phoenix Moment: A T20 World Cup Triumph! India's cricket team exhibited remarkable determination and resilience, clinching the T20 World Cup 2024 title with a breathtaking comeback in the final five overs. Rising like a phoenix from the ashes, India soared to victory, proving their mettle on the grandest stage. In the thrilling conclusion, Hardik Pandya's final over was nothing short of brilliant, and a spectacular catch by Suryakumar Yadav (SKY)—who went beyond the boundary and timed his leap perfectly to secure the catch on his second attempt—played a crucial role in sealing India's victory. Earlier in the match, King Virat Kohli's solid 76 runs and Akshar Patel's crucial 47 provided stability to the Indian innings, setting a record-high T20 Cup final total of 176. Despite this, the South African team, the Proteas, responded with a strong performance, reaching a respectable score and losing just four wickets. However, with only 30 runs needed from the last 30 balls and six wickets in hand, the Proteas faltered under immense pressure. Boundaries that were expected to seal the win for them turned into catches or mere singles, proving that "luck did not favor them" in those decisive final overs. Yes, indeed, a blend of luck and daring spirit won the game for India. Team India deserves all the praise for its fantastic performance. PVM Nivriti | Secunderabad

### SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

Madam — Apropos the report titled "Flogging of couple: BJP seeks resignation of Didi" (July 2); if the TMC leader Tajemul Islam has indeed beaten up a youth and a woman with sticks, he must be awarded exemplary punishment according to law. But by which temerity can the leaders of BJP dare to act as "moral guardians" of the country and atrociously demand the resignation of Mamata Banerjee? When Dalit youths

### Unjustified opposition to new criminal laws



The recent introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) has sparked mixed reactions from experts. Some members of the legal community suggest continuing with the old laws for another 20 years, a recommendation that is both impractical and counterproductive. It's unreasonable to speculate on future circumstances even one or two years ahead, let alone 20 years. This suggestion essentially advocates for delay-

ing the implementation of the new laws indefinitely. As is often the case, opposition parties have unitedly opposed these new laws, not on their merits or demerits, but because they were discussed during the previous Lok Sabha in their absence. This argument holds no water. Their absence during the discussions and debates in the previous session was not justified, and they missed an opportunity to contribute meaningfully. No one prevented them from participating; they chose not to, and that cannot be a valid reason to stall the implementation of these new laws.

The custodians of the law, who are highly educated and capable individuals, can certainly understand and implement these new legal frameworks. Union Home Minister Amit Shah aptly stated that these laws are created by Indians, for Indians, and by the Indian Parliament, marking the end of colonial criminal justice laws.

KV Setharamaiah | Bengaluru

were publicly flogged in Una Gujarat in 2016, the BJP leaders asked Anandiben Patel to resign! When spine-chilling gangrape/murder/forced cremation took place in Hathras Unnao Budaun; did the BJP leaders demand the resignation of Yogi Adityanath? When Kuki women got paraded naked in Manipur before gang rape, why didn't the BJP leaders demand the resignation of N Biren Singh immediately? Why didn't the resignation of Pushkar Singh Dhama get demanded after a lady receptionist was murdered in Uttarakhand? When Bengali migrant labourer Afrazul Khan was burnt alive to death in Rajsamund in 2017, did the BJP leaders ask Vasundhara Raje to resign? Hardly two weeks ago, street vendor Aurangzeb had been brutally lynched to death in full view of the Aligarh public! Did the "conscientious" leaders of the BJP act honestly enough to demand the resignation of Yogi Adityanath? Indeed, two wrongs do not make a right, but the greater truth remains that the

leaders of the hypocrite BJP simply hold no moral right to deliver unsolicited sermons about human rights. Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

### MONSOON IS A CHALLENGE

Madam — In the past few days, the number of rain-related deaths in the nation's capital has reached 11, with six deaths reported on Saturday alone. The heavy rainfall on Friday caused widespread waterlogging in Delhi. In response, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has expanded its staff to address waterlogging issues. To effectively tackle urban waterlogging, a holistic approach is needed, incorporating infrastructure improvements, sustainable urban design, and active community engagement. By implementing these strategies, cities can mitigate the impacts of heavy rains and enhance their resilience for the future.

Neha Tomar | Ujjain

## The need for music and life skills in modern education

To ensure holistic development and equal opportunities for all children, music must become an integral part of the school curriculum



RAVI SONAD

Driven on one side by developments in technology and on the other by changes to the global social order, we face tectonic shifts in the future of the workforce and challenges such as climate change and conflict. With this as a backdrop in mind, there is an urgent need to ensure that we can equip today's youth with the skills and mindsets to thrive in this dynamic environment. Education for the last 200 years has largely been based on imparting knowledge.

With increasing levels of specialization through the Industrial Revolution, knowledge became more valuable; however, today, soft skills, also known as Life Skills, have become much more needed. Without these skills, it is difficult to survive and succeed. More importantly, character building becomes imperative if we are to be prepared to tackle the global challenges facing us. We must define leadership not by position but as "Strength of Character" and "Sense of Community." There is plen-



ty of research and evidence showing that skills such as collaboration and communication, critical and creative thinking, and character traits such as self-confidence, grit, and resilience, as well as having a growth mindset, can be effectively developed through experiential learning that uses mediums such as team sports, the arts, and free play. Music is one of the most powerful art forms that supports the development of these skills in multiple, effective ways. Learning music requires practice and self-discipline to improve. It

requires the student to set goals, like mastering a piece of music or preparing for a performance, and then implement a plan to achieve these goals. Performing in a group teaches students the importance of working together, listening to each other, and supporting one another. Students who learn different types and forms of music develop empathy and a deeper understanding of different perspectives. Most music programs encourage composition and improvisation, allowing students to develop their creative thinking skills. Performing

in front of an audience helps build self-confidence while learning from mistakes during a performance helps build resilience and a growth mindset. Today, a well-rounded music curriculum is available in higher-end private schools, but all children must get the same opportunity. We need to ensure that music education becomes a core part of the school curriculum and is not treated as an extracurricular activity. Only then can we ensure equal access, regardless of background or skill level. If we can make teaching music in schools the norm, it will ensure the holistic development of all children. Building character and life skills will mean that we will not only support children in their journey towards personal and professional success, but we will also help develop a generation of leaders capable of taking care of themselves and the world around them.

(The writer is CEO and founder, Enabling Leadership; views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN

## EMBRACING THE PRESENT WITH MINDFULNESS

True peace and creativity flourish when we fully engage with the present



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Most of us might have heard the proverb 'You only know what you've got when it's gone' many times in our lives. But, in spite of that, many of us realize the fortune we had, only when we lose it. The stream of life flows on and every second the water in the stream is changing. At any given moment the water at the same spot in the stream is different. What is present now will move on to the next moment, so every moment life is unfolding and something new is being presented. Life unfolds in the present. But so often, we let it slip away, allowing time to rush past unobserved and unseized, and squandering the precious seconds of our lives as we are lost in the past or caught up in the future.

It's very common for most of us to fantasize about things like shopping or going to a movie while we are at work. And while we are actually in a movie theatre, we worry about the work piling up on our desks, isn't it ironic? We are trapped by intrusive memories of the past or fret about what may or may not happen in the future and in this whole struggle, we don't appreciate the Present because we identify ourselves with our thoughts, beliefs and emotions strongly. We forget the fact that we need to live in the Present i.e. the NOW, and for that, we need to be very still inside but we are constantly distracted by our thoughts linked to the past and future. Most of us think in a conditioned, addictive way.

We are addicted to the patterns and beliefs we created in the past which keep driving our thoughts in the present. Instead of thinking consciously and with full awareness, we are controlled by our thoughts of the past. To change this pattern we need first to pause and observe what's going on in our mind. We need to step back and watch and then steer our thoughts towards the present moment and creative goals. We need to focus on being before thinking, judging, analysing and doing. Living in the present is a state of active, open, intentional attention to the present. When we become aware of what's going on inside our mind, we realize that we are not our thoughts; we are the observer of our thoughts from moment to moment and stop judging them. It is like watching waves rising and falling on the surface of the ocean. Spiritual wisdom makes



us aware and realise that we are souls — sentient points of light and purity, peace, joy and love are our original state of being. As the noise and chatter of the mind slow down, we can experience our true nature and just relax in our state of being. Then we are connected to the now not influenced by the past, future or anything out there. We are in a highly creative state when our pure awareness creates pure energy of love, joy and peace in every moment and shapes our destiny. Under such a stage, we are flowing with life without grasping, chasing, wanting, needing or holding on to anything. We are in a truly liberated state and truly powerful and creative. There is fresh energy in every thought and action. Living in the present reduces impulsive and reactive behaviour. Those who live in the moment can hear negative feedback without feeling threatened.

They are more accepting, accommodating and flexible, as a result of which they have easy and satisfying relationships. It is very important for all of us to realize that we are now in the most important and beneficial age when the Almighty Himself is bestowing His treasures of wisdom, love and powers upon humanity. Hence, by becoming soul conscious we can live in the present and make the best out of each second of this valuable period. Being aware of the self as a soul and of being connected to the Supreme liberates us in a second and we are able to flow with life with ease and lightness. So, don't look back because you are not going that way.

(Writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

## Modi Govt's imperative for employment growth



AS MITTAL

Despite the country's emerge as a major manufacturing hub, the sector has seen limited progress, contributing to a rising unemployment rate among the youth

There has been a long-standing vision to make India a global manufacturing hub to create millions of jobs. However, considering India's size and status as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, it's perplexing how the potential for job creation and growth in the manufacturing sector has been overlooked for so long. The new government must implement a new industrial policy having decisive measures to address current structural constraints and reshape India's manufacturing sector in response to global supply chain shifts. This is crucial for achieving a GDP of \$5 trillion and making India the world's third-largest economy by 2027. It's alarming that unemployment among young people with graduate degrees is at an all-time high of 29 per cent as India moves towards becoming the third-largest economy. In 2019, manufacturing was the second-largest employer in India after agriculture, but it has now fallen to fourth place behind the construction sector, trade, and hospitality.

The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSO) data shows that 45.5% of the workforce is employed in agriculture, 12.4% in construction, and only 11.6% in manufacturing, despite its potential to create a multitude of job opportunities. Manufacturing still employs around 60 million people in India, effective action is needed to unlock its full potential for job creation at large. India's impressive growth is hindered by the lacklustre performance of the manufacturing sector, which has shown limited expansion over the past 25 years. Unlike other countries, India's production structure has shifted directly from agriculture to services-driven growth, resulting in a stagnant contribution of manufacturing to India's GDP at 15-17%, significantly lower than in East and South-East Asian countries. China has a 31.63% share of global manufacturing, the US has 15.87%, Japan 6.52%, Germany 4.78%, and India 2.87%. This highlights the urgent need for India to address the challenges in its manufacturing sector.

The reasons for this stagnation could be diverse, such as high tax burden, overburdened regulatory compliances, inadequate infrastructure and connectivity, unreliable electricity, lack of access to credit or a skilled workforce, and insufficient focus on research, development, and technology adoption.

Despite these obstacles, Indian manufacturers are now more emboldened to transcend their comfort zones and align with the nation's goal of becoming a global player.

**Areas to be addressed:**  
**Focus on sectors of strength:** There are strong capabilities in various sectors such as automobiles (especially e-vehicles, to raise its current share from 7% to over 30%), pharmaceuticals and chemicals, textiles and apparel, engineering goods, farm-implements, and bicycles. However, there are significant gaps in mega-scale facilities that can anchor large-scale exports. The reliability of supporting infrastructure and fostering global partnerships for MSMEs are critical for accelerating growth.

**Revisit PLI:** It is necessary to reevaluate the effectiveness of the Production Linked Incentives (PLI) scheme, creat-



THE NATIONAL SAMPLE SURVEY ORGANISATION DATA SHOWS THAT 45.5 PER CENT OF THE WORKFORCE IS EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE, 12.4 PER CENT IN CONSTRUCTION, AND ONLY 11.6 PER CENT IN MANUFACTURING, DESPITE ITS POTENTIAL TO CREATE A MULTITUDE OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES

ed in 2020 to invigorate the domestic manufacturing sector, showing the desired results. The progress of schemes worth over Rs.2 lakh crore covering 14 sectors, especially in labour-intensive sectors like automobiles, auto components, textiles, IT hardware, and medical devices, it has been slow.

