



OPINION 6 NEW ARMY CHIEF FOLLOWS ZORAWAR'S FOOTSTEPS

WORLD 9 CHINA BEGINS KEY MEET TO STEM ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

MONEY 10 AUTOMOBILE RETAIL SALES UP 9% IN APRIL-JUNE: FADA

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

Late City Vol. 160 Issue 191 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY JULY 16, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

Established 1864

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



IT IS A GOOD THING THAT EVERYONE IS PERFORMING: GILL 12 SPORTS

Assam CM's warning: Post-2015, arrivals in the State to be deported

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said anyone coming to Assam in 2015 or later will be deported back to their country of origin. "We will deport those who have come after 2015. Only eight persons have applied so far who came before 2015 for CAA. Out of these applicants, only two have proceeded to attend interviews with relevant authorities," the CM said at a Press conference in Guwahati to share the insight into the implementation of the Citizenship Act.



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma addresses the media, in Guwahati PTI

Minister's statement comes after he stated that the citizenship act will be "completely insignificant" in Assam due to a low number of applications. Himanta said anybody (according to CAA) who has come to India before 2015, they have the first right to apply for citizenship. "If they don't apply we will lodge a case for them. So this is a statutory instruction," the CM said on a strong note to carry forward implementation of the CAA. Based on the rules of the Citizenship Amendment Act, migrants belonging to six religious minorities — Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain,

Parsi, and Christian from neighbouring countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan will be allowed to stay in India as citizens if they entered the country before December 31, 2014. Sarma claimed that most of the Hindu-Bengali families, who were not included in the final draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), told him that they possessed necessary documents to prove their Indian citizenship and preferred the FT route than applying through the CAA. Asked whether the Assam Government is dropping cases in Foreigners Tribunals (FT) against Hindu-Bengalis,

Sarma clarified, "This is misleading. We cannot drop any case. We are simply advising that before initiating a case, individuals should apply through the CAA portal. Even if a case is filed, there won't be any outcome because these people are eligible for citizenship." The Chief Minister said he will request the Advocate General to flag the issue of CAA so that FTs can give time to people whose cases are going on to apply for citizenship under the newly implemented law. "I can't give a direction to court to pause while deciding the citizenship cases. The FT judges themselves have to decide and they know the latest situation," he added. Asked about such a low number of applications in CAA, Sarma said the Opposition myth that 15-20 lakh Bangladeshis will get citizenship in Assam has been busted completely. "In the anti-CAA movement, five Assamese youths lost their lives. So they made the sacrifice to prevent only these eight people! This abysmally low number of eight applications, of which only two turned up for interview, is a bit surprising for us also," he added. Continued on Page 8

BJP numbers dip in Rajya Sabha, Party eyes bypolls for renewed strength



File Photo: PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP's tally in the Rajya Sabha has dipped below 90 for the first time in many years but the ruling party at Centre with its NDA partners is looking forward to gain berths in the Upper House by-elections to fill the existing vacancies in forthcoming weeks. The current strength of the Rajya Sabha is 226 with the BJP having 86 followed by 26 of the Congress and 13 of the Trinamool Congress (TMC). There are currently 19 vacancies. Interestingly, after a decade without a Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha due to a shortage of numbers, this position has now been filled with the appointment of Rahul Gandhi, as the party improved its score in the

recently concluded general elections. The Rajya Sabha is heading in a similar direction, with the Congress struggling to maintain the numbers necessary to keep the status of LoP for its party chief, Mallikarjun Kharge. After the election of party leaders KC Venugopal and Deepender Singh Hooda to the Lok Sabha and their subsequent resignation from the Rajya Sabha, the Congress strength in the Upper House too has come down to 26, just one more than the minimum 25 members required to qualify for the post. For this grand old party strategically made its old timer Kesava Rao to quit the RS berth from the BRS party who joined Congress last week which is the party's plan to improve its tally in the

Upper House to retain the post of LoP for incumbent Kharge. This has caused a vacancy from Telangana, which will be filled up by the Congress given its numbers in the State Assembly. According to sources, Congress is trying to get more members from other parties from Telangana and Karnataka to resign and get them elected on its ticket. While the BJP-led NDA is confident of winning two seats each in Bihar, Maharashtra and Assam and one each in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tripura due to their numerical superiority over the Opposition, the four new nominated members are also expected to be pro-treasury benches whenever the Government names them. Continued on Page 8



Sensex, Nifty sing on an all-time high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty closed at new record high levels on Monday following buying in PSU bank shares and fresh foreign fund inflows. The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 145.52 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at a new record high of 80,664.86. During the day, it advanced 343.2 points or 0.42 per cent to hit a high of 80,862.54. The NSE Nifty rallied 84.55 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,586.70. During the day, it surged 132.9 points or 0.54 per cent to hit a new record peak of 24,635.05. Among Sensex shares, State Bank of India was the biggest gainer, rising by 2.55 per cent after the bank announced a hike in MCLR-based lending rates for various tenors. NTPC, UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors, Maruti and ITC were the other major winners.

Pollution Centres down shutters, hike not Under Control

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Around 600 Pollution Under Control Centres (PUC) across 400 petrol pumps in the national Capital will remain closed starting Monday in response to a protest call by petrol dealers and pump owners following the Delhi Government's proposed hike in pollution certificate charges. The closure call of PUC by the Delhi Petrol Dealers' Association (DPDA) comes amid tussle with the Government for not revising the PUC checking rates according to the demand of the association. The association of petrol dealers claimed that while the rates for PUC certificates were not increased from the last 13 years, last week, there was a very nominal increase in the rates by the Delhi Transport Department. While announcing the decision on Thursday, Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said, "In response to the long-pending demands of the Delhi Petrol Dealers Association and to keep up with the rising costs of pollution checking services, we have decided to revise the rates. This revision is necessary to ensure that pollution checking stations can continue to operate efficiently and provide quality services to the public.



View of a petrol pump, in New Delhi, on Monday, Around 600 Pollution Under Control (PUC) centres across 400 petrol pumps in the national Capital will remain closed from Monday in response to a protest call by petrol dealers and pump owners Pioneer photo

We remain committed to maintaining Delhi's air quality and ensuring that all vehicles meet the required pollution standards. Stating that the association has decided to go ahead with the strike as the running of PUC centres have become unviable, DPDA president Nischal Singhania said, "There are 400 petrol pumps in Delhi and all of them have

petrol PUC centres. Some of them also have diesel PUC centres, which takes the count to around 600 PUC centres," he added. President of All India Petroleum Dealers Association Ajay Bansal claimed that the nominal increase in the rates are not justified by the Government. Continued on Page 8



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump reacts as he is surrounded by US Secret Service agents at a campaign rally, in Butler AP/PTI

US Security Services Spooked

AP ■ MILWAUKEE

Former President Donald Trump has arrived in Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention a day after he was targeted in an attempted assassination at a campaign event. Trump's airplane touched down Sunday, the day before the four-day event kicks off with thousands of Republicans coming together to formally elect him as their 2024 presidential nominee. The shocking scenes of violence at his Saturday campaign rally that injured his right ear, killed a spectator and injured another set a dark backdrop for the convention, which is typically four days of party pageantry, political speeches, policy platforms and the presidential

nominee's keynote address. The attack on Trump has put a heightened focus on safety and security of the event. The former president said in a social media post earlier Sunday that he was going to delay his trip by two days because of the attempted assassination "but have just decided that I cannot allow a shooter, or potential assassin, to force change to scheduling, or anything else. Republican National Convention starting on Monday which will nominate him as the party's candidate for the November 5 presidential election. In one of his first interviews since the incident, the 78-year-old former president told conservative US media that he felt that he had been saved "by luck or by God".

SC agreeable to hearing pleas on key Central laws

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider a suggestion for setting up a constitution bench to hear pleas challenging the validity of passage of laws like the Aadhaar Act by the Modi Government as money bills allegedly to bypass the Rajya Sabha where the majority mark is 123. The passage of Bills like the Aadhaar Act and even amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) as money bills, apparently to circumvent the Rajya Sabha where the NDA did not have a majority there, has been at the centre of a major political and legal row. Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jai Ram Ramesh is one of the petitioners who have challenged the passage of the Aadhaar Act of 2016 as money bill under Article 110 of the Constitution. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal told a bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Monday that the pleadings are complete and the petitions needed to be listed for hearing. Sibal said since the matter is already there in the list of scheduled constitution bench



File Photo

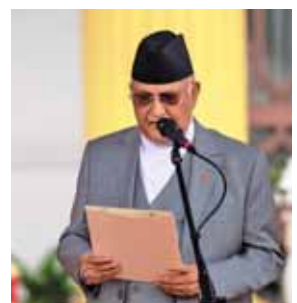
hearings, such a bench should be created on a priority basis. "I will take the call when I form the constitution benches," the CJI told him. Later in the day, the Congress welcomed the top court's decision agreeing to consider setting up a constitution bench to hear the pleas. The party hoped a final verdict would come before Chandrachud retires in November this year. Earlier, the top court had said it would constitute a seven-judge bench to consider the issue of validity of passage of laws like the Aadhaar Act as a money bill. A money bill is a piece of legislation which can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha cannot amend or reject it. The Upper House can only make recommendations which may or may not be accepted by the Lower House. A bench headed by the CJI

had earlier said all pending seven-judge bench matters will be listed on October 12 last year for procedural directions. In November 2019, a five-judge bench of the apex court had referred to a larger bench the issue of examining the validity of the passage of the Finance Act, 2017 as a money bill. "The issue and question of Money Bill, as defined under Article 110(1) of the Constitution, and certification accorded by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha in respect of Part-XIV of the Finance Act, 2017 is referred to a larger Bench," it had said. The five-judge bench had then struck down in entirety the rules governing the appointment and service conditions of the members of various tribunals that formed part of the Finance Act. Earlier, another bench of the top court, while upholding the constitutional validity of PMLA, had kept the issue of passage of the amendments to it as a money bill open for adjudication by a larger bench. In the Aadhaar judgement, the top court had upheld the validity of passage of the law as a money bill. However, Justice Chandrachud, the present CJI, had penned a dissenting judgement and called designating the Aadhaar legislation as a money bill a "fraud on the Constitution".

Nepal okays Oli as PM

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

KP Sharma Oli on Monday was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the fourth time to lead a new coalition Government that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the Himalayan nation. The leader of Nepal's largest communist party was appointed as Prime Minister on Sunday by President Ram Chandra Paudel to lead the coalition Government with the Nepali Congress (NC), the largest party in Parliament, apart from other smaller parties. Oli, 72, succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who lost the vote of



Newly elected Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli is being sworn in by president Ram Chandra Paudel, unseem, at the Presidential residence in Kathmandu, Nepal PTI

confidence in the House of Representatives (HoR) on Friday, leading to the formation of the new Government.

Sport Icons draw ire, not applause

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a controversial incident, as former cricketers Harbhajan Singh, Suresh Raina, Yuvraj Singh, and Gurkeerat Mann face backlash and a police complaint for allegedly mocking people with disabilities (PwD) in a video posted on Instagram, a battery of individuals and players within the community have stepped forward to vehemently condemn the sports' icons 'disgraceful' act. As the video, where they mimicked physical disabilities while recreating actor Vicky Kaushal's dance step from the song 'Tauba Tauba', sparked widespread condemnation, one of the

sports icons under the scanner Harbhajan Singh has issued an apology amidst calls for accountability and sensitivity. Arman Ali, the executive director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) who filed the complaint in the afternoon with the SHO of the Amar Colony police station in a strongly worded statement said it is "disgusting to see India's top cricketers mocking disability. Shameful and atrocious behaviour from those who are idolised by masses. Shame on them..." Alongside the cricketers, the complaint also names



Sandhya Devanathan, Vice President and Managing Director of Meta India. It accuses Instagram, owned by

Meta, of violating the Information Technology Act, 2000, for allowing such content to be uploaded and

shared. Authorities at the Amar Colony police station stated that the complaint will be forwarded to the cyber cell for further investigation. Para-badminton star Manasi Joshi, a former world number one in her category, minced no words as she directly addressed Harbhajan Singh, who is Rajya Sabha Member from Aam Aadmi Party also and Suresh Raina on social media Instagram, criticising them for mocking the gait patterns of people with disabilities. "Wanted more responsibility from the stars that you all are, please do not mock the gait patterns of people with disabilities. This isn't funny...this isn't legendary.

"You don't know how much harm your behaviour can do. The appreciation you're getting from people around is appalling to see. This reel of yours is going to encourage that it is ok to make fun of the walking patterns of people with disabilities for a few laughs. "More young children with disabilities will be bullied by using this reel. If any of you athletes would have done responsible community service in disability space area, you all would not have come up with this reel. I'm scared how the PR agencies of these athletes approved this reel for public platform," Manasi rued. Continued on Page 8

Absconding real estate scamster held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a major breakthrough, a team of Aliganj police arrested the absconding scamster president of a real estate company on Monday. The miscreant, his boss and other employees of the Shine City company have shattered the dreams of several innocents to have residences in their names in the city. The accused arrested was identified as Jaya Prakash Upadhyaya of Aliganj Sector E. He is a native of Ayodhya and carries a cash reward of Rs 50,000 announced by the police. He is named in 19 cases of fraud linked with the Shine City investment scam. The company's chief managing director and Upadhyaya's boss, Rashid Naseem, is absconding and is said to have taken shelter in a Gulf country. He carries a reward of Rs 5 lakh for information leading to his arrest. The scam first surfaced in 2013.

The company has its office at R Square in Vipul Khand of Gomti Nagar. Since the fraud surfaced, as many as 550 cases of forgery, criminal breach of trust, and on other counts are registered at different police stations in Lucknow against the company and 62 fraudsters linked with the Shine City and its other sister concerns have been arrested and sent to jail. DCP (North) Abhijeet R Shankar said the company had launched 32-33 projects, all registered in Kanpur, including a recurring deposit scheme offering triple the amount of money invested, an investment in the name of luxury vehicles to get an attractive profit, and several others. The fraudsters also made people invest money for ornaments. "But their main venture is the sale and purchase of land. They formed a land bank and cheated people by promising to give plots or land/houses to them

against the invested sum," the police said. The DCP North said Rashid Naseem of Prayagraj was absconding and the UP government had announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh on him. He said the team working on the case got a tip-off about Gyan Prakash Upadhyaya and he was nabbed. He said Gyan Prakash Upadhyaya and his aides had duped several innocents of millions of dollars. Sources said the owner and administrative staff of the realtor company had succeeded in fending off legal action by paying bribes to the local police for some time. "But as time passed, the noose around them tightened, and several of them were nabbed after the change of government in 2017," they said. Meanwhile, the police arrested a fraudster who used to dupe people on the pretext of selling them plots in Lucknow. The accused had opened a

company named Elpida Home Private Limited in Eldeco Corporate Tower in Vibhuti Khand of Gomti Nagar in Lucknow. He used to take money from people in the name of selling plots and then reneging from the promise. The Vibhuti Khand police said Aman Chauhan of Tulsi Sagar Peer Nagar in Ghazipur had filed a complaint in Vibhuti Khand police station on May 23, alleging that owner of the real estate company Uddeshya Tiwari and his agent Sanjay Singh of Ghazipur had duped him in the name of selling a plot. "Sanjay met me through a common acquaintance and offered me a plot at Lucknow-Barabanki border at a cheap rate. He told me that the rate of the plot was Rs 149 per square feet. I booked a 1,500 square feet plot and paid Rs 80,000 to him in cash for it. On the same day, I booked four plots of 1,500 square feet each in the name of

my father Rajesh Kumar. For this I paid Rs 10,000 each as the booking amount," he said. According to Aman, Uddeshya told him that the sale deed would be registered after the full amount was paid and he gave about Rs 8 lakh on different dates. Then Uddeshya asked for more money saying that he would transfer the plot in the name of someone else. Under pressure Aman asked for money from his relatives and deposited about Rs 12 lakh with the company. Uddeshya told Aman that he would call him to inform about the date of registry. After waiting for a call for several days, Aman contacted Uddeshya who said he wanted to sell the plot to someone else. "He returned about Rs 20 lakh but refused to return the remaining money," Aman alleged. On Sunday, the police arrested Uddeshya Tiwari from a well-known hotel.

Woman hangs self to death

Lucknow (PNS): A newly-married woman committed suicide by hanging herself in the PGI Kotwali area of Lucknow. The police have sent the body for post-mortem. The reason for the suicide is said to be a dispute between the woman, identified as Arpita aka Jolie (20), and her husband. Arpita had married one Shivam of Kanpur Dehat in a court on March 22, 2024 and they were staying in a rented accommodation in Launga Kheda locality of Teibagh. On Sunday night, Arpita and Shivam quarrelled over a trivial matter, after which Arpita locked Shivam in a room. She then went to another room and committed suicide by hanging herself.