The PLI scheme's broader goals, such as job creation, attracting substantial investments, enhancing exports, and positioning India as a global manufacturing hub, have yet to be fulfilled. **Restructure GST:** The current Goods and Service Tax (GST) structure applies to over 1250 items and services, with standard tax rates of 5%, 12%, 18%, and the highest rate of 28%. Additionally, there are zero and special rates of 0.25%, 1.5%, and 3% for certain goods and services.

To address inflation and tax-related issues, a restructuring of the tax system is necessary. This could involve transitioning from the existing four-slab structure to a two-slab model and providing exemptions for items such as farm implements, which were previously exempted under the Pre-GST regime.

**Opportunities in next-generation sectors:** Opportunities in renewable energy, aerospace, and high-tech manufacturing sectors such as semiconductors and mobile devices is a case in point as the \$12 billion exports in FY 23, more than double the \$4.8 billion in FY20, are rapidly emerging as the world transitions to a

green and connected future. Building a solid foundation in these sectors requires focusing on R&D, investments in technology transfers, global tie-ups, and incentivizing investments, along with collaboration across academia, industry, and the government.

**Smart manufacturing stack:** India's technology stack is a leading example of digital disruption at scale and showcases the country's capabilities for innovative solutions. A similar innovative leap in manufacturing, oriented toward the next generation of smart industrial clusters, connected factories, enhanced efficiency and reduced waste, high-productivity assets, end-to-end value chain transparency, and tech-enabled real-time interventions, can be significant differentiators. Accelerate future-ready infrastructure: India's inefficiencies are costing the nation heavily in time and money.

It is imperative to reduce current logistics costs from 8-10 per cent to 6 per cent of GDP by 2030. This requires a \$1.2 billion investment in industry-focused corridors. To provide a level playing field to the northern India manufacturing hubs, away from sea-ports, especially land-locked border states like Punjab needs policy-backed support to combat over double freight burden in comparison to southern-western states.

Labour-intensive manufacturing: As technological advancements drive productivity in manufactur-

ing across various sectors, the government also needs to address the transition of the workforce from agriculture and other fields. The 2024 India Employment Report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasizes the need to promote labour-intensive manufacturing and enhance efforts in skilling. It is crucial to prioritize skill development, and industry leaders should play a pivotal role in driving this initiative.

**The Way Forward:** A thriving and self-reliant domestic manufacturing sector is essential for India to achieve inclusive growth by implementing an aggressive and effective reform agenda and navigating geopolitical risks and climate change-driven calamities.

It is crucial to ensure that the recent promises made in the poll can be fulfilled to transform India into a global manufacturing hub, resulting in employment generation and tangible progress. India has the capacity and resources to excel in this area, and it's time for the new government to make it happen.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman (Cabinet minister rank) of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council and President of Tractor and Mechanization Association (TMA). Views expressed are personal)

## The petrodollar system and its influence on global finance and geopolitics

A more multipolar financial ecosystem that accommodates a diverse array of currencies and economic influences is taking shape

The petrodollar system, inaugurated in 1974, has long been a linchpin of global finance and geopolitics. Established through an agreement between the United States and Saudi Arabia, it stipulated that the kingdom would exclusively sell its oil in US dollars. This arrangement not only guaranteed a consistent demand for the dollar but also directed oil revenues back into the US economy through investments in US Treasury bonds and other financial assets.

As a result, the system created a significant source of funding for the US government and solidified the dollar's status as the world's primary reserve currency. Geopolitically, the petrodollar system forged a symbiotic relationship between



SANTOSH MATHEW

the US and oil-exporting nations, particularly those in the Middle East. In exchange for security assurances and economic assistance, these countries committed to conducting oil transactions in dollars, thereby granting the US significant sway over global oil markets and the broader economy. This symbiosis reinforced the US's geopolitical influence and allowed it to project power in

the strategically vital Middle East, ensuring the uninterrupted flow of oil, which is critical for the global economy. Recent developments suggest a potential departure from this long-standing arrangement. On June 9, Saudi Arabia declared its intention to discontinue exclusive oil sales in US dollars. This decision is part of a broader strategy to diversify the Saudi economy and diminish reliance on oil revenues. The move away from the petrodollar system is seen by some as a step towards strengthening ties with other economic powers, notably China, which seeks to promote its currency, the yuan, as an alternative in global trade. The role of Henry Kissinger, a pivotal figure in establishing the petrodollar system, under-

scores its historical significance. Kissinger's negotiations with Saudi Arabia in the 1970s not only secured American dominance in global finance but also assured protection for Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, cementing their alliance with the US through military cooperation and strategic partnerships.

Reactions to Saudi Arabia's decision vary widely. Analysts speculate it could weaken the dollar's global hegemony, potentially leading to its depreciation and higher inflation rates in the US. However, mitigating factors include the US's current status as an oil exporter, reducing vulnerability to fluctuations in oil prices and currency dynamics. The broader implications for the global economy remain



uncertain. A shift away from the dollar in oil transactions could promote greater currency diversification and lessen dependence on the US financial system. For oil-importing countries, this shift could offer more stable pricing if transactions are conducted in their own currencies or other stable alternatives. In conclusion, Saudi Arabia's strategic pivot signifies a significant evolution in global financial systems.

While it may not immediately dismantle the petrodollar's influence, it signals a transition towards a more multipolar economic order, where multiple currencies could assume pivotal roles in global trade and finance. This transformation is anticipated to unfold gradually, with profound implications for international relations and economic strategies worldwide.

Throughout decades, the petrodollar system has upheld the dollar's global dominance, intertwining economic power with geopolitical influence. The petrodollar system's historical context and its prospective decline illustrate the dynamic nature of global financial and geopolitical landscapes. The shift in Saudi Arabia's pol-

icy highlights the kingdom's strategic intent to align itself more closely with emerging economic powers and reduce its over-reliance on oil revenue. This move is emblematic of a broader global trend toward economic diversification and the quest for greater financial sovereignty among oil-producing nations.

The gradual erosion of the petrodollar system could herald the rise of alternative financial paradigms, challenging the entrenched supremacy of the US dollar. As countries explore new avenues for conducting international trade and finance, the world may witness an increase in currency diversification, potentially leading to a more balanced and less US-centric global economy. Such a shift could also

encourage more equitable economic partnerships and reduce the economic vulnerabilities associated with dependence on a single dominant currency. Moreover, the potential decline of the petrodollar system invites a reexamination of existing geopolitical alliances and economic dependencies.

The ripple effects of these changes could extend beyond the realm of finance, influencing international diplomacy, trade policies, and even security dynamics. The focus will likely shift toward fostering a more multipolar financial ecosystem that accommodates a diverse array of currencies and economic influences. (The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

# CPM working to plug loopholes to retrieve lost ground in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The ruling CPI(M) in Kerala has started the process of consolidating its numero uno position in the State politics following the directive by the all-India leadership of the party to plug the loopholes that led to its drubbing in the recent Lok Sabha election. The CPI(M), rated as the world's largest Marxist organization by its national leader Sitaram Yechury, could win just one seat out of the 15 seats it contested while its allies, the CPI and the Kerala Congress(M) drew a blank. As part of the mission to regain its status, the party decided to get three of its "official" assassins undergoing rigorous life term in Kannur Central Jail freed at the earliest though the trio have been sentenced to life term with no provision of parole for the next 20 years. The grapevine is that the Marxists are trying to finish off some top Sangh Parivar leaders in the State in order to regain the trust of Muslims



and Christians in the State. TK Rajeev, Mohammed Shaffi and Anna Sijith, veteran assassins with number of "successful operations" to their credit were the ones proposed by the party leadership to be freed of all charges of murder. This initiative is a follow up to the Azadi Ka Amrith Mahotsav and envisaged the release of life term convicts who have behaved well in the prisons. On 13 June, the Kannur Prison Superintendent initiated the move to get the approval of the governor for the release of the trio. But following a media leak, the government made a hasty retreat and hushed up the entire plan. M B Rajesh, the

Minister for Excise, told the Assembly that it was a faux pas by the jail department and has been nixed by the government. What went unasked was whether the officials of jail department, a sensitive branch, would write a letter seeking the release of three dreaded criminals without prodding by the government. The three, along with other party activists were sentenced by the Kerala High Court for the gruesome murder of T P Chandrasekharan, a former CPI(M) local leader who turned against the party for its anti-poor and anti-working class stances. Chandrasekharan was hacked to death by the trio in association with the local leaders of the CPI(M) in one of the hundreds of party villages spread across the northern districts of Kerala. The CPI(M)'s intention was to bring out the trio from the jail and deploy them to execute leaders with whom the official leadership is cut up as a fall out of the turf war over gold smuggling through

Kozhikode International airport. The media in Kerala is under orders of the party not to mention the names of the gold smugglers. The fight for the control of the gold smuggling operations has led to a turf war between two prominent factions of the CPI(M) which is reminiscent of the fight between the gangs of Dawood Ibrahim (D-Company) and the Pathans gang led by Alamzeb and Amir Zada of Mumbai during the 1970s and 1980s. On Monday, the whole of Kerala was in for a shock as activists of the CPI(M) and its student wing SFI assaulted Dr Sunil Bhaskar, principal of Gurudeva College of Advanced Studies near Kozhikode when the latter objected to the wayward behavior of the students. A teacher getting beaten up by students is the rarest of rare incidents anywhere in the country but the CPI(M) in its bid to retrieve lost ground is busy bulldozing any kind of challenges to the party and comrades.

# Bengal Guv meets victims at Cooch Behar

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Tuesday made a last minute amendment in his programme of visiting Chopra in North Dinajpur district to meet the victims of public flogging by a local TMC strongman and took a detour to Cooch Behar about two hundred kilometers away where he met some other victims. As expected the Chopra victims who were asked to come to Cooch Behar would not turn up to the Cooch Behar venue but the Governor met the victims of other atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the TMC men on the BJP workers, sources said. Continuing post poll violence has afflicted a large part of Cooch Behar district where scores of BJP workers have been attacked and their houses looted and ransacked alleged TMC goons leading many of them to take shelter in the district party office. "I am here not only as a Governor but as the friend of the unfriended poor... Violence has become a norm, rather

than an exception. The responsibility lies with the (State) Home Minister. As Governor, it is my constitutional duty to see that the right to life is not tampered with...As Governor, I assure you that the Constitution and the rights of people are protected. The culture of violence has to go. Murders most foul seen in most parts of West Bengal. Steps needed, will be taken effectively," Bose who was expected to submit a report on his findings to the Centre said. Tajemul alias JCB — named apparently in consideration of his physical appearance — a TMC strongman charged with similar other incidents including the murder of a CPI(M) worker had a couple of days ago publicly flogged a couple for their extra-marital relationship. The incident was soon dubbed by the BJP as a sample of Taliban rule being perpetrated by the Trinamool Congress in Bengal which a number of saffron leaders including Soumitra Khan an MP from Bishnupur termed an ominous signal of the State turning into a Muslim Rahstra so to say. "In 10 years time Bengal will

turn into a Muslim State," Khan told in Delhi. While Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar called it a "Talibani rule being perpetrated by the Mamata Banerjee Government." However amid nationwide condemnation of the criminal act North Dinajpur police administration said, "efforts are being made from certain quarters to spread misinformation about an incident in Chopra PS under Islampur PD (police district). The fact is, police have promptly identified and arrested one person who had publicly assaulted a lady." Meanwhile, more such events of public assault came to the fore with Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Tuesday informing about an "Episode 2 of street justice," even as his party leadership alleged that "JCB" had in a similar incident delivered "public justice" by beating up another couple where the woman was almost beaten to unconsciousness. A national BJP leader referred to "another shocking video of Tajemul Haque's Talibani styled insaf approximately from 15 days ago where yet another couple were flogged."

# NEET-PG 2024 likely in mid-August

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test-Post Graduate (NEET-PG) 2024 is likely to be held mid-August, sources said on Tuesday. The revised date for the medical entrance examination is expected to be announced this week. A meeting was held in the Union home ministry on Monday, in which officials from the health ministry, National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS), along with its technical partner Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and Cyber Cell officials discussed the preparedness for the NEET-PG, which is to be held online. "Besides the NEET-PG, the meeting was held to evaluate the robustness of the system for the conduct of the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination, which is scheduled for July 6," a source said. Monday's meeting was held to check the "robustness" of the system for the conduct of the exam in the coming days, the sources added.

# Soldier on picnic sacrifices own life while saving fellow soldier

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a poignant testament to the unwavering courage and selflessness of armed forces, Shwensinlo Semp, Assam Regiment, exhibited extraordinary bravery during a tragic incident at Nsonji Lake, Tsimenyu, Nagaland. While on leave and enjoying a picnic with friends on June 30, Shwensinlo demonstrated the essence of duty and sacrifice in the face of adversity, Defence Ministry said here on Tuesday. During the outing near Nsonji Lake, a friend encountered perilous waters and struggled to stay afloat. Without hesitation, Shwensinlo jumped into the lake and successfully rescued his friend. However, during the rescue, his feet became entangled in weeds and mud on the lakebed, preventing him from saving himself. This incident underscores the profound commitment of Indian Army soldiers to protect and serve, even at great personal risk. His sacrifice serves as a poignant reminder that their readiness and valor have no limits.

# Drive against ticketless travelling in FY 23-24 yields ₹ 66.27 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NF Railway conducts intensive ticket checking drives regularly in order to ensure hassle-free, comfortable travel and better services to all bonafide passengers. Keeping a constant vigil against ticketless and irregular travellers, drives are conducted to discourage and curb such activity that leads to inconvenience for genuine passengers. During the current FY from April till May, 2024 such drives led to recovering an amount of more than Rs. 14.72 cr from approximately 167154 ticketless travellers within the jurisdiction. Thus the current period of FY 2024-25 (April-May) marked an increase of 18.85 per cent in terms of revenue earnings from ticketless travellers and 14.53 per cent in terms of detected cases from its preceding FY of 2023-24. It can be mentioned here that during the period from April, 2023 to March, 2024, 793170 nos. of cases of ticketless/irregular ticket passengers were detected leading to more than Rs. 66.27 Cr earnings towards realization of fare and penalties from offenders.

# Central Bank of India celebrates Doctors Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To show gratitude for this noble profession, on the occasion of National Doctors Day Central Bank officials visited hospitals and greeted doctors. Bank's senior staff Anil Agnihotri RH(Delhi South) visited Lady Harding Medical College and met Dr Sarita Beri, Director of Institute, Rajeshwar Lal, Dy Director(Admin), Dr Anupam Parkash(CMO) and many other doctors and greeted them with a flower bud and a small gift as a token of love. Official of RO & Marketing team and staff of LHM branch met with approx 50 doctors from LHM Kalawati Hospital and Kriplani Hospital. BH Gole market Ms Sushri Ranjana met with doctors from RML Hospital. In addition to it many other branch managers visited their nearby hospitals/Clinics and met with doctors and their staff. They were informed about our Cent Sanjeevani Scheme, Cent Home Loan and Cent Vehicle Schemes. All the doctors overwhelmed by this initiative taken by us and assured a very strong relationship to be continued.

# Echon expands domestic distribution in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Echon, a globally recognized manufacturer of innovative building materials for home interiors, exteriors, and signage, announces its strategic expansion into the Indian market. With over 25 years of international experience and a robust global presence, Echon aims to revolutionize India's construction and home improvement sectors with eco-friendly and cutting-edge solutions. Echon's structured five-phase expansion into India marks the beginning of an extensive distribution network starting from Gujarat. The company is poised to cater to the evolving needs of Indian consumers across residential, commercial, and industrial segments. Central to this launch is the introduction of its flagship product, "Masterboard", designed to redefine standards in construction, renovation, and signage solutions. These offerings emphasize durability, cost-effectiveness, and modern design, addressing the burgeoning demand in India's real estate and infrastructure sectors.

# Arun Chaudhary joins as general manager of NFR construction

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Arun Kumar Chaudhary, an officer of Indian Railway Service of Engineers from UPSC's 1988 batch, has taken over as the General Manager of N.F. Railway (Construction). He carries with him vast experience of working in various zones and PSUs of Indian Railways spreading all over the country. Before joining as the General Manager of N.F. Railway (Construction), he worked as the Principal Chief Engineer Eastern Railway from June, 2023 onwards. As General Manager/Construction he will be the overall in-charge of all railway construction activities within the jurisdiction of N. F. Railway i.e. all north-eastern states including Sikkim and parts of West Bengal and Bihar.

# No scientific study to blame farm fires in Punjab for Delhi air pollution: NGT member

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

There has been no scientific study to back the claim that farm fires in Punjab contribute to air pollution in Delhi, National Green Tribunal (NGT) member Justice Sudhir Agarwal has said and deprecated imposing fines and jailing farmers of the state over stubble burning, calling it "grave injustice". The statement of a sitting judicial member of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) assumes significance as in most judicial proceedings and public discourses paddy crop residue burning in the neighbouring states, especially Punjab, has been blamed for Delhi's worsening air pollution. Observing that curbing air pollution in Delhi is the shared responsibility of all, Justice Agarwal said, "Prosecuting, fining and jailing the farmers only (for stubble burning) will be grave injustice". Justice Agarwal was speaking at the "Conference on Environment Friendly Paddy Cultivation" and 'Savior of Natural Resources and

Environment Award' held in the national capital on July 1. The event was organised to "felicitate and facilitate" water friendly, air friendly, earth friendly paddy cultivation. Sharing his experiences as a member of the NGT, Justice Agarwal said stubble burning was often considered the main cause of rising air pollution in Delhi. He said Punjab is not even an immediate neighbour of Delhi, which shares its borders with Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Moreover, a particular wind speed and a specific direction were needed to ensure that the so-called polluted Punjab air reaches the national capital, he said. "Har bat ke liye kisan bhaiyon ko zimmedar thehrana mujhe samajh nahi aata hai (Holding farmers responsible for everything is beyond my comprehension)," said Justice Agarwal. "Was there any scientific study conducted before alleging so?" he asked, adding that the Delhi air had oily content and it not possible that crop residues, which are biodegradable in nature, can have these.

# Two booked for duping loan agency

PTI ■ THANE

Police have registered a case against two men for allegedly defrauding a loan agency and a leading private sector bank to the tune of Rs 3.26 crore, an official said on Tuesday. The accused have been identified as Sagar Suresh Sonawane and Rajesh Shette, he said. "It was between October 2021 and December 2023, Sonawane, an employee of a loan providing agency, manipulated the loan application process and together with Shette and their accomplices, he allegedly submitted false information to secure loan from the bank. After getting the money, he did not repay the loan, that resulted in a loss of Rs 3.26 crore to the loan agency as well as the bank," he said. The authorities are conducting a thorough investigation to apprehend all involved parties and recover the misappropriated funds.

# Rahul urges Speaker to restore expunged remarks

From Page 1

has in support of the allegation. The Speaker can bring the matter to the notice of the Minister or the member concerned to ascertain the factual position. Later significant portions of the Congress leader's speech were expunged from the records early this morning by the Chair. In his first speech as the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul had launched a no-holds-barred attack on the BJP, accusing the leaders of the ruling party of dividing people on communal lines. The former Congress president wrote: "While the Chair has the power to expunge certain remarks from the proceedings of the House, the stipulation is only about those kinds of words, the nature of which have been specified in Rule 380 of the

Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha. I am, however, shocked to note the manner in which considerable portions of my speech have been simply taken out of the proceedings under the garb of expunction." "I am constrained to state that the portions expunged do not come under the ambit of Rule 380. What I sought to convey in the House is the ground reality and the factual position. Every member of the House who personifies the collective voice of people whom he or she represents has the freedom of speech as enshrined in Article 105(1) of the Constitution of India," he said. He asserted that it was every member's right to raise matters of people's concern on the floor of the House. "It is that right and in exercise of my obligations to the people of the country that I was exercising yesterday," he said.

# 1992-93 Mumbai riot accused re-arrested after being on run for 31 years

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Thirty one years after he went absconding in the wake of his arrest and subsequent grant of bail, the Mumbai police have tracked down and re-arrested a 1992-93 Mumbai riots case from Sewri in south-central Mumbai.

Identifying the re-arrested accused as one Sayed Nadirshah Abbas Khan (65), the police said that the absconding accused was taken into custody by a team of police officials from his Sewri home by the Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Marg police station during the weekend. Sayyed Khan — who had ear-

lier been arrested by the police under Indian Penal Code sections 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 307 and 34 on charges of attempt to murder and other riot-related cases — had jumped the bail and absconded. He had not attended his trial proceedings. Sayyed Khan had been named as an accused in a case of

attempted murder and unlawful assembly during the communal riots that erupted in the metropolis in the wake of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992. "After having been granted bail from judicial custody, Sayyed Khan had disappeared. An arrest warrant had been issued against him

way back in 1995. We were on the look-out for him for years. Subsequently, he was declared by a court as a proclaimed absconder. The court had even issued a non-bailable warrant against him," Station Senior Police Inspector Satish Pawar of the Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Marg Police station said.

The police had been tabs in the area where he lived. Recently, the police managed to lay hands on the mobile phone records of his relatives. The investigators later learnt that he was planning to visit his Sewri home on Saturday. Accordingly, they laid a trap for him and re-arrested when he visited home.

# Ruling MahaYuti, Opp MVA bag two seats each in Maha Council polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

The ruling MahaYuti and the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) bagged two seats each in the Maharashtra Legislative Council in the polls held in the run-up to the Maharashtra Assembly polls to be held in October this year. From the MahaYuti side, the BJP won the Konkarn seat, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena secured the Nashik seat. On its part, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena — which is a part of the Opposition MVA — walked away with both State Legislative Council seats. The four seats of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, for which elections were held during the weekend were: Mumbai Graduates' constituency, Mumbai Teachers' constituency, Konkarn Division Graduates' constituency, Nashik Division Teachers' constituency.

The elections had been necessitated by the vacancies caused by the retirement of Vilas Potnis of Sens (UBT) (Mumbai Graduates' constituency) Niranjan Davkhare of BJP (Konkarn Division Graduates' constituency), Kapil Patil of Lok Bharti (Mumbai Teachers' constituency) and Kishore Darade, an Independent (Nashik Division Teachers' constituency). The four members had retired on June 7. The winners in the just-held elections are Anil Parab from Mumbai Graduates' constituency and Prof Jagannath Abhyankar from Mumbai Teachers' constituency, both from the Shiv Sena (UBT), while BJP's Niranjan Davkhare and Shiv Sena's Kishore Darade emerged victors from the Konkarn Division Graduates' constituency and the Nashik Division Teachers' constituency Davkhare is the son of for-

mer Council Deputy Chairperson late Vasant Davkhare, who was a close aide of NCP founder Sharad Pawar, who now heads NCP (SP). Davkhare won the Konkarn Division Graduates' seat for fourth term after defeating Congress candidate Ramesh Keer. From the Nashik Division Teachers' constituency, Darade won the seat defeating Vivek Kolhe of BJP, who was contesting as an independent candidate, Sandeep Gulve of Shiv Sena (UBT) and Mahendra Bhavsar of Ajit Pawar-led NCP. In Mumbai Graduates' constituency, Parab defeated Kiran Shelar of the BJP. An advocate, Parab is a close aide of the Thackeray family. In Mumbai Teachers' seat, Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Prof Abhyankar trounced Subhash More of Shikshak Bharti, while Shivnath Darade of BJP defeated Shivaji Nalawade of NCP.