Chandrika Devi temple complex to have multi-level parking

Lucknow (PNS) The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department will construct a multi-level parking facility near the Maa Chandrika Devi temple compound in Bakshi Ka Talab to address parking issues. A proposal of Rs 8 crore has been submitted to build the parking structure and develop additional tourist facilities. This ancient temple is a significant religious site attracting numerous devotees and visitors round the year. In view of the high volume of visitors, efforts are being made to expand tourist amenities.

We are Society for Voluntary Action & Research (SVAR), an registered NGO inviting bids for E.Y. 2024-25 regarding Solar Power Plant of 25 Kilo-Watt and related products and services in our Old Age Home for Senior Citizens, Fatehpur, U.P. The application form cost is Rs.1000 & can be purchased from Our Head-Office from 16-07-2024 to 31-07-2024. Bids will open on 05-08-2024 in the presence or absence of applicants. Read all the terms and conditions carefully to avoid cancellation. President Society for Voluntary Action & Research (SVAR) Address: Flat No.-102, Awadh Galaxy Apartment, Indiranagar, Lucknow Email: svar.india@gmail.com

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from SANDEEP KUMAR To SANDEEP YADAV S/O- SHIV SAGAR YADAV R/O SAUHPUR ADHAH, POST AYAH, FATEHPUR for future purpose

NOTICE

I have changed my name from MAHNAZ SIKANDER To MEHNAZ SIKANDER W/O-MOHAMMAD SHAHID MERAJ R/O 675/15, K D A COLONY, SHIWANS TENRAY, JAJMAU KANPUR for future purpose.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JC-732659H Sub Maj Vijay Kumar Maurya resident of Vill & PO- Chhapya, Tehsil - Sadar, District - Gorakhpur, PIN-273016 (U.P.), Unit - HQ Central Command (Ord). My name mentioned in Army documents as Vijay Kumar Maurya whereas in the Aadhar card etc. the name is mentioned as Vijay Kumar Maurya that is correct. Hence I have changed my name from Vijay Kumar Maurya to Vijay Kumar Maurya vide affidavit dated 12 Jul 2024 before Shri Suresh Kumar Advocate & Notary Public, Lucknow for all future purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sudha, spouse of JC-732659H Sub Maj Vijay Kumar Maurya resident of Vill & PO- Chhapya, Tehsil - Sadar, District - Gorakhpur, PIN-273016 (U.P.) have changed my name from Sudha to Sudha Maurya vide affidavit dated 12 Jul 2024 before Shri Suresh Kumar Advocate & Notary Public, Lucknow.

OBITUARY

OBITUARY
12 MAR 1998 - 24 JUN 2024
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF SEPOY SACHIN WHILE SERVING WITH ARMY HOSP (R&R) DELHI CANT.
FROM: LT GEN KAVITA SAHAI AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

NOTICE

Inform That, I Ashok Kumar S/o Ram Vilas Varma Service No. 15768258L Rank A.C.P. Hav Resident Village-Madairpur Khurd Post Chakgendi Distt. Fatehpur U.P. 212664. I Declares that in my Military Record my Daughter's Name VIDHI SINGH D.O.B. is mentioned as 25.10.2006 which is wrong. Correct Name ANKITA SINGH D.O.B. is 25.08.2008 all concerned. Please Note this.

OBITUARY

OBITUARY
15 AUG 1984-30 MAY 2024
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF HAV GANE VENKATESH WHILE SERVING WITH ARMY HOSP (R&R) DELHI CANT.
FROM: LT GEN KAVITA SAHAI AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

NOTICE

Due to mistake my daughter (Divyanshi Singh) mother name is written in school records as Reena Choudhary where as the correct name is Reena choudhari. Please correct accordingly. Reena Choudhari 307 Mayur Residency vistar-2 Lucknow.

OBITUARY

OBITUARY
02 FEB 1984 - 20 JUN 2024
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF TS NK PRASHANT KUMAR SINGH WHILE SERVING WITH MH GAYA.
FROM: LT GEN KAVITA SAHAI AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

NOTICE

I Army no. JC771231M SUB Satish Kumar Mohindera S/o Surendra Mohan R/O Near H.No 302 Preet Colony post Morden Town Jandi Kanwala Barara Ambala 134003 Haryana unit 803 Fd workshop New cant Prayagraj I have changed my name from Satish Kumar Mahindera to Satish Kumar Mohindra in all future purpose

OBITUARY

OBITUARY
24 NOV 1997 - 24 JUN 2024
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF SEPOY PAMENDRA KUMAR KANGE WHILE SERVING WITH 153 GH.
FROM: LT GEN KAVITA SAHAI AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

सूचना

मैंने अपने पुत्र राज सविता को असामाजिक व परिवार विरोधी कार्यों के कारण अपनी चल-अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल कर दिया है। इनके द्वारा किए गए किसी कार्य से मेरा कोई सरोकार नहीं है। अपने कार्यों का वे स्वयं विधेयदार हों। गीता पुत्री स्व. ०२६६६६६६ ११९/१२३, कृष्णा नगर, दर्शन फ्लोर, आर के नगर, कानपुर।

NOTICE

It is being informed that my mother father's correct name is Sweta Tiwari, Shishir Kumar Tiwari. Which are mentioned in Adhar card and Pan card, by mistake in my High school Marksheet (Roll no. 23235384) and Intermediate Marksheet (Roll no. 23707642) my mother, father's name has been mentioned as Sweta Tripathi and Shishir Kumar Tripathi. Which are wrong. Raj Vardhan Tripathi S/o Shishir Kumar Tiwari R/o, 196D/4J, Naya pura Kareli Distt. Prayagraj.

सूचना

सूचित किया जाता है कि शादी के पूरे मेरा नाम स्वाती शुक्ला पुत्री ब्रजेश कुमार शुक्ला था। जो मेरे शैक्षणिक प्रमाण पत्र में अंकित है। शादी के बाद मैंने अपना नाम स्वाती शुक्ला से बदलकर स्वाती मिश्रा पत्नी गौरव कुमार मिश्रा रख लिया है। भविष्य में मुझे स्वाती मिश्रा पत्नी गौरव कुमार मिश्रा के नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाए। स्वाती मिश्रा पता: 599PC/615/02 पिक सिटी, मोहन रोड बुद्धेश्वर लखनऊ।

Honey trapping crimes on rise after online financial fraud

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A trend of honey trapping through social media has emerged as a new kind of crime after online financial fraud. The miscreants target youngsters and elderly people alike, and trap them through obscene chats and obscene video calls and later blackmail them. A case in point is of a young man from Mohanlalgarh who was honey trapped by cyber criminals and lost Rs 19,000. Even after that the fraudster demanded more money by claiming to be a police officer, after which the young man, realising that he had been cheated, told the whole story to his wife. Thereafter he along with his wife reached the police station on Saturday and filed a com-

plaint, requesting action against the unknown fraudsters. The police registered a case against the unknown fraudster and started an investigation. In the complaint, the woman said that her husband received a call from an unknown number on his mobile phone and he received the call. "The unknown girl who made the call cajoled him to talk with her and then told him to go to the bathroom and that she would call him while being nude on WhatsApp," the complainant said. She said her husband fell for the bait and went to the bathroom. "The girl made a call while being nude and made a video of him and after some time sent the video on WhatsApp and threatened that if he did not give her the

money, she would show the video and complain to the police," she said. She said her husband got a call from another number and the caller introduced himself as a senior police officer and said that everything would be settled by paying money and after this Rs 19,000 were paid by her husband in five installments to the accounts mentioned by the fraudster. "Even after that, the fraudsters continue to call and demand more money and threaten my husband to make the nude video viral on social media if the money is not given," she alleged. Inspector Alok Rao said that on the complaint filed by the wife of the victim, a case had been registered against the unknown fraudsters and a search had been started.

Two 'fakirs' rob family

Lucknow (PNS): Two con men robbed a family in Rajajipuram of their ornaments and cash on the pretext of curing their sick child. They trapped the family of Usha, an employee of Awasthi Vikas Parishad, by claiming to cure the illness of her grandson. After that, they made her and her son Arjun, daughter-in-law Ruby and grandson Naitik unconscious by making them smell some substance and ran away with the jewellery and cash kept in the cupboard. Hearing the cries of the Naitik, the family's other daughter-in-law, Reshma, living on the second floor called the police. All three were admitted to Rani Laxmi Bai Hospital. Reshma said that her husband Dharmendra had gone to work and she was resting after working at home when she heard Naitik crying.

Lt Gen Chatterjee visits AMC Centre & College

Lucknow (PNS): Lieutenant General Arindam Chatterjee, Director General of Medical Services, Army and Colonel Commandant of Army Medical Corps was given a warm send off from the AMC Centre and College here on his farewell visit from July 14 to 15 before superannuation in the end of this month, after a successful and illustrious career in the Army Medical Corps. During his visit, Lt General Chatterjee paid tribute to the bravehearts of Army Medical Corps at the cenotaph of AMC War Memorial 'Shradhanjali' in Lucknow Cantonment. An impressive Guard of Honor was presented to the general officer at Officers Training College parade ground. The contingent was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ajay Tyagi. It was marked by customary elegance and military precision. DGMS (Army) was accompanied by Lieutenant General Kavita Sahai, Commandant, AMC Centre and College and Officer-in-Charge AMC Records. Lt Gen Arindam Chatterjee also addressed a special Sainik Sammelan for all ranks of AMC Centre and College, Lucknow. In the address, he emphasised the importance of delivering high quality health care services to the armed forces personnel and dependents with commitment, zeal and enthusiasm. Lt Gen Arindam Chatterjee was commissioned in 1984 and has put in 39 years of illustrious service in the Armed Forces Medical Services. He is a specialist in hospital administration and a graduate of the elite Armed Forces Medical College, Pune.

Provocative slogans during Muharram procession in Amethi, six arrested

Lucknow (PNS): The police have arrested six people from Amethi in connection with provocative slogans raised during the Muharram procession. The swift action came after a video of provocative slogans being raised during the procession went viral on social media,

officials said on Monday. A case has been registered on the basis of a police complaint in connection with objectionable slogans raised during the procession on Sunday evening, right in front of Musafirkhana police station of the district. As the procession passed the

Musafirkhana police station, some youths who were part of the procession allegedly raised provocative slogans, the police said. A case was registered against some unknown youths involved in the Muharram procession late at night after the news spread.

Munshi Pulia-Ayodhya road flyover to be officially inaugurated soon

PNS ■ SHARMILA KRISHNA
The construction of the Munshipulia-Ayodhya road flyover has been completed and it will be inaugurated shortly. Diwakar Tripathi, the representative of MP from Lucknow and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, said here on Monday that they had already written for early inauguration of the flyover. Incidentally vehicles have started plying over this flyover as it has been opened for trials. The 1.8-kilometre-long, four-lane flyover starts from the Polytechnic, crosses Munshipulia and then descends before Sector 25 of Indira Nagar. Tripathi said that the cost of the construction of the flyover was Rs 170 crore. He said that it would relieve the general public from traffic

snarls to a large extent. "The vehicles moving from Sitapur road towards engineering college, Terhi Pulia crossing, Khurram Nagar crossing will be connected with the Ayodhya road and this will help all those people who are going to high court and Shaheed Path," he said. Tripathi said the flyover would ease traffic in the entire Indira Nagar, Aliganj, Vikas Nagar, Jankipuram Extension and Madiyaon area. "This traffic will move on the flyover and will not stop anywhere and thus all the localities and lanes lying below the flyover will not be touched. With the external traffic moving completely outside leaving the local life undisturbed, it will witness several crossings being free of traffic snarls," he added. From the Ayodhya road, the commuters will first move over

the Munshi Pulia flyover then Khurram Nagar and Terhi Pulia flyovers followed by the engineering college flyover then the IIM flyover. MLA from Lucknow East OP Srivastava said that the entire Lucknow East Vidhan Sabha constituency would get relief from the traffic snarls. "The residents of the Lucknow East assembly constituency should be grateful to the defence minister for the construction of this flyover," he said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Kamlesh Dixit said that the large number of vehicles coming from the side of Moradabad, Rampur, Shahjahanpur and going towards Ayodhya and Sultanpur would move over the flyover and not disturb or increase the load of the traffic within the city.

// ई-निविदा आमंत्रण //

उज्जैन स्मार्ट सिटी लिमिटेड (USCL) द्वारा श्री महाकाल महालोक के बेसमेंट पार्किंग के ऊपर निर्मित दुकान/कियोस्क "प्रसादम" (Prasadam) के लिए ऑनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की गई है। जिसका विवरण निम्नानुसार है। समय सारणी :-

क्रमांक	विवरण	दिनांक एवं समय
1.	ऑनलाइन निविदा पंजीयन प्रारंभ करने का दिनांक एवं समय	15.07.2024
2.	ऑनलाइन निविदा ऑफर प्रस्तुत करने का अंतिम दिनांक एवं समय (तकनीकी और वित्तीय बोली जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि)	20.08.2024, 17:00 pm
3.	निविदा के तकनीकी प्रस्ताव खुलने की दिनांक एवं समय	22.08.2024, 11:00 am
4.	निविदा का ऑनलाइन वित्तीय प्रस्ताव निविदा प्रपत्रों का मूल्यांकन होने पश्चात ओपन किया जाएगा। जिसकी सूचना एस एम एस/ईमेल के माध्यम से दी जावेगी	सूचित किया जाएगा
5.	निविदा की वैधता अवधि	वित्तीय प्रस्ताव खुलने की तिथि से 180 दिन तक

अतः निम्नानुसार निविदा विज्ञापित की सूचना समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित कराया जाना प्रस्तावित है :-

दुकान क्रमांक	NIT क्रमांक	टेंडर आई. डी.	दुकान/कियोस्क का बिल्ड-अप एरिया	निकटतम सौ. रु. के मूल्य पर पूर्णांकित करते हुए	आरक्षण स्थिति	अमानत राशि (5 प्रतिशत)
Shop No. 5	USCL/343	2024_UAD_357079_1	13.12	23,83,100.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,19,155.00
Shop No. 6	USCL/344	2024_UAD_357082_1	26.12	47,93,800.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	2,39,690.00
Shop No. 7	USCL/345	2024_UAD_357087_1	14.48	26,35,200.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,31,760.00
Shop No. 9	USCL/346	2024_UAD_357092_1	15.76	28,71,700.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,43,585.00
Shop No. 10	USCL/347	2024_UAD_357095_1	15.76	28,71,700.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग की विधवा	1,43,585.00
Shop No. 13	USCL/348	2024_UAD_357098_1	12.78	23,21,200.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,16,060.00
Shop No. 14	USCL/349	2024_UAD_357089_1	24.18	44,33,700.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	2,21,685.00
Shop No. 15	USCL/350	2024_UAD_357117_1	14.61	26,68,200.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,33,410.00
Shop No. 16	USCL/351	2024_UAD_357123_1	14.53	26,62,900.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,33,145.00

विशेष नोट :-

- ई-निविदा में भाग लेने वाले व्यक्ति/संस्था/साझेदारों फर्म/कंपनी या कंपनी द्वारा अधिकृत व्यक्ति/संस्था/फ्रेचाईजी मध्य प्रदेश का ई-निविदा पोर्टल <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर ई-निविदा प्रस्तुत कर सकते हैं।
- प्रत्येक दुकान की निविदा के लिए पृथक-पृथक आवेदन प्रस्तुत किये जायेंगे।

उज्जैन स्मार्ट सिटी लिमिटेड

इंडियन बैंक (भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)

Indian Bank (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD

POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property) [Under Rule-8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/ Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/ her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said Rules. The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charges of the Indian Bank. The Borrower's / Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. This Possession Notice is being served to the Borrower (s), Guarantor (s) & Mortgagor (s) to deposit the said dues. Details as under:

S. N.	Name & Address of the Borrower (s)/ Guarantor (s)/ Proprietor / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Property	Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Outstanding Amount
Branch: Staff College Branch			
1.	1. Smt. Rajvinder Kaur W/o Shri Satnam Singh (Borrower & Mortgagor), Add-1: H.No. 14A, Jagpal Khera, Chota Bharwara, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226003 Add-2: Sardar Nagar Manjhari Jhanjari, Tehsil-Fatehpur, Barabanki, U.P.-225304 Add-3: Plot No. A-5, Minjumila Part of Khasra no. 490sa & 487sa situated at village Sarai Shekh, Pergana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow	Plot No. A-5, Minjumila Part of Khasra no. 490sa & 487sa situated at village Sarai Shekh, Pergana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow. Sale deed no. 3492 dated 13/03/2018 Bahi no. 1, zild no. 20669, Pages 281 to 312 registered at sub registrar II, Lucknow, Boundaries as per sale deed-North: Plot No. A-4, South: Plot No. A-6, East: Aaraji Degar, West: Road 20 ft wide	22.04.2024 10.07.2024 Rs. 15,53,034.00 as on 10.07.2024 and interest on charges thereon.
2.	1. M/S LALMAN CATERERS, Prop- Lalman Rastogi (Borrower) Address- 356/318 Manas Vihar, Aman Vihar, alam Nagar, Rajajipuram Saripur, Lucknow 226017 2. Shri. Lalman Rastogi S/o Shri Ram Chandra Rastogi (Borrower cum Prop.), Address- 356/318 Manas Vihar, Aman Vihar, alam Nagar, Rajajipuram Saripur, Lucknow 226017 3. Mrs. Susheela Devi Rastogi W/o Lalman Rastogi (Guarantor and Mortgagor), Address- 356/318 Manas Vihar, Aman Vihar, alam Nagar, Rajajipuram Saripur, Lucknow 226017	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Plot No. 3A in Kasara No.51 of Minjumila village Goda (Kanak City Yojna) Pergana Tehsil Lucknow. (Nagar Nigam Plot no. 356/318/234, Manas Vihar, saripur, Lucknow). Sale deed dated 15.03.2004, book no. 1jild no. 1822 page no. 351-370 SI No. 2267/04 Registered with Sub-Registrar V, Lucknow. Bounded by :- North: PLOT No. 03, South: PLOT No. 02, East: BHUKHAND ARAJI SAMITI, West: 18 FT. Road	22.04.2024 10.07.2024 Rs. 18,66,780.00 and interest and charges thereon.
Branch: Ujariyan Branch			
3.	1. Shri Balik Prasad S/o Ram Badat Prasad (Borrower), Address: Plot at part of Khasra No.2/2 and 38/1 rajiv Nagar, Kalyanpur,Lucknow-226022 2. Smt. Indrawati Devi W/o Mr. Balik Prasad (Co-Borrower), Address: Plot at part of Khasra No.2/2 and 38/1 rajiv Nagar, Kalyanpur,Lucknow-226022 3. Shri Anoop Srivastava S/o Mr.Daya Shankar Srivastava (Guarantor), Address: 1/539 Sector-J Jankipuram,Lucknow-226021	All that part and parcel of the plot situated at part of Khasra No.2/2 & 38/1 measuring 69.702sqmtr, Village Rajeev nagar Kalyanpur Pergana Tehsil and District Lucknow in the name of Smt. Indrawati Devi W/o Mr. Balik Prasad, Boundary as per deed: North: 15feet Road, South: Araazi deegar, East: House of Mr. Kaali Shankar, West: House of Mr.Jitendra	24.04.2024 10.07.2024 Rs. 7,10,372.00 and interest thereon.
Branch: Kaiserbagh Branch			
4.	1. M/s Kamakha Graphics (Firm & Borrower) through its proprietress Smt. Upasana Kaushal w/o Shri Mukesh Kaushal, Unit Address: Sarla Industrial Building, Hall No. 2-3, Agrasen Nagar, Mohibullapur, Sitapur Road, Lucknow-226010 2. Smt. Upasana Kaushal, w/o-Shri Mukesh Kaushal (Proprietor, Borrower, Guarantor & Mortgagor) Address: A28, Shree Nath Ji Vihar, Near Daliganj Railway Crossing, Sitapur Road, Nirala Nagar, Lucknow 226020 3. Shri Mukesh Kaushal, s/o Shri Niwas Kaushal (Borrower, Guarantor & Mortgagor), Address: A28, Shree Nath Ji Vihar, Near Daliganj Railway Crossing, Sitapur Road, Nirala Nagar, Lucknow 226020 4. Shri Vinay Bansal S/o Shri Vinod Kumar Bansal (Guarantor), Address: B-7/114, First Floor, Shri Nath Ji Vihar, Ahibaranpur, Sitapur Road, Lucknow 226020	All the part & parcel of Flat No. A-028 on Ground Floor and Parking No. 09, Khasra No. 354/2, 355/1, Shrinathi Vihar Building, Village- Ahibaranpur, Sitapur Road, Ward- Triveni Nagar, Pargana, Tehsil and District-Lucknow. Bounded by :- North: Open Set Back and Block No. B-12 Lift, South: Inner Road of Colony, East: Passage and adjoining flat No. A-027, West: Open Set back and Block No. B-12	23.04.2024 10.07.2024 Rs. 1,21,45,280.32 and interest thereon.

Date : 16.07.2024 Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer Indian Bank

Enhance electricity billing, collection efficiency: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday reviewed the current status of power generation, transmission and distribution in Uttar Pradesh.

The meeting, which was attended by Energy Minister AK Sharma, senior officials of the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited and all DISCOMs, focused on ongoing efforts and future plans. Electricity demand is growing rapidly, with peak demand rising from 20,062 MW in 2018-19 to 30,618 MW on June 13 this year. To meet public needs, uninterrupted power supply was ensured during the summer, he said, and added it was essential to provide adequate power supply in accordance with demand.

To achieve the goal of 'Har Ghar Bijli-Nirbadh Bijli', it is crucial to upgrade the power transmission system. Before establishing a new sub-station, a thorough assessment of local needs must be conducted. New sub-stations should be set up based on a five-year requirement target, the chief minister stressed. Whether in rural or urban areas, any damaged transformer should be repaired immediately, with new transformers provided as needed, he said, adding that adherence to the stipulated time limits was essential, and the performance of agencies responsible for transformer repairs should be monitored.

"All calls to the toll-free number/helpline must be attended to, ensuring that every consumer's issue is addressed promptly," he stressed. There is often dissatisfaction



among the public regarding fixing the electricity connection charge, highlighting the need for uniformity. Rules should be improved to ensure consistency, with a focus on reducing unnecessary infrastructure charges and prioritising the convenience of the common citizen, he added.

The chief minister said UP had achieved the goal of 'Sabko Bijli-Nirbadh Bijli' (uninterrupted electricity to all) in the last seven years.

"Electricity now reaches every village and hamlet ensuring equitable distribution without VIP treatment to any particular district. It is gratifying that currently, electricity is supplied without discrimination," he said, adding that during the intense heat, additional efforts were made to ensure convenience for the public, with round-the-clock electricity provided state-wide from March 15 to June 30.

In addition to various hydropower projects, 22 thermal projects are successfully operational in the state, located in Anpara, Hariduanji, Obra, Parichha and

Jawaharpur. The construction of units in Ghatampur, Panki, Obra-C and Jawaharpur should be completed promptly. Apart from Obra D, Anpara E and Meja Thermal Project-II being set up as a joint venture with NTPC, the work of Khurja thermal project under construction with THDC is expected to be accelerated. These initiatives will significantly enhance the state's power generation capacity. A study should be conducted to explore the feasibility of establishing pump storage plants at Ribhand Dam, Obra Reservoir and nearby areas, the chief minister said.

The primary challenge faced by the power corporation is issue and distribution of flawless bills and collection of revenue from all consumers. It is crucial that no consumer receives an incorrect electricity bill and that all bills are delivered on time. Overbilling or delays not only inconvenience consumers but also diminish their confidence in the system, affecting their willingness to pay. Concrete efforts must be made by all, from Discom to feeder,

to ensure timely and accurate billing and effective communication with consumers to achieve this goal, he stressed. Line losses are steadily decreasing due to strategic efforts. It is essential to combat electricity theft and monitor the performance of meter readers. We must ensure that no consumer faces harassment under the guise of meter checks or outstanding bills, maintaining a goodwill approach in all interactions, he added.

There was considerable enthusiasm for the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijlee Yojana, with over 18 lakh people having registered for the programme, Yogi said. It is important to promote this scheme widely and encourage more individuals to take part, he added. The chief minister asked the officials to complete the process of land acquisition for the proposed solar parks in Jhansi, Lalitpur, Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, Chitrakoot and Jalaun expeditiously. Similarly, in accordance with the bio-energy policy, the process of setting up CBG, bio-coal and bio-diesel plants should also be taken forward, he added.

Govt to boost farmers' income through carbon finance

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a remarkable initiative, the Yogi Adityanath government is set to break records by planting 36.50 crore saplings on July 20. Simultaneously, it is boosting farmers' incomes through 'carbon finance', by encouraging them to participate in this plantation drive.

As part of the Government of India's ambitious goal to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070, farmers will gain additional income from carbon credits by planting fast-growing trees such as Poplar, Melia, Dubia and Semal. These carbon credits will be purchased every five years at a rate of 6 US dollars per credit.

It is noteworthy that the trees planted under this initiative will provide farmers with addi-

tional income. The state government will benefit farmers through incentives for this purpose. The chief minister has also instructed that promoting carbon finance should reach as many farmers as possible.

In the first phase, farmers from six divisions of Uttar Pradesh will benefit from carbon credits. In a recent high-level meeting, Chief Minister Yogi ordered that farmers should be provided with these benefits immediately. For the first phase, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's home district Gorakhpur, state capital Lucknow, Bareilly, Meerut, Moradabad and Saharanpur have been selected. TERI and VNV Advisory Services are assisting in this process. Between 2024 and 2026, farmers will receive incentives total-

ing Rs 202 crore. In the first phase, 2,406 farmers from Gorakhpur will receive Rs 34.66 crore, 4,500 farmers in Bareilly will receive Rs 24.84 crore, 2,512 farmers in Lucknow will receive Rs 21.26 crore, 3,754 farmers in Meerut will receive Rs 21.67 crore, 4,697 farmers in Moradabad will receive Rs 38.05 crore and 7,271 farmers in Saharanpur division will receive Rs 61.52 crore. In total, 25,140 farmers will benefit from Rs 202 crore. In the first phase, Rs 50 lakh obtained from carbon credits will be distributed to 100 selected farmers in the Gorakhpur division. Every fifth year, the rate will be six dollars per carbon credit. The estimated carbon credits will be 42,19,369. For the second phase, seven divisions -Devipatan, Ayodhya, Jhansi,

Mirzapur, Kanpur, Varanasi and Aligarh - have been selected. In the third phase, the entire state is proposed to be covered under carbon financing. Carbon financing is an innovative financial instrument that assigns a monetary value to carbon emissions. It provides businesses, looking to offset their emissions, with a tradable permit through carbon credits.

A carbon credit allows its holder to emit one ton of carbon dioxide or an equivalent amount of other greenhouse gases. In the context of farmers, it targets the reduction in carbon emissions achieved through the trees they plant.

Farmers are given carbon credits for each ton of carbon dioxide emissions they prevent, providing them with financial benefits as an incentive.

Performance of Uttar Pradesh in Jal Jeevan Mission lauded

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

The Central government has commended the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government for its progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission. On Monday, Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil reviewed the mission's progress in UP during a meeting in New Delhi. Patil lauded Uttar Pradesh, saying, "UP has effectively implemented the campaign to provide tap water to every household. Now, it is crucial to raise awareness among the villagers about the value of every drop of water and the impor-

tance of its conservation." He urged UP to launch a dedicated campaign for this purpose. Principal Secretary (Namami Gange and Rural Water Supply) Anurag Shrivastava was present on behalf of the Yogi government. He highlighted how, despite numerous challenges, UP had successfully provided water connections to most families in the Vindhya and Bundelkhand regions. He also detailed the progress of the scheme in Purvanchal, west Uttar Pradesh, and other areas of the state. The Union minister praised UP's achievements, noting that it was

unimaginable that women in Bundelkhand would no longer have to carry water. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, we have achieved this," he said. In its presentation, the UP government reported that as of Monday, 2,23,86,760 (84.19 per cent) rural families have received tap connections under the Har Ghar Nal Se Jal Yojana, benefiting 13,43,20,560 villagers. Before 2019, only 5,16,221 rural families had access to tap water.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister CR Patil, UP Jal

Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh, Union Minister of State V Somanna, Dr Raj Bhushan Chaudhary, Secretary, Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Vimi Mahajan, UP Principal Secretary Anurag Shrivastava and others. Status of progress of Jal Jeevan Mission in Bundelkhand: Mahoba (99.64 per cent), Jhansi (98.92 per cent), Lalitpur (99.4 per cent), Chitrakoot (98.76 per cent), Banda (99.01 per cent), Jalaun (94.37 per cent), Hamirpur (98.75 per cent). Status of progress in Vindhya region: Mirzapur (97.43 per cent), Sonbhadra (77.11 per cent),

Ganga E-way to upgrade connectivity between eastern and western UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Ganga Expressway, the flagship project of the Yogi Adityanath government, is on track to become the second-longest expressway in the country. Targeted to be completed by December 2024, the expressway aims to significantly upgrade connectivity between eastern and western Uttar Pradesh and facilitate the grand Maha Kumbh 2025, which will see millions of devotees and tourists from around the world visiting the festival. Construction of the expressway, which marks a significant leap in Uttar Pradesh's infrastructure development, is progressing rapidly. These 594 km-long expressways, stretch-

ing from Bijauli in Meerut to Judapur Dandu in Prayagraj, will significantly cut both the distance and travel time between western and eastern Uttar Pradesh. The Ganga Expressway, currently under construction at a cost of Rs 36,230 crore, will span 12 districts of Uttar Pradesh. Covering approximately 7,453.15 hectares, the expressway will traverse 518 villages. Initially designed as a six-lane expressway, it will later be expanded to eight lanes, with a right-of-way width of 120 metres, enabling a design speed of 120 kilometres per hour. The construction of the expressway is divided into four segments. The Meerut-Budaun section (129.70 km) is being

built by M/s IRB Infrastructure. The remaining three segments - Budaun-Hardoi (151.70 km), Hardoi-Unnao (155.70 km), and Unnao-Prayagraj (156.85 km) - are being constructed by M/s Adani Infrastructure. The target for completing the main carriageway of the Ganga Expressway is set for December 31, 2024, with the remaining works slated for completion by November 2025. As of June 2024, soil work on the main carriageway has reached over 82 per cent completion across all four sections, averaging 3.85 lakh cubic metres per day. The complexity of the Ganga Expressway project is evident, with significant engineering feats such as a 960-metre-long bridge over the

Ganga river between Meerut and Budaun, and a 720-metre-long bridge over the Ramganga river between Budaun and Hardoi, both of which are currently under construction. The Ganga Expressway will feature 14 major bridges, seven rail overbridges (ROBs), and 32 flyovers. Additionally, it will include a 3.5-kilometre airstrip near Jalalabad in Shahjahanpur, capable of accommodating large Boeing aircraft in emergencies. The expressway will also have two main toll plazas located in Meerut and Prayagraj, along with 15 ramp toll plazas at various points along the route. Furthermore, nine public facility complexes will be established to serve travelers.

Woman abducted, brutally murdered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational killing in Hafizganj area of Bareilly, a woman was brutally murdered by slitting her throat. On Monday morning, her body was found floating in water filled at the side of the road. Her fingers were also cut. Reports said that a woman from Nawabganj police station area was going home on a scooter with her cousin sister on Sunday night. According to the victim's cousin sister, Nawabganj resident Monu Gupta, a grocery merchant, along with his wife and others, who were travelling in a car, stopped them on Hafizganj bypass. They pulled her sister, who was on the pillion of the scooter, and bundled her into the car and escaped.

According to the family members, they filed a complaint at the Hafizganj police station the same night against Monu Gupta and others for kidnapping their daughter. The police registered the report, but did not make any attempt to search for her. On Monday morning, the body of the girl was found lying in the water of the ditch near Faizulapur turn in Hafizganj area. Her neck was cut slit and the fingers of the hand were also cut. As soon as the information was received, the family members of the victim reached the spot along with many villagers. As soon as the information of the murder was received, the local police also reached there. The family of the victim did not allow the police to send the body for post-mortem, accusing the Hafizganj cops of not taking action after the complaint of kidnapping. They were pacified after SP (North) Mukesh

Mishra convinced them that stern action will be taken against the accused. The police later sent the body for autopsy. It is said that Monu Gupta's wife suspected that the girl had relations with her husband that is why she got the girl killed. The SP (North) said that it was a case of murder and the accused was being traced. He said the negligence of police had not yet come to light. In another incident, the bodies of a couple were found hanging in a house in Budaun on Monday morning, a senior police officer said, adding that the family members suspected murder. SSP Brijesh Kumar Singh said prima facie the case looked like of suicide. However, he added the cause of death will be found out after post-mortem report and further investigation. According to the police, Manoj (22), a res-

ident of the Nagla Tarau village under the Bilsil police station area, was married to Ranjana (20) in May 2022. Manoj worked as a tile stone installer. Ranjana's parents alleged both of them were killed and then hanged. They claimed the couple's feet were touching the ground and said if they had committed suicide, then their feet would not have touched the ground. The SSP said the bodies were found hanging from the same noose made of saree. The brother of the deceased, his wife and their children were sleeping in the adjacent room, he added. Meanwhile in Ballia, a 15-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly raped by a 22-year-old man in a village in the district, police said on Monday. The accused, identified as Sarvjeet Bind, has been arrested and is in judicial custody.