# Confident of all 3 MVA candidates winning Council polls: Uddhav

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday said the opposition MVA would not have fielded a third candidate in the upcoming polls to the Maharashtra legislative council had it not been confident of victory. Talking to reporters here, Thackeray asserted that all three candidates of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), which comprises the Sena (UBT), Congress and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) and some smaller parties, will emerge victorious. The biennial elections for 11 seats of the Upper House of the state legislature will be held on July 12. The six-year term of the 11 MLCs is due to end on July 27. After a meeting with the MVA leaders to discuss the poll preparations, Thackeray said the opposition bloc has fielded Pradnya Satav (of



Congress), Jayant Patil (Peasants and Workers Party) and Milind Narvekar (Shiv Sena UBT). With the opposition's current strength in the 288-member legislative assembly, the electoral college for the polls, only two of its candidates can win the council polls. The current strength of the state assembly is 274, while 14 seats are vacant. The quota for the winning candidate is 23. "All our three candidates are going to win," Thackeray

said. Asked if the opposition bloc does not have numbers for the victory of its third candidate, the former state chief minister said, "We would not be doing it had we not been confident." The NCP led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has fielded Rajesh Vitkar and Shivajirao Garje. The Shiv Sena headed by CM Eknath Shinde has fielded former MPs Krupal Tumane and Bhawana Gawali. The BJP has announced the candidatures of Pankaja Munde, Amit Gorkhe, Sadebhai Khot, Yogesh Talekar and renominated Parinay Phuke. The last date for withdrawal of nomination is July 5. The Ajit Pawar-led NCP has 41 MLAs, the Eknath Shinde-led Sena has 40, and the BJP has 103. The Congress has 37 MLAs, Shiv Sena (UBT) has 13 and NCP (SP) has 15.

# ASI seeks time to submit report

PTI ■ INDORE

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Tuesday filed an application in the Madhya Pradesh High Court seeking four weeks' time to submit its survey report on the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula mosque complex, a medieval-era structure in Dhar district locked in a long-running dispute. The plea contended that the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), Hyderabad, has sought three weeks' time from the ASI to study the huge data collected during the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR)-Geographic Information System (GIS) survey of the complex and submit a final report.



# Congress & CPN-UML strike deal to oust PM Prachanda

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Kathmandu(PTI) In a dramatic development, politically fragile Nepal's two largest parties have inked a midnight power-sharing deal to form a new government to replace the ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who on Tuesday refused to resign and asserted that he would rather face a confidence vote. The agreement, finalised between Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba and Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman K P Sharma Oli on Monday night, outlines the ministerial division, provincial leadership roles and a rotation for the prime ministerial position. Deuba, 78, and Oli, 72, - both former premiers - agreed to

share the Prime Ministerial position on a rotation basis for the rest of the term of the Parliament, said ex-foreign minister Narayan Prakash Saud, who is a Nepali Congress central member. Nepali Congress, the largest party in the 275-member House of Representatives, has 89 seats at present, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. Their combined strength of 167 is sufficient for a majority of 138 seats in the lower house. Prachanda's party has 32 seats. The two leaders met on Saturday to lay the ground for a potential new political alliance between the two parties, following which Oli's CPN-UML ended its association with the Prachanda-led government barely four months after extending support to it. Meanwhile, embattled Prime

Minister Prachanda refused to step down despite the agreement between the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML. In a meeting of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) office-bearers held in Baluwatar, Prachanda said he would rather face a vote of confidence in Parliament than resign from the post, the party Secretary Ganesh Shah told PTI. Prachanda, 69, a former guerrilla leader, has won three votes of confidence in Parliament during his one-and-a-half-year term. Nepal has had 13 governments in the last 16 years, indicating the fragile nature of the Himalayan nation's political system. Under the agreement, the CPN-UML chief Oli will lead the government in the first phase of the remaining term of

Parliament. For the remaining term, Deuba will be the prime minister. The two leaders tentatively agreed to form a new government, amend the Constitution, and work out a power-sharing formula, which they reportedly shared with a few confidants, media reports said, quoting multiple senior leaders from both parties. The ministers belonging to the CPN-UML in the Prachanda-led Cabinet are likely to resign en-masse, sources close to the CPN-UML said. CPN-UML secretary Shanker Pokharel told reporters that an agreement was reached with the Nepali Congress to form a national government led by Oli. The new government will be formed to maintain political stability in the country and make necessary amendments to the Constitution.

# Hungary's Russia-friendly leader in Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

During his first visit to neighboring Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday that the war was Europe's "most important issue," and recommended an immediate ceasefire. Orbán is widely seen as having the warmest relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin among European Union leaders, and his visit was a rare gesture in a tumultuous relationship with Ukraine as Budapest has repeatedly leaned toward Moscow. The Hungarian prime minister has routinely blocked, delayed or watered down EU efforts to extend assistance to Ukraine and to sanction Moscow over its war, frustrating both Zelenskyy and other EU leaders. But following talks in Kyiv on Tuesday, Orbán appeared to open the door to a new phase of bilateral relations, saying "the time had come" for such

an official visit. "We are trying to leave the disputes of the past behind us and focus on the period ahead," Orbán said in brief comments to journalists following the talks. "We would like relations between our two countries to be much better." Ukraine and Hungary have had a tense relationship since the war began, with Orbán portraying himself as a champion for peace and calling for an immediate cease-fire and peace talks without expanding on what that would mean for Ukraine's territorial integrity. He reiterated that call Tuesday, saying it would "provide an opportunity to speed up peace negotiations." But Zelenskyy on Tuesday said he was "grateful" for the humanitarian support Hungary had provided to Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war. He also said Hungary could play a role in organizing a second iteration of a peace summit that was held in Switzerland last month, which brought together dozens of

world leaders. "Today, we discussed in detail how Hungary can show further leadership in preparing the second summit," Zelenskyy said, adding that he would like for the event to take place this year. Orbán's visit comes the day after Hungary took over the six-month rotating presidency of the EU, a position that has little real power but can be used to set the tone of the bloc's agenda. Hungarian officials have indicated that they will act as "honest brokers" in the role despite worries from some EU lawmakers that Hungary's democratic track record makes it unfit to lead the bloc. During the visit, the Hungarian prime minister acknowledged Russia's invasion, and said his aim in traveling to Kyiv was "to understand how we could be helpful to Ukraine in the forthcoming six months." "The issue of peace is not only important for Ukraine, it is important for the whole of

Europe," Orbán said. "This war, which you are now suffering, has a profound effect on European security." The war is "the most important issue for Europe," he said. The Hungarian premier, a self-described adherent of "illiberal democracy," has long been accused by his European partners of dismantling democratic institutions at home and acting as an obstinate spoiler of key EU policy priorities. The bloc has frozen more than \$20 billion in funding to Budapest over alleged rule-of-law and corruption violations, and Orbán has conducted numerous anti-EU campaigns depicting it as an overcentralized, repressive organization. Orbán has also long accused Kyiv of mistreating an ethnic Hungarian minority in Ukraine's western region of Zakarpattia, a community he has used to justify his refusal to provide weapons to Ukraine or allow their transfer across the two countries' shared border.

# Hurricane Beryl rips through open waters

AP ■ SAN JUAN

Hurricane Beryl roared through open waters on Tuesday as a monstrous Category 5 storm on a path that would take it near Jamaica and the Cayman Islands after earlier making landfall in the southeast Caribbean, killing at least two people. A hurricane warning was in effect for Jamaica and a hurricane watch for Grand Cayman, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac. Beryl was forecast to start losing intensity on Tuesday but still to be near major hurricane strength when it passes near Jamaica on Wednesday, the Cayman Islands on Thursday and Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on Friday, according to the National Hurricane Center. The center warned that Beryl was expected to bring life-threatening winds and storm surge to Jamaica, where officials warned residents in flood-prone areas to prepare for evacuation. "I am encouraging all



Jamaicans to take the hurricane as a serious threat," Prime Minister Andrew Holness said in a public address late Monday. "It is, however, not a time to panic." Beryl is the earliest Category 5 storm ever to form in the Atlantic, fueled by record warm waters. Early Tuesday, the storm was located about 300 miles (485 km) southeast of Isla Beata in the Dominican Republic. It had top winds of 165 mph (270 kph) and was moving west-northwest at 22 mph (35 kph). "Beryl remains an impressive

Category 5 hurricane," the National Hurricane Center said. A tropical storm warning was in place for the entire southern coast of Hispaniola, an island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic. As the storm barreled through the Caribbean Sea, rescue crews in the southeast Caribbean fanned out across the region to determine the extent of the damage that Hurricane Beryl inflicted after landing on Carriacou, an island in Grenada, as a Category 4 storm.

# UN group demands immediate release of Imran Khan; Pak govt says 'internal issue'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A UN group has demanded the immediate release of Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, saying at least two cases slapped on him were "politically motivated" and aimed to exclude him from the country's political scene. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted its opinion on the 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party founder's detention in its 99th session from March 18-27 in Geneva. The UN body said that Khan's detention and prosecution in the first Toshakhana corruption case and cipher cases were "politically motivated" to exclude him from competing in the political arena. The UN group also said that it was "without legal basis." Reacting to the development, the Pakistan government on Tuesday dismissed the plea, saying the jailed former prime minister's arrest and the pending cases against him were "internal matters." Khan getting relief in many cases is "a manifestation of a

transparent and fair trial and judicial system. Any demand beyond the constitution, law and international norms will be called discriminatory, biased and against justice," Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar said in a statement reacting to the UN agency's report. He also said that Pakistan as an independent state enforces the constitution and prevailing laws through the courts. "Imran Khan has all the rights according to the country's constitution and law and international norms, he is in jail as a convicted prisoner," Tarar said. His remarks came after the embarrassing indictment of the Pakistan government as the UN group termed Khan's detention in at least two cases as void of any legal basis. PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari, in his reaction to the Law Minister's remarks, said that the issue of Khan's arrest is no longer an "internal matter" of Pakistan. "The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, based in Geneva, after months of work, has given their official opinion. This is huge and reveals that Imran Khan's

detention is illegal and should be released immediately," Bukhari said in a statement on X. "The Working Group concludes that his detention had no legal basis and appears to have been intended to disqualify him from running a political office. I thank everyone who has worked tirelessly on this case in the UN. This is no longer an 'internal matter,'" he added. The Dawn newspaper reported that the UN body based its opinion on its source's detailed and un rebutted submissions regarding the ultra vires nature of the prosecution in the first Toshakhana case, as well as the context of the political repression of Khan and his party in which that prosecution occurred. "The working group concludes that his detention had no legal basis and appears to have been intended to disqualify him from running for political office. Thus, from the outset, that prosecution was not grounded in law and was reportedly instrumentalised for a political purpose," it said. It further added that how Khan was convicted in the first

Toshakhana case (namely, a summary judgment delivered in absentia) and his subsequent arrest by law enforcement personnel who broke into his residence and assaulted him and his staff were concerning and compounded the illegality. The working group further said that Khan's prosecution in the cipher case "lacks a grounding in law, as his actions do not appear to have violated the Official Secrets Act, as was apparently corroborated by the intelligence services, according to the source's un rebutted submissions." The 17-page UN agency report details the various cases in which Khan was arrested and how he was treated while undergoing the judicial processes. The main cases were the two Toshakhana cases and the cipher case. The first Toshakhana case alleges that Khan had "deliberately concealed" details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana — a repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept — during his time as the prime minister and proceeds from their reported sales.

# Dutch king swears in new govt

The Hague (AP): The Netherlands has a different prime minister for the first time in 14 years as Dutch King Willem-Alexander swore in the country's new government Tuesday, more than seven months after elections. The anti-immigration, anti-Islam party of firebrand Geert Wilders won the largest share of seats in elections last year but it took 223 days for the four parties in the coalition to form a government. Dick Schoof, former head of the Dutch intelligence agency and counterterrorism office, signed the official royal decree at Huis Ten Bosch Palace, saying he "declared and promised" to uphold his duties as the country's prime minister. The 67-year-old was formally installed alongside 15 other ministers who make up the country's right-leaning coalition.