Priyanka's concern over growing custodial deaths in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has alleged that cases of death in police custody have increased in Uttar Pradesh and the state government should work towards restoring law and order in the state. In a social media post on X, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra wrote, "According to reports, a person died in police custody in the Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh. The family members allege that he died due to police beating. The job of the police is to protect the general public. It should not become



synonymous with cruelty, oppression, and murder. The cases of deaths in custody have increased a lot in Uttar Pradesh. This is very dangerous for the public. The state government should rein in this cruel system and restore law and order." Besides Jalaun, in another disturbing incident of alleged custodial death, a drunk man allegedly caught and taken by the police was reportedly found dead on railway tracks in Chitrakoot district. The incident is said to have occurred on Sunday, when the inebriated man, identified

as Anshu, was caught by the police for creating a ruckus during a Muharram procession. It is learned that the police took him to the station; however, his dead body was found on the railway tracks later. After the incident came to light, the police have been accused of killing Anshu and throwing his body on the railway tracks. In their defence, the police said Anshu ran away nine minutes after he was brought to the police station. They also said that CCTV footage of him running away was also with them.

Maha Kumbh fair area to have grand food court

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/PRAYAGRAJ

In its ongoing efforts to make Maha Kumbh 2025 a grand event, the Yogi Adityanath government is establishing an extensive food court in the fair area to offer devotees a taste of local cuisine, delectable sweets, and various culinary styles. To ensure quality food services for all devotees, the Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC) is developing this grand food court in Prayagraj. The food stalls will feature a diverse selection of dishes, including delectable local specialties and delicious sweets, catering to the tastes of all devotees. The UPSTDC has allocated a plot of approximately 25,000 square feet near the Civil Lines Cathedral Church in the Parade Ground area for

the establishment of the food court. This facility will be situated along Parade Ground Road, close to the Ganga Pandal and Tourism Tent Colony in Sector-1 of the Mela Area, featuring a total of 25 food stalls, each measuring 15 x 15 square feet. An agency will be selected for the development and management of the food court and various food stalls, with applications invited through a request for proposal (RFP). It is important to note that once the work is awarded, the agency will expedite the development of the designated food court area to ensure it is ready months ahead of the fair. Crores of devotees from 75 countries are expected to attend Maha Kumbh 2025, which will span three months. There will be five shahi snans

during this mega festival. The first bath, on January 13, 2025, marks Paus Purnima, with the first shahi snan scheduled for January 14. Subsequent shahi snans will occur on Mauni Amavasya on January 29, Basant Panchami on February 3, Maghi Purnima on February 12, and Mahashivratri on February 26. During the bathing periods, it is anticipated that two lakh people will take a holy dip in the Sangam area every hour. To cater to their needs, the food courts providing food, sweets, tea, drinking water, and other essentials, will operate 24 hours a day. The proposed operational period for these food stalls has been set at 180 days, with a minimum rental fee threshold of Rs 61.50 lakh. The food court will feature a diverse

range of cuisine styles from across the country, with a focus on local traditional 'satvik' food. Offerings will include baati-chokha, Awadhi thali, Banarasi thali, various types of khichdi, and Marwari, Gujarati and Jain dishes. Devotees will also be able to enjoy sweets from all over India, with a special emphasis on Bengali sweets, as well as renowned local treats. National brand food outlets will also be present in the court. All food stalls will be designed after a German hangar. The food court, with high-quality chairs and tables, will offer ample seats to the devotees. Facilities for heating and air conditioning will be provided, and strict hygiene standards will be maintained in food preparation.

इंडियन बैंक		Indian Bank				
इलाहाबाद		ALLAHABAD				
Zonal Office Lucknow, New Building, 2nd Floor, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001, Ph. 0522-2286272, 2287283, Fax: 0522-2288033, E-mail id: zolucknow@indianbank.co.in						
NOTICE OF SALE E-AUCTION						
Notice in intended sale under rule 8(6) of The Security Interest (Enforcement Rules) 2002 under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002						
Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank) had taken constructive possession of the following property /ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same of "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS, AS IS WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upto failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act platform provided by the Service Provider, contact & detail for Symbolic Possession of property is available at present.						
Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/Proprietor/Partners/ Director(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of the Immovable Property mortgaged	Dt. of Demand Notice		a) Reserve Price b) Earnest Money c) Account Details for EMD d) Incremental Bid Amt.	Date for submission of EMD Date & Time of E-Auction
			Out.Amt. as per Demand Notice	Dt. of Possession Notice		
Branch : Barabanki Main						
1.	M/s Ram Sewak Yadav Memorial Montessary School through its Manager Mrs. Shailish Yadav (Society/Borrower/Mortgagor), Address: Satya Premi Nagar, Near Ram Sewak Park, Nawabganj, Barabanki-225001	All that part and parcel of the Plots at Khasra No. 2820 (M) situated at Barabanki (urban), Mohalla Gandhi Nagar, Pargana & Tehsil Nawabganj, Distt Barabanki in name of M/s Ram Sewak Yadav Memorial Montessori School (Manager Mrs Shailish Yadav), Satya Premi Nagar, Area 232.257 Sq Mtr (2500 Sq Ft)	17.05.2021 01.11.2021	17.05.2021 01.11.2021	a) Rs. 36,02,000/- b) Rs. 3,61,000/- c) 6127853725	Till 30.07.2024 31.07.2024 at 11.00 AM to 03.30 PM
2.	Mrs. Shailish Yadav W/o Mr. Ram Swaroop Yadav (Manager), Address: Near- Lal Kothi, Lakhperabagh, Nawabganj, Barabanki-225001	Property constructed at Khasara No. 169 min, situated at Vill Paisar under seema Nagar Palika, Mohalla - Satya Premi Nagar, Pargana & Tehsil Nawabganj, District Barabanki in name of Mr. Ram Swaroop Yadav s/o Late Maiku Lal Yadav, Area 200.67 sq. mtr (2160 sq. feet). Bounded: North: House of Mr. Chandra Mani Singh, South: 15 Feet wide Road, East: House of Mrs. Kamini urf Kammo, West: House of Dr. R. K. Verma	17.05.2021 01.11.2021	17.05.2021 01.11.2021	a) Rs. 47,60,000/- b) Rs. 4,76,000/- c) 6127853725	Till 30.07.2024 31.07.2024 at 11.00 AM to 03.30 PM
3.	Mr. Anshu Kumar Yadav s/o Mr. Ram Swaroop Yadav (Guarantor), Address: Near- Lal Kothi, Lakhperabagh, Nawabganj, Barabanki-225001				IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	
4.	Vinod Kumar Ratra S/O Mr. Belli Ram (Guarantor), Address: K-123 Ashiyana, Near- Power House, Kanpur Road, L.D.A. Colony, Lucknow - 226012					
5.	Mr. Ram Swaroop Yadav S/o Late Maiku Lal (Guarantor), Address: Near- Lal Kothi, Lakhperabagh, Nawabganj, Barabanki-225001					
6.	Mr. Ram Swaroop Yadav s/o Late Maiku Lal Yadav (Borrower), Near Lal Kothi Lakhperabagh Nawabganj Barabanki-225001					
7.	Mrs. Shailish Yadav W/o Mr. Ram Swaroop Yadav (Guarantor), Near Lal Kothi Lakhperabagh Nawabganj Barabanki-225001					
8.	Mr. Anshu Kumar Yadav s/o Mr. Ram Swaroop Yadav (Guarantor), Near Lal Kothi Lakhperabagh Nawabganj Barabanki-225001					
For verification about the document, property & inspection thereof, the intending bidders may contact Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank), above mentioned Branch, Lucknow during office hours before on 29.07.2024 and for auction related query intending bidders may contact above mentioned Branch.						
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Place : Lucknow, Date : 16.07.2024 INDIAN BANK (erstwhile Allahabad Bank)						

Water level of Ganga continues to rise in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The water level of river Ganga in this holy city continued to rise on Monday. As per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Committee (CWC), the water level was recorded to be rising at a speed of five centimetres per hour though the water level of this river is rising by twice the speed i.e. 10 cm per hour a day ago. Though other half of the state is facing severe flood situation, this region of Purvanchal (eastern UP) is still safe as the main rivers are flowing far below the danger mark. However, in Varanasi during the last two



Namami Gange activists spreading the message of cleanliness at Kedar Ghat in Varanasi on Monday.

weeks, the water level of Ganga increased by more than four metres from 57.66 metres on July 1 to 61.79 metres on July 15 at 8 am but it was still well below the danger mark of 70.262 metres. However, the region received a respite as Ganga was recorded steady right from upstream Phaphamau to downstream Ballia, except Varanasi and Ghazipur where it continued to rise. Another relief was that this region remained dry during the last 24 hours. The level of Gomti river was also constant at Jaunpur. Meanwhile, during the day, the activists of Namami Gange carried out a cleanliness drive

at Kedar Ghat. They removed the garbage spread on the surface water of Ganga at Kedar Ghat. After this, the wastes scattered here and there on the banks of Ganga were collected and later put in the dustbin. After 'shramdaan', by giving the message that protecting the environment is everyone's moral responsibility, Maa Ganga's Aarti was performed with the devotees present at Kedar Ghat. People were made aware to maintain cleanliness on the ghats. Regional coordinator (Kashi) of Namami Gange Rajesh Shukla said cleanliness is the foundation of public health. "Dirty envi-

ronment leads to diarrhoea, jaundice, gastro-related diseases. Cleanliness should be made a part of lifestyle", he said, adding that the environment is our invaluable treasure. "If we are aware, then only we will keep it away from harmful elements polluting the environment. Problems like climate change, global warming, unseasonal rains and floods etc are arising as a result of the ill effects of the environment. It is the duty of all of us to protect the environment", he added. Gyanbabu, Kishan Thakur, Sudeep Manjhi and devotees participated in the cleanliness drive.

Minister reviews NCL's production



CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey chaired a review meeting at NCL headquarters. During it Dubey reviewed NCL's production, despatch, overburden removal, mining operations, achievements, FMCs and future expansion plans. He called upon NCL to work in the direction of enhancing solar energy. Dubey appreciated the contribution of NCL in maintaining the energy security of the nation. Apart from this Dubey exhorted the NCL to continuously streamline its CSR activities for the inclusive development of the local communities of the Singrauli region. During the NCL visit, Dubey also visited NCL's Jayant Area. He reviewed the Jayant project and inspected the mining oper-

ations from the view point. Dubey felicitated the outstanding employees of Jayant Area for their commendable work. During the programme MP (Sidhi) Dr Rajesh Mishra, Minister of State, Panchayat and Rural Development Department, MP Radha Singh, NCL CMD B Sairam, Manish Kumar, Rajneesh Narain, Jitender Malik, Sunil Prasad Singh, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO), NCL Ravindra Prasad and other senior officials were present. It is worth mentioning that the Northern Coalfields Limited is a Singrauli-based flagship arm of Coal India Limited (CIL) under Government of India. In the FY 2024-25 NCL is eyeing upon 139 million tonne (MT) of coal production and despatch. The company has produced more than 41 MT of coal and despatched more than 40 MT of coal till July 15.

Upendra Chandra Joshi takes charge as NCR GM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Upendra Chandra Joshi, an officer of Indian Railway Traffic Service, assumed the charge as General Manager (GM) of North Central Railway (NCR) here on Monday. Earlier he was working as Principal Chief Operations Manager Northern Railway. The new GM is a 1988 batch officer and has served Indian Railways in various capacities. Apart from his vast experience in traffic related issues, he also has a vast experience in general administration. Joshi started his railway service as Assistant Operations Manager, Samastipur and thereafter worked as DOM and DCM, Lucknow, followed by posting as senior DOM Varanasi and Izzatnagar divisions respectively. He has also served as the deputy chief operations manager and deputy chief commercial manager at Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR). Then he also worked as deputy chief operations manager at NWR headquarter and as senior DCM, Jodhpur. Joshi served as CCM/IT in Northern Railway and also worked in CRIS where he had immense contribution as project head in implementation and integration of Control Office Application (COA) resulting in automation of control offices which are known as the nerve centre of Railway



operations. COA is the base of National Train Enquiry System (NTES) which gives real time online train running information to Indian Railway passengers. He also held important positions as EDCM in Railway Board, Divisional Railway Manager, Kota and Joint Secretary in Ministry of Mines. Joshi a native of Almora, Uttarakhand, had early education from Ranikhet Almora followed by Bachelor and Masters degree in Chemical Engineering from prestigious IIT, Kanpur. On Monday after formally taking the charge Upendra Chandra Joshi held a meeting with all the principal heads of departments. All the divisional railway managers also joined the meeting through video conferencing. While addressing the meeting Joshi outlined his priorities. He said there has been quan-

tum jump in infrastructural and passenger amenities fronts in last 10 years. Due to public orientation of these efforts, there is marked improvement in customer interface. There is also improvement in staff orientation, earlier they used to work for railways only, now our frontline staff work to provide best services to the customers. Presently we have a challenge to provide real time response to the customers, all of us should strive to achieve overcome the challenge and ensure timely redressal of the queries and grievances. We should also ensure safe operations and instil confidence in public, he said. He also emphasized on punctuality as its not just timetable but is our commitment to passengers to make them reach their destinations in time. He also stressed on building infrastructure as it's the source to fulfil people's aspirations. He said we have to focus on Amrit Bharat stations and fulfilling demands of freight customers. While talking about the ensuing Kumbh Mela, he said there is need to work as a team in coordination with state, civil and mela authorities. He also desired that all the Kumbh related infrastructure works must be finished in proper time frame and adequate number of additional special trains should be run so as to avoid any inconvenience to pilgrims coming to Prayagraj.

SP leader asks workers to unite for poll

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

National secretary of Samajwadi Party (SP), former UP Minister and president of All India Vishwakarma Shilpkar Mahasabha Ramase Vishwakarma said in the 2027 assembly elections SP is eager to form the government with a huge majority in UP. "We all have to be ready to live among the people and make them party's supporters", he told the party workers while arriving on a day's visit here on Sunday. When Ramasre arrived here, the SP workers led by former city president Vishnu Sharma welcomed him at the Circuit House. Ramasre met the party workers and intellectuals and then visited the residence of SP leader Vijay Yadav 'Viji' who was attacked in the Meerghat firing incident recently and enquired about his well-being. He asked the party workers to unite right from now for better results in the 2027 assembly elections by making them ready to serve the people and solve their problems. The SP leader said that the people of the state have become disillusioned with the policies of BJP government and on the other hand, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has raised the voice of Pichada Dalits Alpankhyak in the entire country due to which the voters have made an important contribution in making SP the third largest party of the country after BJP and Congress by giving it 37 seats in Uttar Pradesh.

1,500 saplings planted using Miyawaki method on banks of Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

About 1,500 saplings were been planted on the banks of Ganga river using Japanese Miyawaki method here on Sunday. This is the fourth Miyawaki forest in Varanasi district. The Miyawaki method is an afforestation technique for cultivating fast-growing groves of native plants, with the dense and mixed planting of trees. Worried about the rapidly deteriorating natural balance, people conscious of the environment have started various efforts at their own level for environmental protection. The unprecedented heat last month had disrupted people's lives. Now, as soon as it rains, some organisations sensitive to nature are doing intensive plantation. An innovative experiment in this direction is the planting of Miyawaki forest. Vishwajyoti Jansanchar Kendra, a social organisation of Varanasi, has taken up the responsibility of planting a forest based on this Japanese technology. The organisation is running a plantation and environmental awareness campaign under the BHU Seva Jal Seva Abhiyan. With the help of the centre of social organisation Asha Trust located in Bhandha Kala (Kathi), about 1,500 plants were planted using the Miyawaki technique on the private land of a local

resident Nar Nahar Pandey on the banks of Ganga. Umashankar Mehta, coordinator of BHU Seva Jal Seva Abhiyan, said that this is the fourth Miyawaki forest of Varanasi district. In the past years, the experiment of establishing three such forests was successful. This forest remains green throughout the year and some fruit or the other is planted, due to which the number of birds is in abundance in this forest. Asha Trust coordinator Vallabhacharya Pandey said a total of 1,500 plants of 25 species have been planted in an area of 2,100 square feet, which also includes fruit-bearing and ornamental plants. "If this experiment is successful, then it will be further increased on the banks of Ganga in the coming years", he said. Vishwajyoti Jansanchar Kendra director Praveen Joshi said the pioneer of Miyawaki method is Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki. It started in Japan in the 1970s. By this method, a small area can be converted into a dense forest in a very short time by planting dense saplings. In this process the trees grow on their own and within three years they grow to their full height. Pramod Patel, Anil Kumar, Gaurishankar, Ranjit Kumar, Ajay Pal, Ashok Patel, Surendra Kumar, Taufiq Ansari, Ajit Gaurav and Sujit Gaurav were the main participants in the plantation programme.