# S'pore prepared to recognise Palestine in principle at appropriate time

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore is prepared in principle to recognise Palestine as a state and will make this move at an appropriate time, Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said in Parliament on Tuesday, emphasising that the country has advocated a negotiated two-state solution, consistent with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions to achieve lasting peace. "In particular, there needs to be an effective Palestinian government that accepts Israel's right to exist and categorically rejects terrorism," Dr Balakrishnan said. "Both sides have legitimate rights, and both peoples have a right to live in peace and dignity within secure borders." The Straits Times quoted the Singapore minister as saying. He was responding to questions from parliamentarians on Singapore's May 10 decision to vote for a United Nations resolution backing the admission of

Palestine as a member of the world body, which it said was made after "serious and careful consideration." Dr Balakrishnan urged both sides to seize the moment to take steps towards a long-lasting peace and put an end to the suffering that has "gone on for too long." "Ultimately, Israelis and Palestinians would need to exercise leadership and would have to work together to forge a better future for their people. As Singapore is a friend to both, Singapore will continue to offer our encouragement and our tangible support to both Palestinians and Israelis," he said. The minister also reiterated the principles guiding Singapore's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He pointed out that Singapore has consistently advocated a negotiated two-state solution, consistent with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, as a way for Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and

security. "This is the only viable path for achieving a comprehensive, just, and durable solution to this conflict," the broadsheet had Dr Balakrishnan as saying in the House. Answering a question about the thresholds that need to be crossed for Singapore to recognise the state of Palestine, Dr Balakrishnan said it depends on whether there is an effective Palestinian government or leadership that represents all Palestinians. This authority should have effective control over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the mandate and authority to negotiate with the Israelis on behalf of the Palestinians, he said. "So, I would say that we are not going to lock ourselves into a specific time, or to whether or not other countries have made decisions in parallel on the same fundamental question," he added. Dr Balakrishnan said that Singapore has consistently supported the right of the Palestinian

people to a homeland. On April 18 this year, a UN Security Council resolution that recommended that Palestine be admitted to the United Nations was vetoed. On May 10, the General Assembly took up a resolution expressing support for Palestine's membership in the UN and recommending that the Security Council reconsider this matter favourably. Singapore had voted in favour of this resolution. The vote in the UN General Assembly was supported by 143 members and opposed by nine — including the United States and Israel — while 25 members abstained. "Singapore voted in favour of this resolution after very careful consideration, and this reflected our hope to encourage both Israel and Palestine to resume direct negotiations towards a two-state solution, at a time when in fact, the prospects for such negotiations were increasingly bleak," said Dr Balakrishnan.

# 'Tropical Cyclone Freddy that hit S Africa was longest ever'

Geneva (AP): The UN weather agency said Tuesday that Tropical Cyclone Freddy, a deadly Indian Ocean storm that lashed eastern Africa last year, was confirmed to be the longest-lasting cyclone ever recorded at 36 days. Freddy topped the previous record held by Hurricane John, which struck Hawaii and lasted almost 30 days in the northern Pacific three decades ago, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said as it released a study which began as Freddy waned in March last year. It was also the second-longest in terms of distance traveled, at some 12,785 kilometers (7,945 miles) — while John was more than 13,000 kilometers, the agency said. In the wake of Freddy, more than 1,200 were reported dead or missing in Malawi while more than 180 people died in Mozambique, the WMO said.

# Iranian presidential candidates accuse each other of having no plan ahead of runoff

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's presidential candidates on Monday accused each other of having no solution for the country's problems ahead of Friday's runoff election aimed at choosing a successor for the late President Ebrahim Raisi, who died last month in a helicopter crash. During a more than two-hour debate on public TV, reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian attacked his competitor, Saeed Jalili, a hard-line former nuclear negotiator, for his lack of experience, saying: "Tell me, what single company have you ever managed to make you capable of running the country? Jalili, who is known as the 'Living Martyr' after losing a leg in the 1980s Iran-Iraq war and is famous among Western diplomats for his haranguing lectures and hard-line stances, defended himself highlighting his career and several positions

held, including that of top nuclear negotiator. Pezeshkian further questioned his opponent on what plans he would have for reaching a nuclear deal, with Jalili responding he would approach it "based on strength not weakness," without providing details. Jalili accused Pezeshkian of having no plans for managing the country, saying his presidency would drive the country to a "backward position," as it was under relatively moderate former President Hassan Rouhani (2013-2021). Rouhani struck a nuclear deal with world powers that capped Iran's uranium enrichment in return for lifting sanctions but later, in 2018, President Trump pulled the US out from the landmark deal abruptly restoring harsh sanctions on Iran. Jalili said that "with the support of people," Iran would achieve an economic growth of 8 per cent a year, a promise

Pezeshkian mocked, saying authorities should be allowed to "execute him if he failed" to deliver on it. Iran must implement "a dynamic foreign policy" if it wants to have a successful economy, Jalili said, adding that it should not be limited to those nations that it has a problem with — a reference to the US and the western world. Instead, he said, "Iran should look to the other 200 nations in the world where 'foreign relations should be improved.'" Pezeshkian said his foreign policy will be based on "engagement with the world" including engaging in "negotiations for lifting sanctions." Both sides promised to address the problems of the country's poor, workers, women, ethnic groups and religious minorities, and vowed to provide better and faster internet — a plea to a younger generation that showed apathy during Friday's vote.

# UN adopts Chinese resolution with US support on closing gap in access to AI

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a Chinese-sponsored resolution with US support urging wealthy developed nations to close the widening gap with poorer developing countries and ensure that they have equal opportunities to use and benefit from artificial intelligence. The resolution approved Monday follows the March 21 adoption of the first UN resolution on artificial intelligence spearheaded by the United States and co-sponsored by 123 countries including China. It gave global support to the international effort to ensure that AI is "safe, secure and trustworthy" and that all nations can take advantage of it. Adoption of the two non-binding resolutions shows that the United States and China, rivals

in many areas, are both determined to be key players in shaping the future of this powerful new technology — and have been cooperating on these first important international steps. The adoption of both resolutions by consensus by the 193-member General Assembly shows widespread global support for their leadership on the issue. China's UN Ambassador Fu Cong told reporters Monday that the two resolutions are complementary, with the US measure being "more general" and the just-adopted one focusing on "capacity building." He called the Chinese resolution, which had over 140 sponsors, "great and far-reaching," and said, "We're very appreciative of the positive role that the US has played in this whole process." Fu said AI technology is advancing extremely fast and

the issue has been discussed at very senior levels, including by the US and Chinese leaders. "We do look forward to intensifying our cooperation with the United States and for that matter with all countries in the world on this issue, which ... will have far-reaching implications in all dimensions," he said. The Chinese ambassador, however, strongly criticized the US Treasury Department's proposed rule, announced on June 21, that would restrict and monitor US investments in China for artificial intelligence, computer chips and quantum computing. "We are firmly opposed to these sanctions," Fu said. China does not believe the rule will be "helpful to the healthy development of the AI technology per se, and will, by extension, divide the

world in terms of the standards, and in terms of the rules governing AI." He called on the US to lift the sanctions. The Chinese resolution calls on the international community "to provide and promote a fair, open, inclusive and non-discriminatory business environment," from AI's design and development to its use. Fu said China doesn't think the US actions foster an inclusive business environment. Both the US and Chinese resolutions focus on the civilian applications of AI, but Fu told reporters the military dimension of artificial intelligence is also very important. "We do believe that it is necessary for the international community to take measures to reduce the dangers and the risks posed by the development of AI," he said.

# North Korea brags of new missile with 'super-large warhead'

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea said Tuesday it had test-fired a new tactical ballistic missile capable of carrying "a super-large warhead," a claim quickly disputed by South Korean officials and experts who speculate the North likely fabricated a successful test to conceal a botched launch. It's the second time that South Korea has questioned North Korea's claim on the development of new weapons in recent days, as the rivals are locked in heightened animosities over the North's testing activities. The North's official Korean Central News Agency said that Monday's test involved the Hwasongpho-11 Da-4.5 missile, which can carry a 4.5-ton-class warhead. It said the test was meant to verify the weapon's



flight stability and hit accuracy at the maximum range of 500 kilometers and the minimum range of 90 kilometers. The test apparently refers to the two ballistic missile launches that South Korea said North Korea performed Monday. Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Lee Sung Jo said at a briefing later Tuesday that the second North

South Korean military has said the second North Korean missile possibly travelled abnormally during the initial stage of its flight. It said if the missile exploded, its debris would likely have scattered on the ground. The KCNA dispatch didn't say from where it launched the new missile and where it landed. Unlike previous weapons tests, North Korea also didn't publicise any photos of Monday's test. The fact that it tested both the missile's maximum and minimum ranges suggested North Korea performed two launches. KCNA, citing North Korea's Missile Administration, reported that North Korea will test-fire the missile again later in July to verify the performances of its simulated warhead at the medium range of 250 kilometers.

# Sensex, Nifty settle flat after hitting fresh lifetime high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit fresh lifetime high levels before closing flat due to profit-taking in select banking and telecom shares amid concerns over rich valuations on Tuesday. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 34.74 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 79,441.45 in a volatile trade. During the day, it jumped 379.68 points or 0.47 per cent to hit a record peak of 79,855.87. The Nifty declined by 18.10 points or 0.07 per cent to 24,123.85. Intra-day, it climbed 94.4 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a lifetime high of 24,236.35.



Among the Sensex pack, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India and Titan were the biggest laggards. Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Tata

Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers. On Monday, the BSE benchmark settled higher by 443.46 points or 0.56 per cent at an all-time peak of 79,476.19. The Nifty climbed 131.35 points or

0.55 per cent to settle at a fresh lifetime high of 24,141.95. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory on Tuesday, while Seoul ended lower. European markets were trading down. US markets ended in the green on Monday. India's gross GST collection increased 8 per cent to Rs 1.74 lakh crore in June, sources said on Monday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.66 per cent to USD 87.17 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 426.03 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

# RBI proposes rationalising regulations on export, import transactions

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Tuesday proposed rationalising regulations that cover export and import transactions with an aim to promote ease of doing business and empower banks to provide more efficient service to their foreign exchange customers. The central bank has issued 'Regulation of Foreign Trade under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999 - Draft Regulations and Directions' in this regard. As per the draft, every exporter should furnish to the specified authority a declaration specifying the amount representing the full export value of the goods or services.



The amount representing the full export value of goods and services shall be realised and repatriated to India within nine months from the date of shipment for goods and date of invoice for services," it said. The draft also proposes that an exporter who has not realised the full value of

export within the time specified may be cautioned listed by the authorised dealer. An exporter who has been cautioned listed can undertake export only against receipt of advance payment in full or against an irrevocable letter of credit, to the

satisfaction of the authorised dealer. According to the draft, no advance remittance for the import of gold and silver should be permitted unless specifically approved by the Reserve Bank of India. The RBI said the proposed regulations are intended to promote ease of doing business, especially for small exporters and importers. They are also intended to empower Authorised Dealer banks to provide quicker and more efficient service to their foreign exchange customers, the central bank said. The RBI has sought comments on the draft regulations under FEMA and directions to authorised dealer banks by September 1.

# International toy fair to begin on July 6; over 100 foreign buyers to participate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than 300 domestic companies and over 100 foreign buyers from the US, Germany and other countries are expected to participate in the four-day international toy fair beginning on July 6 in the national capital, a statement said on Tuesday. More than 250 Indian brands will display their products during the fair, which is being organised at Pragati Maidan here, Toy Association of India senior vice-president Naresh Kumar Gautam said in the statement. Gautam said that the 15th Toy Biz International B2B Expo 2024 is the largest fair in South Asia. "It is a big platform for Indian toy makers to showcase their products and capabilities to the global audience. It helps us attract new customers and partners, expand market reach for our toys and boost exports," he said.

In addition, he said, Toy Biz also provides a platform for industry players to network and connect with each other, which can help foster collaborations, partnerships and joint ventures. Gautam, who is also the CEO of Noida-based Little Genius Toys Pvt Ltd, also suggested the government provide fiscal support to manufacturers in organising these fairs. "At least Rs 1 lakh should be given to all the stalls in these fairs. At present, we are providing hotel accommodation to foreign buyers and ticket cost up to Rs 1 lakh," he added. He said that the expo can also help raise awareness about the importance of the Indian toy industry, both domestically and internationally. Wooden toy maker Gautam said that different categories of toys will be showcased to buyers such as electronics, soft toys, playground equipment and board games. The country's toy exports declined



marginally to USD 152.34 million in 2023-24 from USD 153.89 million in the previous financial year, according to a report by economic think tank GTRI. India has taken several steps since 2020 to curb the inflow of substandard toy imports, especially from China, and strengthen the domestic toy industry. The report has proposed a comprehensive strategy aimed at developing India's toy industry and boosting exports. It has suggested steps such as developing a robust domestic ecosystem, encouraging global toy brands to manufacture in India, learning from China, and localise production of key inputs. The report recommended setting up specialized toy

manufacturing hubs to reduce costs and increase efficiency; modernising traditional Indian toys while preserving their cultural value to create unique products. It has also asked for making separate strategies for each group of toys such as plush toys like stuffed animals (world trade is about USD 7 billion); educational toys (world trade is about USD 6 billion); construction toys like LEGO (USD 10 billion); action figures and dolls (USD 10 billion); electronics (USD 15 billion); board games and puzzles (USD 9 billion); and outdoor and sports toys (USD 5 billion). In 2022, the global market imported toys valued at about USD 60.3 billion. Dominating this market, China exported toys worth USD 48.3 billion, securing an 80 per cent share of the global exports. Other significant contributors to the global toy export market include the Czech Republic with exports of USD 3.2 billion, the European Union with USD

2.7 billion, Vietnam with USD 1.7 billion, and Hong Kong with USD 1.1 billion. In contrast, India's share in the global toy export market is minimal, totalling USD 167 million, which represents only 0.3 per cent of the global exports, ranking it 27th, the report said. On the import side, India ranks even lower, at 61st, with toy imports amounting to USD 60 million. The US is the largest importer of toys with a total procurement of USD 22.2 billion. It is followed by the European Union (USD 9 billion), Japan (USD 2.8 billion), and Canada (USD 1.6 billion). India raised import duties on toys beginning in February 2020. The basic customs duty was increased from 20 per cent to 60 per cent and then to 70 per cent in July 2021. Implemented from January 2021, the QCO mandates that all toys sold in India, whether domestically produced or imported, must comply with specific Indian Standards for safety.

# Divine Power Energy makes stellar debut; shares jump over 284 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Divine Power Energy Ltd, a manufacturer of insulated wires and strips, on Tuesday made a remarkable debut, closing with a premium of more than 284 per cent against the issue price of Rs 40. The stock was listed at Rs 155, reflecting gains of 287.50 per cent from the issue price on the NSE SME platform Emerge. Later, shares of the company settled at Rs 150 apiece, down by 3.23 per cent. At the close of the trading session, the company's market valuation stood at Rs 322.01 crore. In volume terms, 31.44 lakh shares of the company exchanged hands on the bourse. Last week, Divine Power Energy's initial public offering (IPO) was subscribed nearly 394 times on the final day, driven by an overwhelming response from retail investors. The Rs 22.76 crore IPO is entirely a fresh issue of 56.90 lakh equity shares. The price band was Rs 36-40 per share. The company proposes to utilise Rs 18 crore of the net IPO proceeds to meet its working capital requirements and plans to use the remaining capital for general corporate purposes.



DPEL manufactures copper and aluminium wires/strips insulated with paper, crepe paper, and fiberglass and supplies them to discoms and transformer manufacturers. Its clientele include TATA Power, BSES, Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd and Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. Incorporated in 2001, DPEL is promoted by Rajesh Giri and Vikas Talwar. The company posted a revenue of Rs 222.08 crore and a profit after tax of Rs 6.4 crore in FY2023-24.

# India in talks with Africa, Latin America for critical mineral block: Govt official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is in talks with Africa as well as Latin America to get critical mineral blocks on a government-to-government basis, Veena Kumari Dermal, joint secretary of the Ministry of Mines, said on Tuesday. Critical minerals such as lithium are essential components in many of today's rapidly growing clean energy technologies, including wind turbines, electricity networks, and electric vehicles. Demand for these minerals is growing quickly with clean energy transitions gathering pace. "We are having lots of discussions with many other resource-rich countries both in Africa as well as in Latin America for getting... A block on a G2G basis or on a priority basis," Dermal said at India Energy Storage Week (IESW) 2024 organised by India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA). The mines ministry, she said, is giving more and more importance to the exploration of critical minerals in India. At the domestic front, the



government has successfully auctioned one lithium block in Chhattisgarh, the joint secretary added. She explained hopes that the Chhattisgarh government will take steps to start the exploration and production from the lithium block at the earliest. Maiki South Mining Pvt Ltd had last month bagged the country's first lithium block in Chhattisgarh that was put up for sale. Meanwhile, the government cancelled the auction of 14 critical minerals that were on offer in the second round of

auction. In June, the government had put on sale 21 blocks in the fourth round of auction of critical and strategic minerals. The government received 56 physical bids and 56 online bids for 18 of the 20 blocks offered during the first tranche of the auction, which began on November 29, 2023. However, the auction for 13 of the 20 blocks was cancelled due to a lukewarm response. Seven of these cancelled blocks were re-notified for auction in the third round.

# Sebi mandates email as default mode for dispatching CAS by depositories, Mutual Fund-RTA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday mandated email as a default mode of dispatch of 'Consolidated Account Statement', which provides an account of securities traded by an investor, by depositories and Mutual Fund-Registrar and Transfer Agents (MF-RTAs). The new framework will come into force from April 1, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular. A Consolidated Account Statement (CAS) is a single or combined account statement which shows the details of financial transactions made by an investor during a month across all mutual funds and also other securities held in dematerialised (demat) mode. The CAS is dispatched to the investors by the depositories (NSDL or CDSL), providing

the details of financial transactions in both mutual fund folios and depository accounts if PANs are common across the RTAs and the depositories. In respect of mutual fund folios, where there is no common PAN between the RTAs and the depositories, the CAS is sent by mutual funds containing only the mutual fund transactions. "Considering the increasing reach of digital technology, electronic mode now being the preferred mode of communication and as a green initiative measure and to streamline the regulatory guidelines on the mode of dispatch of account statements, it has been decided to revisit the regulatory provisions and provide for email as the default mode of dispatch for CAS by depositories, MF-RTAs and holding statement by DP," Sebi said.

# Electronics industry body ICEA calls for lower input tariffs in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Head of the Union Budget, India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA) has recommended reduction in input tariffs for building a strong components ecosystem. ICEA based its recommendations on a "tariff study" it conducted across seven competing economies, including India. "...High tariffs on inputs limit the very engine of growth that would lead to higher production. High tariffs on inputs reduce exports because they become uncompetitive, leading to lower production of the final product, i.e., mobile phones. Addressing this requires a reduction in tariffs on inputs. "We recognise that developing the domestic supply chain is extremely critical but the right way is not by protecting with high tariff but drastically reducing disabilities by creating

competitiveness and infuse incentive schemes wherever there are gaps," the report, which was released on Tuesday, said. To attract global value chains (GVCs) and increase the scale of production, ICEA said all tariff lines that increase costs significantly, including components of complex subassemblies, should be brought down to zero. It also suggested removal of 2.5 per cent tariff on sub-assembly parts and inputs. "These tariffs don't serve any purpose. They fail to build a domestic industry while increasing costs, complexity and compliance for legitimate manufacturers," it said. The industry body further said the e-government should provide appropriate policy and financial support for building large-scale components and sub-assembly ecosystem, with a longer gestation and incentive period.

# Rupee falls 6 paise to close at 83.50 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 6 paise to settle at 83.50 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by a strong greenback in the overseas market and elevated global crude oil prices. Besides, a muted trend in domestic equities and foreign fund outflows dented investor sentiments, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.51 and hit the intraday high of 83.47 and a low of 83.56 against the American currency during the session. It finally settled at 83.50 (provisional) against the dollar, 6 paise lower than its previous close. On Monday, the rupee depreciated 10 paise to settle at 83.44 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to



trade with a slight negative bias as the strength in the US Dollar and surge in crude oil prices may keep the rupee under downside pressure," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Choudhary further said the overall positive trend in the domestic markets and expectations of fresh foreign inflows may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech

and JOLTS job openings data from the US. "USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 83.75," Choudhary said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.09 per cent higher at 105.99. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.76 per cent higher at USD 87.26 per barrel. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 34.74 points, or 0.04 per cent, to close at a new peak of 79,441.45 points. The broader NSE Nifty settled 18.10 points, or 0.07 per cent, lower at 24,123.85 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 426.03 crore, according to exchange data.

# Groww Asset Management, trustee settle case with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Groww Asset Management Ltd (formerly known as Indiabulls Asset Management Company Ltd) and its trustee have settled with markets watchdog Sebi a case pertaining to alleged violation of regulatory norms after paying Rs 9 lakh. This came after the applicants - Groww Asset Management Company and Groww Trustee Ltd (earlier known as Indiabulls Trustee Company Ltd) - proposed to settle the alleged violation by "neither admitting nor denying the findings of fact." "It is hereby ordered that any proceedings that maybe initiated for the violations...Are settled in respect of the applicants," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its settlement order passed on June 28. The applicants have submitted that on account of change in control of Indiabulls Asset Management Company and Indiabulls Trustee due to the acquisition of these entities by



Nextbillion Technology Pvt Ltd, the entities are now known as Groww Asset Management and Groww Trustee with effect from May 3, 2023. The applicants, in the settlement application, stated that during April 2020 to March 2022, certain scheme-related expenses were being paid by the AMC and were not paid from the schemes. This resulted in the AMC bearing the expenses towards running their schemes thereby violating Sebi's rule. The Sebi's rule mandates that all scheme-related expenses, including commission paid to distributors, need to necessarily be paid from the scheme only within the regulatory limits and not from the books of the AMC, its associate, sponsor, trustee or any other entity through any route.

# Epic penalties drama for Ronaldo ends with Portugal beating Slovenia

AP ■ FRANKFURT (GERMANY)

No one does high drama in international soccer to such an operatic extent as Cristiano Ronaldo. Portugal is heading to a blockbuster quarterfinal with France at the European Championship after its star captain generated compelling viewing on center stage of the victory over Slovenia on Monday. Winning a penalty shootout 3-0 after a 0-0 game against the 57th-ranked team in world soccer might not sound much. But there were tears, lots of them, from Ronaldo; an apology in prayer-form to his fans, who responded with adulation; extravagant arm gestures of anger, frustration and exasperation; chances wasted and denied to make more tournament history; a renewed duel with an old rival goalkeeper; and ultimately redemption and victory. Ronaldo's mother was in the stadium and TV pictures showed her crying, too, after he missed his penalty. "Sometimes it's hard and difficult to score penalties," Ronaldo told Portuguese broadcaster RTP after the match, getting emotional again. "I've scored more than 200 penalties in my career. Sometimes it's a mess." Still, the last act of Monday's show gave Portugal what it needed. "We showed the enthusiasm that we still have to play, to have fun, to give joy to the fans and that's it, this is our life," he said after it was all over,

close to midnight in Frankfurt. The 39-year-old Ronaldo went into the game without a goal at Euro 2024. The moment when he surely had to become the oldest player ever to score at a Euros finals tournament came in the first period of extra time, the 105th minute, after missing five or six of the kind of chances he has thrived on now for 20 years at this level. Portugal had been awarded a penalty kick and Ronaldo stepped up to take what could have been the decisive goal. Instead, Slovenia goalkeeper Jan Oblak, a long-time adversary from their time playing Spanish league soccer in Madrid, dived left to push aside the well-struck shot against a post and away to safety. Tears welled in Ronaldo's eyes and soon flowed during the break before the second period of extra time began. Teammates consoled him, kissed his forehead and urged him to keep going. Extra time also finished 0-0 and when the penalty shootout started, Slovenia's first kick was saved by Portugal goalkeeper Diogo Costa. Up stepped Ronaldo, facing a massed stand of about 10,000 Portugal fans. He placed it perfectly low beyond Oblak diving to his right. Ronaldo looked apologetically to the fans and put his hands together as if in prayer. The fans responded with a bellowing and forgiving shout of "Siuuuu" - their soccer icon's trademark goal scream.