Youth battered to death by miscreants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 24-year-old youth was battered to death in Karchana area late on Sunday night. Deepak of an area under Karchana police station was thrashed and killed when he was going to get vegetables from the market. The police is investigating the case. According to a report received here, Deepak left the house around 9:30 pm saying that he was going to the market to fetch vegetables. He had reached about 200 metres away from the house when unknown miscreants suddenly battered

him with sticks, rod and etc. As a result he fell on the ground in a pool of blood. However the attackers fled from the spot presuming him to be dead. On hearing the scream, people informed the police about the matter. ACP Karchana Sanjay Singh said Deepak was breathing when the police reached the spot. He was rushed to the hospital where doctors declared him dead. Even the family members are unable to tell who killed him and why. **SUSPENDED:** A child was left inside the primary school after it was allegedly closed 30 min-

utes before time in Meja area on Monday. The matter reached the BSA after the people of the village passing by spotted the child. The officials sent the staff again to the school. After this the child could be taken out. Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) Praveen Kumar Tiwari said that the principal in charge has been suspended. An investigation has been initiated as to why the school was closed before time. In this action will be taken against those who are found guilty. **EMBEZZLEMENT CASE:** A case of embezzlement of sever-

al crores of rupees by an agent associated with the post office has been reported here. Assistant Superintendent of Post Office Daraganj Arjit Kumar Soni has filed a report of embezzlement at the Daraganj police station in this connection. The Daraganj police is investigating the case after filing a first information report (FIR). Station in charge post office Tushar Dutt Tyagi said that a case has been registered under several sections including fraud on the basis of the written complaint given by Assistant Superintendent, Post Office Daraganj, Arjit Kumar Soni.

Woman, nephew killed in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A woman and her nephew were injured when a speeding DCM hit a pickup on the expressway in Kannauj district early on Monday morning. The injured were admitted to the Medical College. Due to their serious condition, four of the injured were referred to the LLR (Hallet) Hospital, Kanpur. The incident took place around 5 am on Monday. Rajan, son of late Dinanath of Bishanpura under Jamo Bazar police station, Sewan (Bihar) along with wife Rajju Devi, sons Dipak, Dipu, brother Mukesh, his wife Ramanti and their sons Ansh, Yash, mother Kaushalya Devi, maternal brother Munnu, son of Dhurandhar Singh and Bishar hold goods was going to Bihar from Delhi on Picup for per-

forming the 'tehravi' ceremony of his father who had died eight days ago. Maternal brother Munnu was driving the pickup owned by Rajan. They had proceeded from Delhi on Sunday evening. On Agra-Lucknow Expressway near Salempur village under Saurikh police area, at 149 km point, Ramandip, son of Balbir Singh of Dhuri village, Samrethaha district. (Punjab) was going to Firuzabad on the DCM. Suddenly, Ramandip dozed off and lost control over the DCM which, after dismantling the divider and its grill, collided with the pickup on the other side of the road. Due to powerful collision, the pickup was badly damaged killing Munnu and his aunt Kaushalya Devi on the spot while eight others were injured. Of the injured, Mukesh (38), son of Dinanath, Ansh (13), Yash (14) Dipu (7)

sons of Rajan, were admitted to the community health centre (CHC), Saurikh, in a critical condition for the first aid. From there all the injured were referred to the Government Medical College from where Rajjo, Ramanti, Rajan and Dipak, due to their serious condition, were referred to the LLR (Hallet) Hospital, Kanpur. The bodies of the woman and her nephew were kept in the mortuary of the medical college. Tirwa SDM Ashok Kumar and tehsildar Atul Harsh along with the Revenue department team rushed to the medical college and enquired about the condition of the injured. Emergency incharge Dr Shadab Hussain said as four seriously injured persons had internal injuries, they were referred to Kanpur. The damaged pickup and DCM were towed to the toll plaza with the help of a crane.

FIELD DAY: A one-day field day was organised on 'Dhaincha crop for green manuring under NICRA Scheme' in Aurangabad village by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dilip Nagar, run by Chandrashekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology on Monday. Soil scientist Dr Khalil Khan told farmers that the Dhaincha crop should be turned into the field 40 to 45 days after sowing. Soil gets organic matter in large quantities. Dr Khan said that green manuring of Dhaincha also increases the number of micro-organisms in the soil. Besides, the upcoming crop also gets all the nutrients. He said the pH value of Dhaincha leaves is 4.5, hence by applying green manure of Dhaincha in barren lands, the barren land starts converting into normal land due to which the health of the soil improves.

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2.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy Repair of 04 TPH husk feed boiler (replacement of shell and water valve tubes) including material and supply of ID fan complete in all respects.	01 Complete job
3.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Annual Rate Contract for the supply of Nitric Acid b) Outsourcing of housekeeping activities of Old Dairy and New Dairy at Verka Jalandhar Dairy. c) Annual Labour Contract for packing of milk & milk products in different pack sizes. d) Hiring of refrigerated vehicles for supply of frozen (like ice cream, table butter, cheese etc.) and Ambient Verka products in Verka Jalandhar Dairy Milkshed area.	Annual
4.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy a) Outsourcing of Milk Booth at Park back side main shopping centre sector 32-A, Chandigarh Road, Ludhiana. b) Outsourcing of Verka Milk Bar at:- • Macchiwara • Kamalpura	Three Years
5.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy a) e-tenders for supply, installation, testing & commissioning of :- • 125 KVA DG set for Milk Chilling Centre Mehta, • 100 KVA DG set for Milk Chilling Centre Fatehgarh Churian. b) Sealed Tenders for Sale of :- • Tata 407 (Model 1994) vehicle at Verka Amritsar dairy. • Tata 709 (Model 1997) vehicle at Verka Amritsar dairy. • Ambassador Car (Model 2010) vehicle at Verka Amritsar dairy.	01 No. Complete job.
6.	For Verka Mega Dairy, Bassi Pathana Loading/ Unloading of Verka Milk & Milk Products, Corrugated Boxes, SMP bags etc.	01.09.2024 to 31.08.2025

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1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
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Youth strangles wife, ends life

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A youth after strangling his wife committed suicide by hanging himself in Safai (Etawah) on Sunday night. Avaneesh alias Manoj Yadav (30) of Nagla Chainsukh, Saifai, was married to Sonam Yadav (28) in 2015. Prior to strangling her, he prepared a video alleging that his wife had illicit relations with a constable. He sent this video to many of his relatives and thereafter ended his life. Police sent both the bodies for autopsy and carried out a probe on the basis of video clips. Kin informed the police and SHO Kapil Dubey along with force and forensic team rushed to the spot. He informed his senior officers about the incident. Police is carrying out an intensive probe in the matter. Meanwhile a boy drowned in Rind river in Vidhnu police station area on Sunday. He had gone there for a bath with friends. The police and pressed divers into service who recovered the body after around three hours by late evening. The body was sent for autopsy. Besides, a sheep herder committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree on the outskirts of Kharagpur village under Rasoolabad police station of Kanpur Dehat.

78 couples tie the knot

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 78 couples — 77 Hindus and one Muslim, got married under Mukhya Mantri Samuhik Yojana at Cholapur development block premises here on Monday. This is second time within a week when such a mass marriage function was organised as on July 11, the government organised the marriage of 61 couples. The girls of poor families took 'saat phere' (seven vows) around the fire while 'nikah' was read for the minority couple. The marriage of eligible couples from other four blocks was conducted with great pomp and show at Cholapur block of Varanasi. Zils Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya and many dignitaries, including officers and employees, were present to bless the brides and grooms. Considering fire as witness, 77 Hindu couples took vows to stay together for seven lives. One Muslim couple got married. Social Welfare



A mass marriage function was organised at Cholapur block in Varanasi on Monday.

Officer Girish Chandra Dubey said 78 couples from four development blocks were married in Cholapur block. They included 32 couples from Chiragaon block, 15 from Sewapuri block, 22 from Cholapur block and nine from Kashi Vidyapeeth block who were married under this mass marriage scheme. After the

Woman meets tragic end

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

An elderly woman died after she was hit by an unidentified vehicle in front of the SS Coaching Centre under Govindpur police outpost in Shivkuti on Monday morning. On getting information the police reached took the body in possession and sent it for the post-mortem examination. The deceased was identified as Chanda Devi (70), wife of Shankar Lal, a resident of Chilla Govindpur under Shivkuti police station. Meanwhile, the marriage of Dinesh Singh's daughter was fixed in Aspur Devsara of Pratapgarh. The wedding procession arrived on Sunday night and a dispute broke out between the wedding party and some people. That day, people intervened and pacified the matter, but next morning, more than half a dozen youths attacked the venue and pelted stones injuring many people. Inspector Naini Yashpal Singh said information of assault has been received, efforts are being made to identify the accused.

SC issues notices to pvt parties on NTA pleas to club all cases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notices to private parties on a batch of pleas filed by the National Testing Agency (NTA) seeking transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts on the NEET-UG row to the top court to avoid multiplicity of litigations. Earlier, a vacation bench had on June 14 issued notices to the parties on similar pleas by the NTA. The NTA had submitted that several pleas seeking cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Under Graduate (NEET-UG), 2024 over allegations of question paper leak and other malpractices are pending in several high courts. Advocate Vardhaman Kaushik, appearing for the NTA, urged a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala on Monday that the fresh batch of pleas be also transferred to the apex court as they pertained to the same issue. "Issue notice and tag," the bench said, adding that these pleas will also be taken up together with the pending petitions on the NEET-UG row on



July 18. The NTA also urged the bench to stay the pending proceedings in various high courts. The CJ said once the Supreme Court has issued notices on transfer petitions, the high courts, procedurally, do not proceed with the hearing. The bench asked the NTA counsel to bring this to the notice of the high courts concerned. The top court was hearing as many as five petitions seeking transfer of cases from various high courts to it. Earlier, the bench had on July 11 adjourned till July 18 the hearing on a clutch of other petitions seeking cancellation, re-test and probe into alleged malpractices in the conduct of NEET-UG, 2024 as the responses of the Centre and the NTA were not received by some parties. The bench had also said it has

received a status report from the CBI on the progress made in the probe into alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam. In an additional affidavit filed in the apex court on July 10, the Centre had said data analytics of the results of NEET-UG 2024 was conducted by IIT Madras which found there was neither any indication of "mass malpractice" nor a localised set of candidates benefiting from it and scoring abnormally high marks. The government's assertion assumed significance in view of the observations made by the top court on July 8 that it may order a re-test if there were large-scale malpractices in holding the exam on May 5. The Centre's affidavit had said experts from IIT Madras have found that the marks distribution follows the bell-shaped

curve that is witnessed in any large-scale examination indicating no abnormality. A bell curve describes the shape of data conforming to a normal distribution. The NTA had also filed a separate affidavit on the similar lines and said it has carried out an analysis of distribution of marks at the national, state and city level. While hearing the pleas on July 8, the top court had observed that the sanctity of the examination has been "breached". Saying that a re-test may be ordered if the entire process was affected, the bench had sought details from the NTA and the CBI, including the timing and manner of the alleged paper leak, besides the number of wrongdoers to understand the extent of irregularities claimed by the petitioners. Over 23.33 lakh students had taken the test on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including in 14 cities overseas. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country.

PM pays tributes to Kamaraj, hails his visionary legacy



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid tributes to former Congress President K Kamaraj, a towering leader of his era who hailed from Tamil Nadu, and said his contribution to sectors like education remains unparalleled. "Remembering Thiru K. Kamaraj on his birth anniversary. He is widely respected for his visionary leadership and efforts to uplift the poor. His contribution to sectors like education remain unparalleled. We reiterate our commitment to fulfil his ideals and build a society that is just and compassionate," Modi said in a social media post. Born in 1903 in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, Kamaraj went on to become its chief minister and is credited for introducing several welfare measures to help the poor. He later became the national president of the Congress and was considered a deft organisational leader. 12

Support to Pacific islands' quest for progress our responsibility: Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India considers supporting the Pacific islands' quest for development as its responsibility, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday. In his brief remarks at an event, Jaishankar also said the Islands in the Pacific are not "small Islands" but rather "large Ocean countries" and that India is privileged to be their partners. "We consider it our responsibility to support the Pacific Islands in their quest for sustainable development. Climate change, natural disasters, poverty alleviation and healthcare are common challenges that we need to address together," he said. "India is always ready to do more with our Indo-Pacific partners," he added. Jaishankar's remarks came at a virtual ceremony that saw India signing an MoU for implementation of four community development projects in the Marshall Islands. "I am glad that these projects cover areas, including a community sports centre in Ailuk Atoll, airport terminal on Mejit Island, community centres at the Arno and Wotje Atolls. These would surely provide better infrastructure to the



people of Marshall Islands," he said. The External Affairs Minister said India and the Republic of the Marshall Islands share a long history of friendly bilateral relations, which has expanded over the years, including under the aegis of the Forum of India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIIC). The FIPIIC has emerged as a major framework for cooperation between India and the Pacific Island nations. "I would like to recall what my Prime Minister said at the third FIPIIC summit. The Islands in the Pacific are not 'small Islands' but rather 'large Ocean countries'," he said. Jaishankar also referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of

India's "concrete" commitments to the Pacific Islands at the third FIPIIC summit. "I am glad to witness the progress in achieving them. We are also working on the proposals regarding desalination units and dialysis machines for the Republic of Marshall Islands," he said. The External Affairs Minister said India recognises the priorities and needs of the Pacific Island nations. "Healthcare and related infrastructure, quality and affordable medicines, wellness and lifestyle, centres of excellence, education and capacity building, development of SME sector, renewable energy and clean water facilities all these are some of the focus areas of our cooperation," he noted.

PM, leaders congratulate new Nepalese PM Oli

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated K P Sharma Oli on his appointment as Prime Minister of Nepal and said he looked forward to working closely with him to further strengthen the friendship between the two countries. Oli, the leader of Nepal's largest communist party, was appointed Nepal's Prime Minister for a fourth term on Sunday to lead a new coalition government that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the Himalayan nation. Oli, 72, succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' who lost the vote of confidence in the House of Representatives on Friday, leading to the formation of the new government as per Article 76 (2) of the Constitution. Congratulating Oli, Modi said in a social media post, "Look forward to working closely to further strengthen the deep bonds of friendship between our two countries and to further expand our mutually beneficial cooperation for the progress and prosperity of our peoples." The Congress also extended its wishes to Oli and said



every Indian looks forward to further strengthening the bonds of cooperation between the two countries for a brighter future. In a social media post, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "On the behalf of Indian National Congress, we extend our best wishes to Shree K P Sharma Oli, on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Nepal." As close neighbours, India and Nepal share unique ties of friendship and partnership characterised by deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture, he said. "Every Indian looks forward to further strengthening the bonds of mutual cooperation for a brighter future," Kharge said.

IFS Vikram Misri takes over as India's Foreign Secretary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seasoned diplomat Vikram Misri, widely regarded as an expert on China and national security, assumed charge as India's new Foreign Secretary on Monday. Misri, a 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service officer (IFS), who was serving as the deputy national security advisor, succeeded Vinay Kwatra. The 59-year-old assumed charge of the key position at a time India is looking to navigate various geo-political challenges, including its frosty ties with China following the lingering eastern Ladakh border row and the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar congratulated Misri on assuming his new responsibility. "Congratulate Foreign Secretary @VikramMisri as he assumes his new responsibility today. Wish him a productive and successful tenure," he said in a social media post. Misri served in various capacities at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in the Prime's Office and in various Indian missions in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. He has the rare distinction of serving as private secretary to three Prime Ministers, Inder



Kumar Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi. As per norms, Misri is set to have a minimum tenure of two years as the foreign secretary. "Vikram Misri assumed charge as Foreign Secretary today. #TeamMEA extends a warm welcome to Foreign Secretary Misri and wishes him a successful tenure ahead," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a social media post. Before he was appointed as the deputy NSA, Misri served as India's ambassador to China from 2019-2021. Misri is believed to have played a key role in talks between

India and China after tensions flared significantly following the Galwan Valley clashes in June, 2020. The ties between the two countries nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. In his illustrious career, Misri also served as India's ambassador to Spain (2014-2016) and Myanmar (2016-2018) besides having stints in many Indian missions, including Pakistan, the US, Germany, Belgium and Sri Lanka. Misri was born in Srinagar and

Indian Coast Guard ship rescues two Olive Ridley turtles



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship Kamla Devi successfully rescued two Olive Ridley turtles entangled in ghost nets approximately 35 nautical miles southeast off the coast of West Bengal on Saturday, officials said here on Monday. The Olive Ridley turtles are classified as endangered species and are protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. Giving details, ICG officials said while on routine patrol in the Bay of Bengal, the crew of ICGS Kamla Devi promptly responded and executed a rescue operation, ensuring the safe release of a mother-child turtle duo that were badly entangled in discarded fishing nets. This operation underscores

the Indian Coast Guard's unwavering commitment to marine protection adhering to their motto "Vayam Rakshamah": "We Protect". Over the years, the ICG has saved numerous endangered species and demonstrated its unwavering commitment to marine protection. During the nesting period from 01 Nov 23 to 31 May 24, under "Operation Olivia" the ICG rescued 24 Ridley turtles, further showcasing their dedication. These species play a vital role in maintaining the health of marine ecosystems, making their preservation crucial. By safeguarding these vulnerable marine creatures, the ICG continues to demonstrate its dedication to preserving marine biodiversity and ensuring the health of our oceans

Shah calls Chief Ministers, takes stock of flood situation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday spoke to Chief Ministers of Assam, UP and Gujarat to take stock of situation caused by floods there and assured of all possible assistance and support of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). Shah's call to Assam chief minister took place as flood situation remains grim there affecting common people. Death toll has risen to more than 90 and more than 5 lakh people across 18 districts are reeling under the deluge, with Assam's Cachar being the worst-hit district. The flood-affected districts in Assam include Cachar, Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karimganj, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, and Sivasagar. Also, 1,342 villages under 52 revenue circles are still under water and the flood waters submerged 25367.61 hectares of crop area in Assam. The water level of the Brahmaputra River is flowing above the danger level mark at Neamatighat, Tezpur and Dhubri while the Burhidighing River is flowing above the danger level mark at Chenimari (Khowang), Disang River at



Nanglamuraghat. Over 58,000 people are still taking shelter in 172 relief camps and distribution centres in 13 districts. 2,83,712 domestic animals were also affected by the deluge. The situation in Uttar Pradesh, especially in the eastern and central regions, is also under observation after an increase in the water levels of several rivers following incessant rains impacting around 18 lakh people in more than 900 villages. As per officials, nearly 18 districts, including Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, Kushinagar, Shravasti, Balrampur, Lakhimpur Kheri, Barabanki, Sitapur, Gonda Siddharth

Nagar, Moradabad, Bareilly and Basti in Uttar Pradesh were affected by increased water level. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath earlier conducted an aerial survey of the affected districts and directed the officials to provide all possible assistance to the affected people. Due to heavy rain in the Valsad district in Gujarat, many low-lying areas have been inundated, and the national highway was also flooded. Teams from disaster cells were deployed to drain the water from these areas. Additionally, the heavy rains caused the water level in Madhuban Dam to rise.