"I was certain that he had to be the first penalty taker and show us the way to victory," Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said. "Life gives you difficult moments and the way he reacted makes us very proud." Costa answered the rest of those fans' prayers with as good a penalty shootout as any goalkeeper could have. He saved all three of Slovenia's kicks

from Josip Ilicic, Jure Balkovec and Benjamin Verbic. Then he was in tears, too. Bruno Fernandes and Bernardo Silva also scored for Portugal to seal the shootout 3-0 with two kicks to spare. "I was sad and now I'm overjoyed. This is what football gives you," Ronaldo said in translated comments in a post-game

interview. "You cannot explain it." Portugal will face France in the quarterfinals on Friday in Hamburg, a rematch of the 2016 final that Portugal won in Paris after Ronaldo went off injured early. "We all know that Cris is the hardest worker. I understand how frustrated he is," Costa said. "For me, it's an honor to play on the same team."

The personal duel between Ronaldo and Oblak had been memorable merely in regulation time. It was an intensely frustrating first 90 minutes for Ronaldo with three free kicks, two mistimed jumps for headers and a golden chance to score with his first clear shot in open play. That was in the 89th, when he ran clear on goal with the ball passed

perfectly into his stride. The left-foot shot was low and powerful but Oblak's block was better. The best of Ronaldo's free kicks was a powerful line drive right at Oblak in the 55th that the tall goalkeeper squatted to push away with strong hands. The intense drama for the Portugal superstar almost overwhelmed the troubled evening for Slovenia's emerging star. Benjamin Seško had chances to win the game, in the 62nd and 115th minutes, going one-on-one with Costa after racing past 41-year-old defender Pepe. The first was a weak shot that screwed wide, and the second was powerful and accurate but saved by the goalkeeper's outstretched boot. So it went penalties. Just as it had in the Euro 2012 semifinals, when Spain beat Portugal before Ronaldo - as the fifth scheduled taker - even had the chance to step up. Just as it had when Ronaldo's Real Madrid and Oblak's Atletico Madrid met in the 2016 Champions League final. Back then, Ronaldo placed the fifth and decisive spot-kick past Oblak to win the title. Portugal is still competing to win back the European title it also won in 2016, at the expense of an admirable Slovenia squad that was effectively unbeaten after drawing all four of its games at Euro 2024. "His emotions show respect for Slovenia," coach Matjaz Kek said of Ronaldo, "and that is what I am content with."

## Mbappé and France into Euro 2024 quarterfinals after Kolo Muani's late goal beats Belgium 1-0

AP ■ DUESSELDORF (GERMANY)

Another frustrating match for Kylian Mbappé. Another underwhelming performance by France at the European Championship. Didier Deschamps isn't concerned - his team is into the quarterfinals. "It's beautiful," the France coach said after Les Bleus relied on the ninth own-goal scored at Euro 2024 to squeeze past Belgium 1-0 in the round of 16 on Monday. A heavyweight match between neighbors and teams ranked No. 2 (France) and No. 3 (Belgium) failed to live up to its billing, and the nature of the only goal proved to be fitting. Randal Kolo Muani, on as a second-half substitute, turned in the area and sent in a shot in the 85th minute that deflected off Belgium defender Jan Vertonghen and looped over stranded goalkeeper Koen Casteels. "I was lucky enough to get my shot on target," he said of his decisive intervention. "It was blocked but it went in. We're very, very happy and very, very proud." UEFA thought differently about the destination of Kolo Muani's shot and put it down as an own-goal, the latest in a tournament full of them. It's the second own-goal earned by France while there has also been a penalty by Mbappé. It means a France player has yet to score from open play. "Even if today that goal was enough to get us to the quarterfinals, we have the capability to score more," Deschamps said. France will play Portugal or Slovenia in the last eight on Friday. Mbappé, again wearing a mask to protect his broken nose sustained against Austria in France's opening match, had five of France's 20 shots but none were on target. He played mostly on the left wing and was well-marshalled by a Belgian defensive set-up that included Kevin De Bruyne - the team's most creative player - deployed



as a deep-lying midfielder. De Bruyne had more clearing headers than incisive passes before being pushed further forward for the final half-hour of the game. Back in his favored position, he created Belgium's best chance when he played through Yannick Carrasco, who took too long over a shot that was blocked by France left back Theo Hernandez. The match-winner, instead, was Kolo Muani, whose last big moment at a major tournament came when he bore down on goal in the last seconds of extra time in the 2022 World Cup final against Argentina. His shot was saved by Emi Martinez, when a goal would surely have won the title for France. France's overall display will do little to stop the growing dissent among many of its fans who feel more can come from a talented bunch of players headlined by Mbappé, playing on the day he officially became a Real Madrid player.

Deschamps, however, was happy with his pragmatic tactics, saying: "We were intelligent, playing the waiting game and not falling into their trap." Mbappé will be playing in his first ever quarterfinal at the European Championship, with France having lost on a penalty shootout to Switzerland in the last 16 at the last tournament in 2021. As for the Belgians, they head home after a fairly miserable Euro 2024, during which the players were jeered loudly by their own fans following a 0-0 draw with Ukraine at the end of the group stage. Against France, they were intent on not leaving the game too open for the quick French attackers and the deployment of De Bruyne in a deeper role helped in that regard, even if it limited the team's attacking options. The tactic would have been a masterstroke had Belgium won. Unfortunately for coach Domenico Tedesco, it didn't.

## Jamshedpur, Shillong to be new venues for Durand Cup beginning in Kolkata on July 27

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Domestic season opener Durand Cup football tournament will be held from July 27 to August 31 across four venues with Indian Super League, I-League and other invitational teams competing in it. The 133rd edition of the Asia's oldest tournament will have 43 matches to be played

in a round-robin league-cum-knockout format, with the opening match and the final scheduled at the iconic Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) in Kolkata. The 24 participating teams will be divided into six groups. Eight teams -- group toppers and two best second-placed sides -- will qualify for the knockout stage.

Like last year, international teams are expected to participate this year too, the organisers said on Tuesday. Continuing with its commitment to spread the tournament further into the East and North-East, two new cities -- Jamshedpur and Shillong -- have been added as host venues this year. Matches will be held in Kokrajhar in Assam for the

second consecutive year, besides Kolkata, which has been a host for the last five years. Kolkata will host three groups while Kokrajhar, Shillong and Jamshedpur will host one group each. ISL side Mohun Bagan Super Giant are the defending champions, having won the tournament for a record 17th time, the most by any team.

## Andy Murray playing only doubles at his last Wimbledon after back surgery

AP ■ LONDON

Two-time Wimbledon champion Andy Murray will play only doubles at his last appearance at the All England Club following his withdrawal from singles on Tuesday, just over a week after back surgery. The 37-year-old Murray pulled out of the singles competition hours before he was supposed to play Tomas Machac on Centre Court. "Unfortunately, despite working incredibly hard on his recovery since his operation just over a week ago, Andy has taken the very difficult decision not to play the singles this year," his management team said in a statement. "As you can imagine, he is extremely disappointed but has confirmed that he will be playing in the doubles with Jamie and looks forward to competing at Wimbledon for the last time."



Murray had surgery on June 22 to remove a cyst from his spinal cord. Murray has said he wants to retire after the Paris Olympics, which start later this month. He has dealt with injuries in recent years, including a bad hip that required two procedures. Murray stopped playing during a second-round match at the grass-court tournament at Queen's Club in London last

month because he was having trouble walking. He later explained that the cyst was compressing a nerve in his back and leaving his right leg numb. Murray owns three major championships: The U.S. Open in 2012 and Wimbledon in 2013 and 2016. His 2013 title made him the first British man to win the Wimbledon singles in 77 years. He reached No. 1 in the ATP

rankings and is the only player with two consecutive tennis gold medals in Olympic singles. He won at London in 2012 - when the Summer Games matches were at the All England Club - and at Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Murray underwent hip operations in 2018 and 2019. While he thought he would need to retire after the second surgery, in which he received a metal hip implant, Murray eventually returned to action. He has since been hampered by various issues, including tearing ligaments in his left ankle at the Miami Open in March. Murray lost in the first round of the French Open in May. He had been practicing in recent days at the All England Club and undergoing medical tests to see whether he would be able to compete at what was expected to be his farewell Wimbledon.

## Naomi Osaka wins at Wimbledon for the first time in 6 years, and Coco Gauff moves on, too

AP ■ WIMBLEDON

Naomi Osaka had not won a match at Wimbledon in six years. Hadn't even played there in five. Grass courts never were her favorite surface. Twelve months ago at this time, Osaka was off the tour while becoming a mother - her daughter, Shai, turns 1 on Tuesday - and recalls flipping on the TV in the hospital and seeing a certain Grand Slam event on the screen. "I'm just really excited to be here," Osaka said Monday after pulling out a 6-1, 1-6, 6-4 victory over Diane Parry in the first round at the All England Club by taking the last two games from 4-all in the third set. "It's funny, because Wimbledon was the first tournament I watched after pregnancy." On a day when there was plenty of focus away from the courts and instead on the health and status of various players who have been ranked No. 1 and won multiple major championships - tournament favorite Aryna Sabalenka and

Victoria Azarenka, each a two-time Australian Open winner dealing with a bum shoulder, withdrew hours before they were due on court; Andy Murray, twice a titlist at Wimbledon, was trying to decide whether to compete less than 10 days after surgery to remove a cyst from his spinal cord - another person fitting that description, Osaka, was making a happy return. She's won the U.S. Open and Australian Open twice apiece on hard courts, but never has been past the third round on either Wimbledon's grass or the French Open's clay. Osaka had not entered Wimbledon since a first-round loss in 2019, and while she's topped the WTA in the past, she is now No. 113 in the rankings after being off the tour for 15 months until returning in January. Before facing the 53rd-ranked Parry, Osaka said, she was sifting through pictures on her phone. "They have that feature, This time last year, I was looking at that. I was looking at photos of myself in the hospital. It's

really cool to be here now," Osaka said. "My mindset last year was just trying to survive. Honestly, I didn't really know what was going on after I gave birth; just trying to piece myself back together." Other big names who won on Day 1 at Wimbledon included reigning U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff, 2021 U.S. Open winner Emma Raducanu and three-time major champion Carlos Alcaraz, all on Centre Court. Alcaraz began his title defense feeling a bit jittery, he said afterward, but came through with a 7-6 (3), 7-5, 6-2 victory over Estonian qualifier Mark Lajal. "I still get nerves when I am playing here," said Alcaraz, who won the French Open last month to become, at 21, the youngest man with a major trophy on three surfaces. "I practiced 45 minutes on Thursday, and it's the first time that I was nervous in a practice - just because I'm playing here." Lajal (pronounced la-YAHL), who's a week younger, was making his Grand Slam debut and felt it to his core, too.



"Two days before, I felt like I was going to throw up, I was so stressed," said Lajal, who actually went up a break in each of the first two sets. "When I found out who I was playing, and where I was playing, I was super excited. But as it sunk in - what I would

be doing and who I was going to be playing - I was stressed about playing in front of such a huge crowd on one of the biggest stages in tennis." A year after a first-round exit at Wimbledon, Gauff eliminated Caroline Dolehide 6-1, 6-2. Raducanu was a 7-6

(0), 6-3 winner against Renata Zarazua, a late replacement when No. 22 Ekaterina Alexandrova pulled out because of an unspecified illness. Thinking back to her 2023 loss to 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, Gauff

said: "It was a very tough moment for me. I'm a little bit emotional." But the All England Club also brings back good memories for the 20-year-old American, whose initial Slam appearance came after becoming the event's youngest qualifier at 15 in 2019. "Wimbledon is the place - I wouldn't say where the dream started," Gauff said, "but maybe where I believed the dream was possible." From a tennis perspective, Osaka had a real breakthrough at Roland Garros in May - although the end result was a loss. Osaka pushed current No. 1 Iga Swiatek to the brink in Paris, leading 5-2 in the third set, serving for the victory at 5-3, even standing one point from victory, before the eventual tournament champion managed to eke out a 7-6 (1), 1-6, 7-5 second-round win. That was the only set Swiatek lost in what would become an otherwise dominant run to her fourth French Open trophy in five years.