Congress slams BJP for allegations against Rahul, decries 'cheap politics'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday slammed the BJP for its allegation that Rahul Gandhi encouraged violence against Prime Narendra Modi, saying "cheap politics" should not be played on the issue of security of leaders. The BJP on Sunday had targeted the Leader of Opposition following the assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump. "Third Time Fail Rahul Gandhi has often encouraged and justified violence against Prime Modi, who he has lost election to, several times now. How can India ever forget how Punjab Police, then under the Congress, deliberately compromised PM's security, when his convoy was left stranded on a fly-over," BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya had said. Hitting back at the BJP, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said, "cheap politics should not be played on the issue of security of leaders. The Congress party lost Mahatma ji to Right Wing terrorists. We lost two Prime Ministers at the hands of ter-



rorists. We lost our entire Chhattisgarh leadership to Left Wing terrorists, under the watch of the BJP government." Prime Modi and the entire BJP has been instigating people against the leadership of the Congress party by "spreading vitriolic" lies against Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and the entire family, he alleged. "He (Modi) also mysteriously withdrew their SPG security," Khara said. Donald Trump survived an attempt on his life when a young gunman fired multiple shots at the former US president at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, injuring his right ear.

Indian warships, USS Theodore Roosevelt conduct joint exercise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Navy's frontline warships carried out a mega military exercise with the Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group of the US in the Indian Ocean, demonstrating the growing strategic congruence between the two sides in the key maritime domain. The USS Theodore Roosevelt is a Nimitz-class, nuclear-powered, aircraft carrier of the US Navy. A carrier battle group or carrier strike group is a mega naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by a large number of destroyers, frigates and other ships. The Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group operated alongside forces from the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean on July 12, the US embassy said in a read out. The wargame came amid increasing concerns among democratic countries over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the larger Indo-Pacific region. The Indian Navy's deployment included guided missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam and replenishment ship INS Aditya. "This joint maritime activity advanced interoperability between the two major defence partners and underscores their



shared commitment to upholding a free and open Indo-Pacific," the embassy said. The US and Indian military forces focused on improving shared maritime domain awareness and information sharing, enhancing replenishment and logistics interoperability and improving combined air-to-air capabilities, it said. "Participating units include the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, Carrier Air Wing 11, and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Daniel Inouye," it said. The USS Theodore Roosevelt is currently operating with carrier strike group nine after conducting this joint maritime

activity in the 7th Fleet area of operations. The 7th Fleet is the US Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The Indian Navy routinely participates alongside US Navy units in multilateral exercises across the Pacific, including Southwest Asia and littoral Africa. "In addition to the group sail, the Indian Navy is also operating in leadership roles with the US Navy and other allies and partners in the ongoing Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2024 exercise in Hawaii," the US readout said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Expectations from the budget

The Union Budget must address infrastructure growth, job creation and clean energy initiatives

The 2024 Union Budget will be presented in the Lok Sabha on July 23rd. This will be the first budget by NDA-3, likely to continue its earlier policies. However, setbacks in the recent elections might lead to course corrections, and some populist measures may be included in the budget by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. As the Union Budget 2024-25 approaches, the Indian economy stands at a pivotal juncture, characterized by robust growth prospects and lingering challenges. The GDP growth forecast remains optimistic, buoyed by a strong recovery in various sectors, particularly manufacturing, services, and technology. However, inflationary pressures, high fiscal deficits, and global economic uncertainties pose significant challenges. The government has made concerted efforts in the past to enhance infrastructure, digitalisation, and clean energy initiatives, reflecting its commitment to sustainable development. Despite these strides, issues like unemployment, income inequality, and rural distress persist, necessitating targeted fiscal measures. The forthcoming budget is expected to address these concerns, aiming to foster economic resilience, stimulate investment, and ensure inclusive growth for the nation. It is an opportunity to streamline the economy and heal ailing sectors. People's prime concerns remain inflation, which can be dexterously handled with tight fiscal planning. The Union Budget under NDA 3.0 must prioritise infrastructure growth and job creation, aiming to boost manufacturing through public-private partnerships. Changes in personal taxation and pension schemes are also expected, focusing on long-term fiscal sustainability and middle-class relief.



There is significant industry expectation for reforms and incentives to bring them back on track. The real estate sector, a major catalyst for economic growth and a vital provider of employment, urgently needs industry status to access lower-cost financing and tax benefits. High taxes on essential materials like cement and steel, particularly the 28% GST on cement must be addressed to sustain growth. India's electric vehicle (EV) sector stands at a crucial juncture, with high expectations for the upcoming budget. The government should prioritise incentivising firms to use EVs for last-mile delivery operations. Reducing GST rates for renewable energy components from the current 18% to 5% could lower the cost structure for green energy projects, promoting faster adoption across the country. The upcoming budget is expected to focus on employee welfare, formal job creation, reducing compliance complexity, and addressing the skill gap. Job creation and equipping people with desired skills, especially in technology, must be focal points. The budget should allocate more funds to tech infrastructure and resources, preparing students for a tech-driven job market and supporting entrepreneurial growth. Overall, the Budget must provide a definitive direction for India's economic agenda, with a strong emphasis on infrastructure, job creation, clean energy, and comprehensive sectoral reforms.

PICTALK



Devotees carry idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra on the occasion of Ulta Rath Yatra in Nadia PTI

High seas treaty: A crucial step for marine biodiversity protection

This treaty represents a significant international effort to protect our oceans, promoting equity and cooperation among nations

The world's oceans, vast and mysterious, are crucial to the health of our planet. They regulate the climate, produce half of the oxygen we breathe, and support a rich tapestry of life that is vital to global biodiversity. Marine ecosystems are incredibly diverse, hosting countless species, many of which remain undiscovered. Protecting this biodiversity is not just an ethical obligation but a practical necessity. Healthy marine ecosystems provide essential services, such as carbon sequestration, which helps mitigate climate change. They also support fisheries that millions of people rely on for food and livelihoods. Yet, the high seas—the areas of the ocean that lie beyond national jurisdictions—remain largely unprotected and poorly managed. The significance of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement comes into the picture here. BBNJ is an international treaty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, also



known as the High Seas Treaty, is a significant international treaty aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Areas beyond national jurisdiction cover approximately two-thirds of the ocean's surface and 95% of its volume. These regions offer invaluable benefits to humanity, including ecological, economic, social, cultural, scientific, and food security advantages. However, they are vulnerable to significant threats such as pollution, overexploitation, and the escalating impacts of climate change. The anticipated rise in human demand for marine resources in the coming decades—for food, minerals, and biotechnology—poses a risk of worsening these issues. These areas cover nearly half of the Earth's sur-

face, yet they lack comprehensive legal frameworks to regulate human activities, leaving them vulnerable to overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. The BBNJ Agreement aims to ensure marine biological diversity conservation and sustainable use in areas beyond national jurisdiction. One of the most commendable aspects of the BBNJ Agreement is its emphasis on equity. The agreement recognises the differing capacities of developed and developing nations in managing marine resources. It includes provisions for capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, helping to level the playing field and enable all nations to participate effectively in ocean governance. This is vital for ensuring that the benefits of marine resources are shared fairly. The BBNJ Agreement represents a vision of global stewardship where nations come together to protect the shared heritage of our oceans. It establishes mechanisms for creating marine protected areas (MPAs), conducting environmental impact assess-

ments (EIAs), and sharing marine genetic resources (MGRs) and associated benefits equitably. This holistic approach ensures that conservation efforts are globally coordinated, scientifically informed, and inclusive of all stakeholders. It is a testament to the power of multilateralism in addressing global challenges. While the BBNJ Agreement is a significant step forward, it faces considerable challenges. Ensuring compliance and enforcement in the vast and remote high seas areas will be complex. Effective implementation will require robust monitoring systems, international collaboration, and sufficient funding. Moreover, the agreement must harmonise with existing regional and sectoral bodies to avoid conflicts and duplication of efforts. An international agreement like the BBNJ Agreement, where countries work together for a common goal, is a beacon of hope for resurrecting our planet from the hardships caused by human activities. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARAMAPALAN

New army chief follows Zorawar's footsteps

The ancient Duggar region has produced many of India's bravest warriors and earned the highest number of gallantry awards in the annals of the Indian Armed Forces



BHOPINDER SINGH

Ancient Duggar region (land of warrior-Dogra spanning J&K, Himachal Pradesh, and parts of Punjab) has given maximum sacrifice and earned the highest number of gallantry awards in the annals of the Indian Armed Forces. Geographically, they have been the first line of defence against all invading forces. The noble land birthed the likes of King Porus, and the warrior sans pareil, General Zorawar Singh. Unbeknownst to many, the legendary Zorawar's audacious conquests included regions that are now in Pakistan and China like Gilgit-Baltistan, Skardu, Hunza, to even large swathes of Tibet. With such martial traditions, it is the only region in the country that populates not one but four fiery regiments of the Indian Army i.e., Jammu & Kashmir Rifles, Dogra Regiment, Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry and Punjab Regiment, besides other arms, and services. But the Jammu & Kashmir Rifles or Jak Rif, has a hallowed place in history and imagination as a proud and direct legate of those Zorawar's dard-dard traditions. The only 'State Force' of the Princely Dogra Kingdom to be fully amalgamated in the Indian Army, they remain the quintessential 'Gentlemen Soldiers' owing to pedigree, immense dignity, and professional restraint in personal conduct, but unmatched ferocity in battle. In 1947 the 'Saviour of Kashmir', Brigadier Rajendra Singh Jamwal, MVC, and his band of 300 indefatigable warriors held off Pakistani tribals for crucial three days to allow the confabulations and the landing of Indian troops in Srinagar. The Maharaja and Commander of J&K State forces had ordered, "Brigadier Rajendra Singh is commanded to hold the enemy at Uri at all costs and to the last man" - he did so by paying the "ultimate sacrifice" himself. In another theatre, Brig Shergun Thapa, MVC, of the J&K State Forces earned the title of "Hero of Skardu". Even the first Param Vir Chakra of India, Maj Somnath Sharma, was from the Duggar region. Decades later, when the enemy attempted to



cross over yet again, it was the unparalleled heroics of the 13th Jak Rif battalion, atop the unforgiving heights of the Kargil War that galvanised the nation. Two combatants from the traditional Duggar catchment areas of Palampur and Bilaspur were to send shivers down the spine of the enemy with their regimental war cries of "Durga Mata ki Jai" as they retook Point 5140. Captain Vikram Batra was to immortalise the moment with his "Yeh dil mange more" spirit and Rifleman (later Subedar Major) Sanjay Kumar would fight to defend their land just as their forefathers did, for aeons. Both won Param Vir Chakra. Even the peace-time equivalent of gallantry, Ashok Chakra, was bestowed on 2/Lt (later Maj Gen) Cyrus Pithwalla of 17th Jak Rif, to be the only 'General' officer with the highest gallantry award. It is from this deep fount of distinguished soldiering, that the 30th Chief of Indian Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi, takes over the reigns. Commissioned in the 18th Rif battalion, he is the first Army Chief from the decorated Regiment. Understandably, people in the Duggar land (especially those from the Jak Rif fraternity) are justifiably proud. As 97 years

GENERAL DWIVEDI ASSUMES THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT HIS REGIMENTAL FOREFATHERS HELD WITH MUCH APLOMB, ELAN AND PROFESSIONAL ACUMEN THAT BEFITS THEIR MOTTO, PRASHATA RANVIRTA OR VALOUR IN BATTLE IS PRAISEWORTHY!

'young', Major General Goverdhan Singh Jamwal (the only General who was commissioned by Commander-in-Chief of J&K State Forces, Maharaja Hari Singh) extended congratulations and recalled the countless regimental sacrifices that, "made the State as crown of newly independent India". Today, General Dwivedi assumes the responsibility that his regimental forefathers held with much aplomb, elan and professional acumen that befits their motto, Prashata Ranvirta or Valour in battle is Praiseworthy! The General assumes the mantle in most challenging times, but as the Military truism goes, "The harder the conflict, the greater the triumph". With the Indian Army, he takes over the most disciplined, combat-hardened, and restrained institution of the nation - much like his own regimental ethos. Regrettably, such a selfless attitude in a selfish world can often lead to being 'taken for granted' or lead to institutional diminishment. Transmitting that 'voice' for redressal to the powers-that-be will be his foremost challenge. To his singular credit, he has tenanted the most sensitive posts e.g., Army Commander of the Northern Command that dealt with dual nemesis

i.e., China and Pakistan simultaneously, amongst other operational and staff posts. This makes him a worthy leader. In a movingly reassuring optic that is so typical of the Indian Army and its inimitable ways, the good General took blessings of his family elders, laid a wreath for those who went down fighting at the National War Memorial and then exchanged greetings with religious leaders of all faiths and denominations. Much like the multi-religious and multi-castiest denomination of the Duggar land and the combatants-in-arms from his beloved Jak Rif who could be a Sikh like Honorary Captain Sundar Singh (Ashok Chakra), Parsi like Maj Gen Pithwalla (Ashok Chakra) or even the martyr from his battalion i.e. 18th Jak Rif, Rifleman Arif Khan Pathan, who laid down his life on Indo-Pak Line-of-Control (LoC). Jak Rif's pride is the nation's pride. As regimental patriarch, Maj Gen Goverdhan Singh Jamwal dotingly noted, "General Upendra Dwivedi is the product of this great Regiment of General Zorawar Singh. You can expect results". (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ROT IN THE SYSTEM

Madam — It is ridiculous that the central institutions are being pulled in for series of alleged discrepancies in the entrance exams one after another. After NEET exam paper leaks, now its time for UPSC exam. Probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar's issue in Pune, is now on the limelight to raise many doubts regarding the UPSC and its selection process which is lenient towards IAS officers daughters and sons. It seems that the rules were bent in favor of her due to the political influence of her father and the impact of nepotism while clearing her medical examination certificate under OBC, PwBD quota, which was accepted despite it was done by the private hospital with an excuse of COVID-19 and posting. It is highly doubtful that she passed the exam under OBC category by misusing the law and fooled the interview board regarding her credentials which is not supposed to fall under OBC, PwBD quota as her asset worth is 22 crore. Her attitude, lavish life and pomposity on her probation period was unethical and disrespect to such highest post in the government. Perhaps, its just because of such candidates the honest and deserving get deprived of a chance to serve the society and nation building. It raises a red flag whether rules were misused in the past as well under the guise of obtaining OBC certificate by showing disability by the candidates who have had political affiliation and support. One hopes for fair and proper investigation of this matter to wipe out the rot in the system.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

RAUT'S UNCHARITABLE COMMENTS

Madam — Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and MP Sanjay Raut now says that Atal Bihari Vajpayee would have imposed emergency in a similar situation. Had Vajpayee told Raut that he would have imposed emergency if he had faced a situation of the kind Indira Gandhi faced? The situation was created by Indira Gandhi herself. Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha of Allahabad High

Trump dodges the bullet



In the shooting incident in Pennsylvania at a Trump rally, the Ex president fortunately had a narrow escape. History is replete with attempts at assassination of US presidents. In

fact world over national leaders elsewhere too have been targeted for differing reasons. In the Trump incident, political observers have highlighted increasing and consistent effort at polarisation in the US, fed by hateful political rhetoric in the past few years. Trump as the serving President would refuse to concede defeat in his bid for re-election in 2020, even after losing it by as many as seven million votes. He not only stuck to a theory of conspiracy to deny him a win but created a partisan following that would recklessly storm into the parliament. The Pennsylvania incident must carry a larger and universal lesson. As a leader grows tall his onus to public propriety and temperance in speech, becomes exponential. Else it stands to rapidly fray the socio-politic fabric of a nation.

R N Narayanan | Mumbai

Court held Indira Gandhi guilty for her electoral malpractices. The Allahabad High Court delivered its judgment on June 12, 1975. The adverse judgment against Indira Gandhi threatened her position as Prime Minister. Top national leaders Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, Vajpayee, and many others were arrested when Indira Gandhi had the premonition that her power and position would be in peril. The justification given for imposition of emergency was 'the internal disturbance'. Vajpayee did not indulge in electoral malpractices for facing a situation of the kind Indira Gandhi faced. He never hankered after power. Power came in search of him. The thought of Raut that Vajpayee would have imposed emergency if he had faced similar situation makes a laughing stock. What is wrong if Modi calls the day of emergency as the day of murder of the Constitution?

K V Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

RESPECT GANDHI'S LEGACY

Madam — I want to express my deep concern and disappointment over the recent

removal of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Doomsday, Assam. The abrupt decision to dismantle this statue, which stood as a symbol of peace and unity at Gandhi Chowk, has understandably sparked widespread outrage among the community, particularly student leaders and local civil society. The statue's removal not only disrespects the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi but also undermines the values of non-violence and harmony that he tirelessly promoted. Such actions can have far-reaching negative impacts on our society, eroding the respect for historical figures who played pivotal roles in shaping our nation. I urge the authorities to reconsider their decision and engage in a dialogue with the community to address their concerns. Restoring the statue or finding a more inclusive solution will help in maintaining social harmony and respecting the sentiments of the people.

Masood Ahmad | Barabanki

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

MANY REASONS FOR THANKING GOD

God helps us in many ways, and the least we can do is thank Him for His generosity



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Anyone, who has even tried to link with God either by praying or by chanting or by any other spiritual practice, would have benefited in some way. Because God can never be a debtor; He doesn't have to be. After all, He is the controller. I do many spiritual activities, and I am rewarded much beyond my expectations. How do I respond? I thank God profusely. This entitles me to more favours from God because thanking God is a high-class spiritual act. Over a long period of being in the shelter of God, many changes have occurred in my life. I am more peaceful; feel more secure; am 'sukhi' (happy); bad times don't last long; help comes, as required; guidance is generally available; etc. There are multiple reasons to thank God. I will detail a few. The first one has to be God's role in keeping the Creation going for our benefit. There have been many wars. But the world remains intact. Because God is the only entity, who could have prevented an all-out war like a nuclear war, which could have destroyed the world. God keeps the Creation going for His parts (The Bhagavad-Geeta 15.7). A businessman tries to keep his business going for his children, grandchildren, etc., but doesn't always succeed, because we all are limited; God is not.

God uses good souls, those who possess divine qualities to keep the Creation going. He rewards them in many ways including a better next birth. Shouldn't we thank God for this 'kripa' (grace)? The second reason to thank God profusely is for protecting good souls from demons. Lord Krishna has stated in verse # 16.6, "There are two types of living beings in this world: possessing divine qualities and having demonic qualities. Every person has either the predominance of divine or demonic qualities." Those with a preponderance of demonic qualities remain engaged in cruel acts. (16.4) There is a good percentage of such people. How do good people, i.e. having a preponderance of divine qualities, escape their attention?

God manages that. I cannot imagine living the way I do, i.e. with freedom and escape from being hurt by them. Believe me, I thank my Lord for this great mercy a lot, knowing how vulnerable I am. My third reason to be thankful to God is for bailing me out of all troubles, which make



their painful appearance due to my past bad/sinful acts, mostly in my past lives. I must have, otherwise I wouldn't be giving birth in this *dukhalaya*. God has promised this to all those who have God's consciousness. The fourth reason to thank God is for acting as *karta* (doer) in my life. There are five factors for accomplishing any task. These are: the place of action and the doer and many different kinds of instruments and many different efforts and fifth in this connection is the providence only." (18.14) Only God can control all the five. No human being has control over any other factor except being a doer. And when God is the *karta*, a task gets surely done. God does this *kripa* on us whenever He feels that it is according to *dharma* and we deserve it.

The fifth reason to thank God, especially by me is for God using me as His *nimitta* (instrument). I am one of many whom God has chosen. I suspect that all good people get this privilege, as *Arjuna* was. (11.33) The sixth reason to thank God one and all human beings is His mercy in allowing very simple spiritual practices like praying, *naman* (obseance), chanting and, yes, thanking.

Once we begin doing them, God is in the picture. He doesn't wait for us to become His devotees; God begins to help us to become one. Because all these acts signal to God our intention to take His shelter. In my case, God has been micromanaging my life for a long time encouraging me to go on with my spiritual activities like writing spiritual texts such as articles and books. All the religions promote this act of thanking God. If we don't thank when we should we are becoming a debtor. I look for opportunities to thank others, and to God of course. He gives me plenty of reasons to be thankful.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Prioritising growth and regional development



A S MITTAL

The first budget by NDA-3 is anticipated to address the demands of stakeholders and States seeking assistance to bridge regional disparities



The NDA-3 government is gearing up to present its first budget on July 23. This budget carries high expectations as it is anticipated to outline a 5-year economic agenda and is expected to deliver substantially to meet the demands of stakeholders and states seeking assistance. Discussions are underway regarding the reinstatement of special status for states like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, with demands from Janata Dal (United) and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in exchange for their support for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government. Andhra Pradesh's CM, N. Chandrababu Naidu, has demanded Rs one trillion to support the state's industrial and infrastructure development. The demand for special category status for Bihar and Andhra Pradesh poses the crucial question of why a similar approach should not be adopted to accelerate and expand the industrial growth of Punjab, a landlocked border state. This expectation arises at a critical time when the state is experiencing a significant divergence in its industrial activities due to stagnant growth and reduced exports. These circumstances demand new measures to catapult the state to greater heights. In the mid-nineties, neighbouring hill states like Himachal Pradesh reaped the benefits of a central special industrial package, while Punjab faced significant setbacks as many major players expanded and shifted their operations to the hilly states.

The geographical disadvantage of being distant from seaports has led to certain investment disadvantages and stagnant growth in the industrial sector. Today, Punjab demands a level playing field to compete on an equal footing, as its key manufacturing industries have the potential to become an 'Engine of Growth.' Punjab inherited a fragile industrial base at the time of India's partition in 1947, which was further eroded with the creation of Haryana in 1966. The 1980s and 1990s were tumultuous due to terrorism and social unrest, impacting industrial growth in the region. Currently, Punjab only accounts for 5% of industrial units in the country, with a 3.6% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in the industrial sector over the last five fiscal years. In contrast,



THE DEMAND FOR SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS FOR BIHAR AND ANDHRA PRADESH POSES THE CRUCIAL QUESTION OF WHY A SIMILAR APPROACH SHOULD NOT BE ADOPTED TO ACCELERATE AND EXPAND THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF PUNJAB, A LANDLOCKED BORDER STATE

neighbouring states like Haryana have demonstrated higher growth rates at 5.9%. Punjab is positioned 10th with a score of 58.95 in the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) ranking 2023, whereas Haryana holds the 5th position with a score of 63.65. It raises concern that Gujarat has the highest number of 8 districts among the top 25 districts in terms of export share, followed by Maharashtra with 5 districts, Haryana with one, and Punjab with none.

Moreover, in terms of foreign direct investments (FDI), Punjab ranks 12th, having attracted only 0.49% of FDI. This is in stark contrast to neighbouring Haryana, which ranks sixth with FDI equity inflows accounting for 4.17% of the total inflows. The erosion of industry is a pressing crisis in Punjab. Despite efforts by successive governments to attract investments, significant hurdles such as location disadvantage, law and order and frequent protests persist. One major issue is the location disadvantage, as Punjab's distance from seaports makes its industrial operations non-competitive in the global market.

Two years ago, CM Bhagwant Maan announced in the Vision Punjab conclave of ASSOCHAM that Punjab aims to become the first state in the country to own wagons (Punjab on wheels), offering a potential solution to dilute the freight burden.

However, the success of this endeavour depends on the support from both the central and state governments. Punjab is an exceptional hub for textile yarn, bicycles, hosiery, tractors, automobile components, sports goods, engineering goods, and leather. These industrial clusters possess immense potential and can be further strengthened. Ludhiana proudly leads as the top producer of blended yarn and hosiery, as well

as the second-largest producer of polyester silk, fibre, and cotton yarn. It dominates woollen knitwear (95%) and hosiery (65%) exports, showcasing its strength in the global market. While China holds a dominant position with a 37% share, India is positioned with a 5% share in the global export market, and there is huge potential for expansion in export markets such as the USA, UAE, UK, Germany, France, and Australia.

Ludhiana also commands a remarkable 92% of India's total bicycle parts production and 75% of bicycle production, securing its position as the leading exporter of bicycles from India with an 80% share. While India lags behind China in bicycle exports, there is clear potential to aggressively expand global exports with untapped opportunities in the US, European countries, and Africa as burgeoning bicycle markets. Jalandhar holds a solid 45% share of the total production, with 75% of the country's sports goods being exported from the city.

Despite China's dominant position as the largest exporter of sports goods with a share of 42.2%, India's current 0.56% share of global exports signifies the untapped potential for Punjab's growth, with lucrative prospects in the USA, UK, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Colombia, and Argentina. Punjab plays a pivotal role, hosting one-third of total OEMs in the farm equipment segment and serving as the leading tractor manufacturer, contributing one-third to India's production. With a commanding share in exports, Punjab stands tall as the largest exporter.

Despite India's current 2.2% share, the potential for over 2 lakh tractors to be exported in the next 3 years to burgeoning markets such as Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, SAARC, and African nations is undeniable. Wish List: Priority Focus on PLI:

The Production Linked Incentives (PLI) scheme should be thoroughly re-evaluated to ensure it delivers the intended impact on competitiveness and scale. Monitoring its progress closely is critical.

The slow progress of the PLI scheme, especially in labour-intensive sectors like textiles, automobiles, and components, must be addressed urgently. To achieve broader goals such as enhancing exports, attracting significant investments, and generating employment, expanding PLI to new sectors like bicycles and sports goods is imperative to encompass the maximum number of MSMEs. Assertive GST Rationalization: There is an urgent need to rationalize the current GST structure to eliminate the complex hurdles created by multiple tax slabs. Transitioning from the existing structure to a simplified two or three-slab framework and providing exemptions for previously exempted items such as farm implements is crucial to streamline the system.

Critical Focus on Logistics Cost: Competitive and efficient logistics are the foundation for industrial growth. Policy-backed support for state-owned wagons in landlocked border states like Punjab is essential to address the over-freight burden and provide a level playing field to manufacturing hubs. Incentivizing labour-intensive and export-oriented industries in the upcoming budget is vital to driving the country's economic growth and employment generation.

(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. Views expressed are personal)

Cinema: A potent tool in global politics and cultural diplomacy

In our multipolar world, cinema has become a critical component of soft power, shaping global perceptions through its captivating narratives

Movies have evolved far beyond mere entertainment; they now play a significant role in global politics and cultural relations. Through creative expressions, films harness the ecosystem comprising key stakeholders to nurture and develop soft power dynamics and geopolitical equations. In the realm of geopolitics, movies are more than art; they are potent tools used by countries to showcase their soft power and expand their influence worldwide.

Through their film industries, nations share stories that resonate globally, reflecting their identities and serving as diplomatic instruments. Films offer profound insights into the societal dynamics of different countries, profound



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

impacting international relations. Today, we live in a multipolar world where power dynamics are fluid, and various stakeholders, perceptions, ideologies, strategies, networks, interfaces, and interactions play a critical role.

The challenge we face today is assembling a complex jigsaw puzzle, where every piece of this puzzle has a vital role to play. Geographical boundaries have blurred exponentially, thanks to globalisation,

enhancing communication and ushering in a new era where technology plays a pivotal role in shaping these interactions.

The emergence of the new players can be attributed to the concept of Soft Power dynamics. This idea, coined by Joseph S. Nye, describes the ability to attract and persuade through culture, political ideals, and policies. In this context, cinema has become an essential component of Soft Power.

Cinema, as a medium and platform, acts as a catalyst to position soft power dynamics, decoding perceptions, perspectives and geopolitical stances globally. The portrayal on the big screen infuses fresh thinking into the policy debate dynamics, global issues and management of ideas in a

global framework, bound by multipolarity and instant communication.

Many films in the past have mirrored multidimensional dynamics and impact on different ecosystems, nations and individuals. Cinema and foreign policy interface reinforces the global appeal of a concept, or idea leading to a dynamic framework for cultural diplomacy. Cinema as a medium has added a new tool to the dynamics of bilateralism, the use of creative tools in the portrayal of a new point of view, ideology and intervention along with better cultural understanding.

Cinema has emerged as a vehicle of Collaboration, Cooperation, Cohesion, Coordination, and Convergence — the 5Cs of cin-



ema. On the global front, cinema breaks barriers, overcomes obstacles, and thrives on the creativity of both old and new players.

It no longer caters solely to Western or Eurocentric narratives but embraces a diverse global perspective, which plays a crucial role in shaping cinema perceptions and adding a soft touch to global power dynamics. The importance of cinema in geopolitics has

grown significantly over recent years, with governments increasingly funding film projects that reflect their national interests and cultural heritage. Many countries use their film industries as a powerful tool for soft power to shape their global impression.

The impact of movies is greatly amplified by their global presence, thanks to the rise of streaming services that have revolutionised film distribution, making it easier for films from smaller markets to reach a worldwide audience. Platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu have democratised access to movies from various countries, allowing filmmakers worldwide to showcase their cultural stories without relying on traditional distribution.

Cinema transcends power structures by influencing public opinion and shaping international policies through its captivating narratives. Movies serve as platforms for discussions and political analysis, sparking conversations that can drive societal transformation. Filmmakers and actors act as ambassadors with significant sway, using their works to facilitate cultural exchange and international conversations. Cinema has become a platform for new ideas and concepts, driving integration through International Film Festivals. The role of cinema in today's world is incredibly significant. It serves as a diplomatic tool and a compelling medium to communicate ideas through storytelling, influencing inter-

national relationships. Beyond its audience, cinema has a far-reaching impact on global leaders, policymakers, and communities worldwide. It acts as an envoy, spreading messages of peace, empathy, and solidarity through engaging stories that mirror the complexities of human life. There is no doubt that cinema now transcends entertainment in contemporary society. Nations are recognising the power of cinema as a tool to promote their agendas and perspectives on the world stage, underscoring its importance in diplomacy.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; Inputs by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan. Views are personal)

BSP leader's murder takes curious turn as police gun down surrendered suspect

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The killing of K Thiruvengadam, a 33-year-old history sheeter by Chennai Police on Sunday has stirred a hornet's nest across Tamil Nadu. Thiruvengadam, an accused in the murder of K Armstrong, State president of BSP on 5th July had surrendered to the Police along with seven of his associates within hours of the incident. Mayawati, BSP's all India President, who flew down to Chennai on hearing about the murder of Armstrong had said that the latter's murder was part of a political conspiracy and those who surrendered to the police were not the real culprits. She had also demanded a CBI probe into the murder of Armstrong. K Annamalai, the chief of Tamil Nadu BJP, expressed shock over the encounter killing of



Thiruvengadam. Annamalai, himself a former IPS officer, had asked the State Government to hand over the probe of the Armstrong murder case to the CBI. Reacting to Sunday's murder of Thiruvengadam, the BJP leader said that there were many unanswered questions. "It is unbelievable to see a culprit, and that too a history sheeter with many murder charges against him, was taken to an isolated area without handcuffs. Taking into consideration his past misdeeds, Thiruvengadam should have been handcuffed before taken

to the spot for recovery of arms used in the murder of Armstrong," said Annamalai. He also said that it was unheard of persons like Thiruvengadam was taken for arms recovery without any body frisking. He alleged that three DMK functionaries — Arul, Kalai Ma Srinivasan and Sathish — had been involved in Armstrong's murder and asked when Chief Minister MK Stalin would break his silence on this. Jacob Thomas, former director general of police, Kerala, is of the view that a probe should be ordered to find out how Thiruvengadam got a weapon

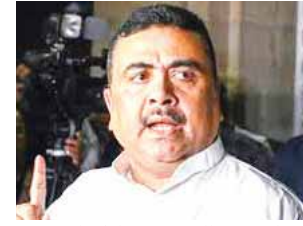
TMC, BJP spar as Suwendu demands Disturbed Areas Act in West Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has scoffed at the BJP for demanding the imposition of Manipur-like disturbed area laws in the State saying, in the wake of "humiliating defeats one after the other" the saffron party was "betraying all the signs of madness." "Suwendu Adhikari is asking for imposition of Disturbed Areas Act in Bengal... let them do so and see the consequence... they will lose whatever trifle seat they have won in the recent elections... the demand itself shows that they are a decaying force and very soon they will change into a signboard," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said adding, "Suwendu is making such demands in order to maintain his credibility before his bosses in Delhi... it clearly shows that he is short in confidence after the resounding defeat... he cannot digest the electoral loss." Consequent to the ongoing



post-poll political violence, massive rigging in the recently concluded by-elections and a general drop in the law and order situation of the State Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari earlier demanded the imposition of "disturbed areas" laws in there-gion. "The way our people were stopped from voting in the by-elections... the way the booths were looted... and the way the police stood a silent spectator... it clearly showed that there is no law and order in Bengal... the way our workers are being attacked everyday it is clear that there is no rule of law here... I will not demand President's Rule in the State...



instead of that we will want that Bengal be declared a disturbed area much like Manipur... that is the only way to control the law and order situation," Adhikari said. "We will observe July 21 as 'Ganantra Hatya Divas'. Millions of people could not vote... only a particular community was allowed to vote and others were restrained from going to the booths... we will organize mass movements taking along the people who could not vote," he said alleging how "in the by-polls, nearly 50,000 people in Raiganj could not vote" and how 70,000 people in Ranaghat and 10,000 people at Bagda constituencies were prevented from voting... they

have murdered the democracy at the behest of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee... this is why we are asking for Disturbed Areas Act to be imposed in Bengal much the way it is in Manipur."