"I, personally, was absolutely gutted, to be honest, because I thought she was going to win. ... But I was also happy for her and proud of her. And she was extremely upbeat," said Stuart Duguid, Osaka's agent. "I don't think she took it as a match where, I had a match point." She took it more as she got some belief back that she can beat the top players." Osaka called Monday's match against Parry "a little up-and-down" and "really fun and really stressful at the same time." She had more than twice as many winners as Parry, 34 to 14, but also twice as many unforced errors, 38 to 19. Still, Osaka considers herself a work-in-progress and some of that entails allowing herself to make mistakes, to cede a game here and there, and not be too bothered. "I know that I didn't play bad. I think I just put too much pressure on myself that I need to win all the games - that I can't be broken and things like that," she said. "When that eventually happened, I felt like I doubted myself, even though I knew my game plan going in."

# Lot of time for me to sleep, for now I want to live every second of this win: Rohit

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Rohit Sharma held the T20 World Cup trophy like a new-born baby as he walked towards the beach here for the triumphant captain's post-tournament photo shoot, a serene smile refusing to leave his face and the feeling of being a world champion yet to fully sink in. He couldn't be faulted for being a bit dazed. After all, a jinx that lasted over a decade had been broken. "It's surreal. It feels like a dream. It feels like it hasn't happened. Although it has happened but it feels like it hasn't happened," Rohit laughed trying to process his thoughts after 24 hours while talking to BCCI.TV. The coastal city of

Bridgetown is battling a hurricane. The same could also be said about the Indian captain, only that his is a battle to control a gamut of emotions threatening to overwhelm him like a huge sea wave every now and then. "Last night we had a good time, we had a blast with the teammates till the early morning," he couldn't stop grinning before becoming a touch emotional. I would say I didn't sleep properly but that's absolutely fine by me. There is a lot of time for me to go back and sleep. "I want to live this moment, each minute, each second that is passing by and will try to make the most of it," he said describing how it felt to lead an Indian team to its first ICC title in 11 years.



"It's been a great moment right from the time the game got over to till now. That's the emotions and feelings you have," said the skipper. His marauding run at the top, especially in the knockouts, fetched Rohit a place in the team of the tournament but all he can think about for now is a sense of joyous relief. "We have dreamt about this for such a long period of time, we worked hard as a unit for such a long period of time and to see this (the trophy) with us, it feels quite relieved as well. "When you have worked hard for something and eventually at the end you get it, feels really, really nice," the skipper reiterated. People were amazed and amused to see Rohit walk to

the 22-yard strip at Kensington Oval and put a tiny speck of soil in his mouth, just like Novak Djokovic does after winning the Wimbledon. The 37-year-old said it was a spur of the moment act. "Nothing was scripted. It was all coming instinctively. I was feeling the moment," Rohit said about his ode to the turf that gave him the best moment of his life. "When I went to the pitch, that pitch gave us this trophy. I will remember that ground forever in my life and that pitch as well. I wanted to have a piece of it with me. "Those moments are very special, the place where all our dreams came true and I wanted something of it," he concluded.

## Thanks for that call Ro: Dravid reveals how Rohit stopped him from quitting after ODI WC heartbreak

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Had he not received a phone call from India skipper Rohit Sharma, requesting him to continue after the ODI World Cup final defeat, Rahul Dravid wouldn't have been a part of history, the outgoing head coach revealed in his farewell speech to the team after it was crowned T20 world champion here. Dravid's tenure had ended with the ODI World Cup after India lost to Australia in the final despite a 10-match winning run, but the coaching staff got an extension till the end of the T20 World Cup that concluded on Saturday last. While Dravid has not reapplied for the role after India's second T20 World Cup win, he mentioned Rohit's role in urging him to continue as the coach during his speech in the Kensington Oval dressing room after the team's win seven-run win in the final against South Africa on Saturday. "Ro, thank you very much for making that call to me November and asking to continue," Dravid said in a video shared by BCCI on



Tuesday. "I think it's been such a privilege and a pleasure to work with each and everyone of you, but Ro, also thanks for the time...There is a lot of time we have to chat, we have to discuss, we have to agree, we have to disagree at times, but thank you so very much," Dravid said as Rohit laughed. Dravid praised the players for putting up collectively solid performances through the tournament and urged them to celebrate the achievement as

much as they would like. "All of you will remember these moments. We always say, it is not about the runs, it is not about the wickets, you never remember your career but you remember moments like this, so let's really enjoy," Dravid said. "I could not be more proud of you guys, to come back the way you did, the way you fought, the way we worked as a team...The resilience. There has been some disappointment over the years where we have

and everyone of them has made since the time you were kids, for you to be here in the dressing room," Dravid said. "Today, your parents, your wives, your children, your brother, your coaches, so many people have made so many sacrifices and worked so hard with you for you to enjoy this memory in this moment... Really, really proud to have being a part of this memory with you guys," he continued. Usually articulate, Dravid admitted he was falling short of words but praised the team for their respect towards the outgoing coaching staff. "I'm not usually short of words but on a day like today, for me to be part of this, I could not be more grateful for the respect, for the kindness, for the effort that each and everyone of you are shown to me, to my coaching staff to my support staff," he conceded. Dravid also dismissed the BCCI officials and others for their work behind the scenes. "Behind a great team, there is also a successful organisation and we have to acknowledge the work of BCCI and people behind the scenes for the work they have done," he added.

## Gutted, tough pill to swallow: Miller on T20 World Cup final loss

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

"Gutted" David Miller said the T20 World Cup final loss to India was a tough blow, but the swashbuckling batter expressed confidence that despite enduring pain the resilient South African team would continue pushing boundaries. Shedding the unwanted tag of perennial "chokers", the Proteas had marched into their maiden T20 World Cup final unbeaten. However, they faltered in the summit clash, losing to India by seven runs. "I am gutted!! Really tough pill to swallow after what transpired 2 days ago. Words don't explain how I am feeling. One thing I do know is how proud I am of this unit," Miller posted an Instagram story late on Monday. Before the final, the Proteas enjoyed a sensational run, eking out wins in the pressure situations to become favourites for the title. "This journey was an incredible one, with highs and lows throughout the entire month. We have endured pain, but I know this team has the



resilience and will keep raising the bar," he wrote. South Africa had looked on course to a memorable win needing 30 runs in as many balls. However, Indian bowlers, led by Jasprit Bumrah, fashioned a remarkable turnaround picking the key wicket of Heinrich Klaasen followed by Marco Jansen.

With Miller at the crease and 16 needed off the last over, the Proteas still remained hopeful. But a spectacular catch by Suryakumar Yadav at the boundary ended Miller's innings while deflating hopes of a South African win. It was the closest South Africa had come to winning a title, having made seven semifinal exits in ICC global events.



## Praggnanandhaa to take on Bogdan-Daniel; Gukesh up against Vachier-Lagrave

PTI ■ BUCHAREST (ROMANIA)

Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa will look to sharpen his game after squandering winning opportunities when he takes on last-placed Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania in the sixth round of the Superbet Classic Chess tournament. While Praggnanandhaa has not been at his best in better positions, World Championship challenger D Gukesh has survived pretty well despite living dangerously in a couple of games in the tournament, which is a part of the Grand chess tour. With five rounds gone and just four more to come, the two Indians with three points apiece, are within striking distance of the tournament leader Fabiano Caruana of United States who is on 3.5 points. Alireza Firouzja and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi and American Wesley So share the fourth spot on 2.5 points each, a half point ahead of Dutchman Anish Giri and Uzbek Nodirbek Abdusattorov. Bogdan-Daniel is at the bottom of the table with 1.5 points. Gukesh will have black pieces against Maxime Vachier-

Lagrave and it should not be a tall order for the Indian who has been trying various set ups against the King pawn opening. Vachier-Lagrave, on the other hand, will be hoping for a complicated struggle but the fact that he is not very adventurous when it comes to opening choices makes his task a little more difficult. Praggnanandhaa will not only be favourite but will also be under pressure. In the previous round, the Indian missed out on a straightforward winning manoeuvre against Wesley So while earlier on, Gukesh survived what was a technically difficult but theoretically lost endgame against him. With the white pieces to back him the ball will be in Praggnanandhaa's court to deliver the goods. Bogdan-Daniel is still hunting for an elusive victory with just three draws thus far and the Romanian knows it will not be easy to cross a tiger on the prowl. Caruana has had some good games and will like to continue in similar fashion. The next round is against Ian Nepomniachtchi who has drawn all his games so far in the tournament.

## Laxman-coached India team leaves for Zimbabwe, Gill to link up from US

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A young-Indian cricket team under National Cricket Academy head VVS Laxman left for Zimbabwe to play a five-match T20I series starting in Harare on July 6. The team will be led by Shubman Gill while the likes of youngsters Rryan Parag and Abhishek Sharma have been rewarded for their exploits in the last IPL with maiden India call-ups. Skipper Gill, the reserve opener for the T20 World Cup was on a break and will link up with the Zimbabwe-bound squad directly in Harare from the US. The BCCI took to X to post pictures of those who boarded the flight, which includes Sharma, Parag, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Avesh Khan, Ravi Bishnoi, Washington Sundar, Tushar Deshpande and NCA head Laxman. Five members of the squad -- Shivam Dube, Sanju Samson, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh and Khaleel Ahmed were either part



of the T20 World Cup-winning team or were travelling reserves are stranded in Barbados due to hurricane Beryl. They will join the squad later. With Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja retiring form the shortest format of the game, the T20 series against Zimbabwe will provide the youngsters with the perfect opportunity to cement their

places in the team for future series. India's squad for T20I series against Zimbabwe: Shubman Gill (Captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Abhishek Sharma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), Shivam Dube, Rryan Parag, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Tushar Deshpande.

## Indians in County: Sudharsan scores 14 for Surrey, Shaw manages 31 and 37 for Northants

PTI ■ LONDON

Young left-hand batter Sai Sudharsan and the seasoned Prithvi Shaw failed to get big scores in their ongoing English county games for Surrey and Northamptonshire respectively. Both are into their second season with their county sides. In a home game at the Oval against Essex, Surrey scored 262 in their first essay with Sudharsan, who normally bats at the top of the order for Tamil Nadu, coming in at No. 6 and managing 14 off 47 balls with two boundaries. He was dismissed by left-arm medium pacer Paul Walter with former South Africa



international Simon Harmer taking an 82-run first innings lead bowling the visitors out for 180. In another game between Northamptonshire and Sussex, flamboyant right-hander Shaw struck 13 boundaries across two innings -- seven in a 22-ball-31 and another six in 27 off 41 balls, but failed to get a big score. In the first innings, Sussex's second change medium pacer Fynn Hudson-Prentice got his wicket, caught by Jack Carson. Shaw's score was the second highest in his team's dismal first innings performance of 97 all out in little over 20 overs. This was after Sussex had scored 143 in their first innings. In the second innings, Northamptonshire were 137 for four in a chase of 284 with Shaw contributing another quick-fire 37 before left-arm seamer Sean Hunt breached through his defences.



## Error-prone Nagal makes first round exit from Wimbledon

PTI ■ LONDON

India's top singles player Sumit Nagal committed 44 unforced errors as he made a first round exit from the Wimbledon, going down in four sets to Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia here. Making his maiden appearance in the men's singles main draw, Nagal toiled hard for two hours 38 minutes and even managed to take a set off world number 53 Kecmanovic before conceding a 2-6 6-3 3-6 4-6 defeat on Monday night. The 26-year-old, ranked 72 did show flashes of brilliance as hit 47 winners but in general, struggled on the grass court. In the end, he could manage only 104 points against Kecmanovic's 122. The 53rd ranked Serbian fired six aces and only conceded two double faults. This was Kecmanovic's second win in as many matches against Nagal, having beaten

the Indian at the ATP 250 event in Cologne, Germany, four years ago. The Paris Olympics bound Nagal is the first Indian in five years to play a Wimbledon men's singles main draw match. Prajnesh Gunneswaran had made a first-round exit in 2019. Nagal is having a dream season as he had also qualified for the main draw of the Australian Open earlier this year. He had stunned 31st-seeded Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan in the opening round to become the first Indian male tennis player to beat a seeded player in 35 years in a Slam. He had also qualified for the main draw of the Indian Wells Masters and Monte-Carlo Masters, the ATP 1000 events. The Indian has won two Challenger events this season the Heilbronn Challenger and the Chennai Open ATP Challenger. He also competed at the French Open, losing in the opening round.

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