Announcing a series of programmes to counter the hype around the July 21 Trinamool Congress Martyrs' Day, Adhikari said "we will observe the day as Ganantra Hatya Divas (Murder of Democracy Day). The TMC observes July 21 as its Martyrs' Day because it was on this day that several party workers were killed in a police firing at Esplanade in Kolkata more than three decades ago. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, then the State Youth Congress president, was on this day leading thousands of people — in an anti-infiltration march — towards the iconic Writers' Buildings in support of her demands for voter identity cards for the citizens complaining.

It is Ramayana Month for next 30 days in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Life in Kerala, especially in Hindu homes, will become sedate for the next 32 days from 16th July 2024. The day marks the beginning of Malayalam month Karkkadaka (in synch with the month of Shraavan) and Hindu homes and temples in the State would reverberate with "SreeRama, Rama! Rama!, SreeRamachandra! Jaya, SreeRama!Rama!Rama! Sree Rama bhadr! Jaya.." the lyrics from Adhyatma Ramayana, a version of the great Indian epic Valmiki Ramayana. Every morning or evening, the family patriarch or the eldest member of the family recites the chapters from the epic and explain to the next generation the meaning of what has been written in Ramayana. Though there are Rama Charita Manas and Valmiki Ramayana, the Keralites follow the Adhyatma Ramayana, believed to have been composed during the 13th century. What makes Adhyatma Ramayana different from Valmiki Ramayana is its portrayal of Lord Rama as God incarnation. The Valmiki Ramayana characterizes the Lord as an ordinary human being.



According to Adhyatma Ramayana, Lord Rama was born in the month of Karkkadaka with Punarvasu as his birth star. Saroj Bala, an Indologist and author of reputed has substantiated the birth details of Rama with planetarium software. She has used the details given in Valmiki Ramayana and a comparative study with planetarium software and astronomical data established that what the Sage has written in his work scientifically match. Kerala's fascination with Adhyatma Ramayana dates back to many centuries, much older than the claim for Ram Janmabhumi Temple. Perhaps, K K Nair, the then district magistrate of Ayodhya, got his passion for Ram Temple because of his daily recitation of

Ramayana, according to monks in Kuttanadu region where he was born. Karkkadaka is the period that brings copious rainfall to Kerala thanks to the South West Monsoon. The monsoon is at its fury for the whole month sending the daily wage earners to starve as they are left with no income. "The hunger and poverty force them to devotion and what is the best recourse other than Ramayana," asked Swamy Chidanandapuri, the spiritual head of the Sanatanis in the State. Another monk, Swami Ranganathanada, in his work "Eternal Values for a Changing Hindu Society" has said that Ramayana is read regularly in Indonesia, the country with largest Muslim population!

Bhujbal meets Sharad to discuss Maratha quota, OBC protest issues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra minister Chhagan Bhujbal on Monday met NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar at his residence here and sought his intervention into the Maratha quota issue and objections over it by OBC leaders. Speaking to reporters later, Bhujbal said had a meeting with Pawar for nearly one-and-a-half-hours and the latter told him that he would discuss the matter with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and other leaders in the next two days. Bhujbal, an OBC leader who belongs to the rival NCP led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, met former Union minister Sharad Pawar at his 'Silver Oak' residence in Mumbai. The visit came a day after his veiled attack at Sharad Pawar for the opposition's boycott of an all-party meeting on the Maratha quota issue. Leaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), which comprises the Congress, NCP (SP) and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), did not turn up at the all-party meeting convened by CM Shinde on July 9, claiming the opposition was not taken into confidence on the Maratha reservation issue. Bhujbal on Sunday claimed the opposition leaders stayed away from the meeting on July



9 "after a phone call from Baramati at 5 pm". Notably, Baramati Lok Sabha constituency in Pune district is the bastion of 83-year-old veteran politician Sharad Pawar. Activist Manoj Jarange has been demanding reservation for the Maratha community under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. Some OBC activists recently held an agitation, seeking an assurance that their quota will not be affected. After the meeting on Monday, Bhujbal said Sharad Pawar told him he would discuss the ongoing deadlock over Marathas demanding their inclusion in the OBC category for quota with CM Shinde and other key leaders in the state. "I requested Sharad Pawar to look into this matter because the situation in the state, particularly in some districts, is very tense. The division between the Marathas and OBCs has

reached such a level that they are not even going to each other's hotels for having food," he claimed. "Pawar has agreed to take the initiative and discuss the issue with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and other important leaders in the state," said the NCP leader, who has also been opposing Maratha quota under the OBC category. Bhujbal also reminded Sharad Pawar of his decision, when he was the CM of Maharashtra, to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations in the state which offered the OBCs reservation in education and in the election to local governing bodies. "When Pawar was the chief minister of Maharashtra, he had resolved the issues of OBCs in the state. Now, the situation demands his intervention again. Pawar also told me that he needs a couple of days to get better as he is not feeling well," Bhujbal said.

Thousands of devotees pull chariots of sibling deities

PTI ■ PURI

Thousands of devotees pulled the chariots of sibling deities — Lord Jagannath, Devi Subhadra and Lord Balabhadra — on the 'Bahuda Yatra' or return car festival on Monday. Though the pulling of chariots was slated to start at 4

The deities left the Jagannath temple on July 7 during the Rath Yatra and reached Gundicha temple, considered their birthplace. They stayed there for a week and on Monday are now returning to the Jagannath temple. This journey is known as the 'Bahuda Yatra'. Earlier, the trinity was



pm, it began ahead of the schedule amid chants of 'Jai Jagannath' and beating of cymbals. Devotees start pulling Lord Balabhadra's chariot 'Taladwaja' at 3.25 pm and Devi Subhadra's 'Devadalan' at 4 pm. Pulling of Lord Jagannath's chariot 'Nandighosh' began at 4.15 pm. The chariot pulling started after Puri's titular king 'Gajapati Maharaj' Divya Singha Deb performed 'cheerapanra', a ritual during which he swept the three chariots with help of golden broom by sprinkling scared water.

ceremonially taken to their respective chariots from the Gundicha Temple in presence of lakhs of devotees. A total of 180 platoons (1 platoon comprises 30 personnel) of police force and 1,000 officers were deployed to maintain law and order and crowd management during the 'Bahuda Yatra'. Additional Director General of Police (Law & Order) Sanjay Kumar said adequate security arrangements have been made and the entire temple town is under CCTV surveillance. Around five lakh people are expected to congregate for the festival.

Pollution centres shut...

From Page 1

"Our demand was to consider the wages hike, take into account the inflation index for other operational costs and increase the charges to Rs. 150 for 2W, Rs. 200 for 4W and Rs. 300 for Diesel Vehicles. An increase of Rs. 20,30 & 40 is not justified at all. What calculations have been considered to come to these figures. DPDA reject the proposed hike and would close the PUC operations from 15th July 2024," he said. "The reason for increase is that salaries have increased 300 per cent in the last 13 years. The other operational costs have also increased. Maintenance and spares of the PUC checking have increased tremendously. Earlier, customers were supposed to get PUC checked every 3 months, now government has made it once a year, thus reducing the revenue to one fourth," Bansal stated. The AAP led Delhi government increased the PUC certificate charges for

petrol, CNG and diesel vehicles after a gap of about 13 years. The new pollution checking rates for vehicles are, Rs. 80 for petrol, CNG, or LPG (including bio-fuel) two and three wheelers, Rs 110 for petrol, CNG, or LPG (including bio-fuel) four wheelers and above categories and Rs. 140 for diesel-propelled vehicles. Earlier, the rates were Rs. 60 for two-wheelers, Rs. 80 for four wheelers, and Rs. 100 for Diesel vehicles, respectively. The Delhi Petrol Dealers Association had been advocating for an increase in pollution checking fees, as they had not been revised since 2011. Delhi's Transport Minister, Kailash Gehlot, also held a meeting with representatives of the Delhi Petrol Dealers Association on June 20, 2024 and later revised the rates. But the DPDA has rejected the proposed hikes and stated that the revision by the department is not according to the inflation adjustment and the rising expenses of the operators.

People coming to Assam in 2015 or later will...

From Page 1

According to the Assam Accord, names of all foreigners coming to the state on or after March 25, 1971 would be detected and deleted from the electoral rolls and steps would be taken to deport them. The final NRC was released on August 31, 2019 by excluding 19,06,657 people. A total of 3,11,21,004 names were included out of 3,30,27,661 applicants. On people facing issues due to blocking of Aadhaar cards, Sarma said around nine lakh cards have been blocked as they had applied during update work of NRC. "At that time, the Government had transformed the Aadhaar centres to NRC centres. These people had gone there to get Aadhaar, but it was blocked due to a clash of timing only. We are examining the list now," he added. The CM said after the assessment, the state government will actively take up the issue with the Centre.

HC sets aside CBDT decision, grants relief to NOIDA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has set aside an order of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) that refused to grant exemption from tax liability to the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA) on account of its "income" from loans to various entities. A bench headed by Justice Yashwant Varma said the board erred in holding that the loans and advances extended by the NOIDA fell within the ambit of commercial activity, and directed the authority to process the exemption request. The court observed that the NOIDA, constituted under the Uttar Pradesh Industrial Area Development (UPIAD) Act, acts as an agent of the government in undertaking planned development of the areas placed under its control and it cannot possibly

be viewed as a corporation intended to have been incorporated for a profit or commercial motive. "We allow the instant writ petition and quash the order dated December 24, 2020 impugned herein. The respondents are consequently directed to process the application for exemption made by the petitioner under section 10(46) of the Act, bearing in mind the observations made hereinabove," the bench, also comprising Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav, said in its judgment passed on July 11. The CBDT had refused to grant the appropriate certification to the NOIDA in terms of section 10(46) of the Income Tax Act on the ground that the extension of loans appeared to be an activity undertaken otherwise than for the benefit of the public. Section 10(46) enables the CBDT to certify the specified income of

a statutory body, constituted with the object of regulating and administering activities for the benefit of the general public and that does not engage in any commercial activity, to be exempt from taxation. According to the CBDT order, the NOIDA had advanced loans of more than Rs 5,000 crore to various entities, including private parties, which had no direct or fundamental connection with its statutory objective, leading to an "interest income" of Rs 793 crore in Assessment Year (AY) 2018-19 and Rs 350 crore in AY 2017-18. The high court, in its judgment, stated that the grant of these loans was not established to have been for profit and some of those were extended to finance activities supplemental to the development activity that was liable to be undertaken by the petitioner.

SC hears Umar Ansari plea

New Delhi (PTI) Late gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari's son on Monday alleged before the Supreme Court that the food given to his father was "poisoned" and he was denied the requisite medical treatment due to which he died in custody. On March 28, Ansari, a five-time MLA from Mau Sadar constituency, died of cardiac arrest at a hospital in Banda in Uttar Pradesh. A bench of justices Hrishikesh Roy and S V N Bhatti was hearing a plea filed in 2023 by Umar Ansari, son of Mukhtar Ansari, raising the issue of safety and security of his father within the Banda jail premises where he was lodged. "All we can say is, what we feared, has happened," senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Umar Ansari, told the bench.

BJP's Rajya Sabha number...

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Though nominated members are usually independent in the House in terms of their party affiliation, they are traditionally supportive of the agenda of the government which picks them. The ruling Congress is looking to win the lone seat in Telangana at the expense of the BRS but its gain will be negated in Rajasthan where the BJP, which has a strong majority, will claim the seat vacated by K C Venugopal of Congress who is now in Lok Sabha. BJP is also confident of winning the lone seat in Haryana where the poll will be held to fill the vacancy caused by the election of its Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Singh Hooda to Lok Sabha. Congress, though, hopes that

a few MLAs, who are either independent or affiliated to the regional parties and are looking for political alternatives ahead of the assembly polls expected in October, may switch sides and help it make a fight. The Election Commission (EC) is yet to announce the date for elections to fill the 11 vacancies effected by the resignation of as many members. Ten of them were elected to Lok Sabha while one MP, K Keshava Rao of the BRS, quit after joining the Congress. Out of the total 19 vacancies in the 245-member Rajya Sabha, four are from Jammu and Kashmir where there is no assembly currently after the erstwhile state was made a Union Territory in 2019.

Sports icons 'disgraceful' act draws...

From Page 1

"This isn't legendary if you're mocking gay patterns of people with polio. This will enable bullying on young children with disabilities in India," Manasi added in another comment on the video. Disability rights activist Satendra Singh criticised the cricketers for lacking empathy, particularly noting Yuvraj Singh's personal battle with cancer, which should have fostered greater

sensitivity. Likewise, Muralidharan, General Secretary, National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled too was upset. "While cricket lovers throughout the country have joined them in celebrating every victory, the mimicking of certain categories of disabled persons to show the hardships is distasteful. ...considering that people hold them in high esteem for the high laurels that they have brought the country in

the past." This degrading action reveals their total insensitivity and boorishness. They should remember that their actions only help to reinforce regressive values and misunderstandings, he said. Murlidharan spoke unequivocally as he c o m m e n t e d , "Notwithstanding laws, guidelines, and court strictures, the overarching consciousness of people and

society are what gets exposed." The criticism of such acts by the advocacy groups highlights a growing awareness and scrutiny of how disability is represented and treated in public discourse and media, reinforcing the importance of sensitivity and inclusivity in cultural expressions and public action, noted Thilakam Rajendran, one of the Co-founders of NEDAR Foundation which assists the

PwDs in setting up startups in the country. Rahul Gupta, founder and Managing Partner of ValueAble, a USD 100 million venture debt business aimed at fostering economic inclusion, too expressed his disappointment, particularly towards Yuvraj Singh. Gupta, who is visually impaired emphasised that the ex-cricketer who is more known for his resilience on the cricket field while battling the throat cancer

should have been more sensitive in his actions as he is viewed as an icon within the disability community. Gupta said that the sector is not seeking their apologies but it is high time they should also deeply reflect on the impact their actions have on the disability sector. He emphasised the importance of standing in solidarity with the sector rather than inadvertently undermining its challenges.



'I'm supposed to be dead'

TRUMP REFLECTS ON ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

PTI ■ MILWAUKEE

Donald Trump has said he is "supposed to be dead" after the assassination attempt on him at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, calling the incident a "surreal experience."

In one of his first interviews since the incident, the 78-year-old former president told conservative US media that he felt that he had been saved "by luck or by God."

"I'm not supposed to be here, I'm supposed to be dead," the former US president said, speaking to the New York Post while en route

to Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention starting on Monday which will nominate him as the party's candidate for the November 5 presidential election.

"The most incredible thing was that I happened to not only turn [my head] but to turn at the exact right time and in just the right amount," he said, adding that the bullet that grazed his ear could have easily killed him.

"I'm supposed to be dead, I'm not supposed to be here," he said. He called the entire incident a "surreal experience."

A spectator was killed in the attack, while two other people were seriously injured. The 20-

year-old gunman, who also died, has been named as Thomas Matthew Crooks.

Trump wore a white bandage that covered his right ear but his aides did not allow any photographs to be taken, said the Post.

"The doctor at the hospital said he never saw anything like this, he called it a miracle," Trump added. "By luck or by God, many people are saying it's by God I'm still here."

Trump also addressed the photos of him raising his fist and saying "Fight!" as he had blood on his face.

"A lot of people say it's the most iconic photo they've ever seen," Trump said. "They're

right and I didn't die. Usually, you have to die to have an iconic picture."

Trump told the paper he wanted to keep speaking following the shooting but the Secret Service insisted he go to the hospital. "I just wanted to keep speaking, but I just got shot," he said. Trump also said he appreciated the call he received from President Joe Biden, also expected to be his rival in the election, according to the Post, calling it "fine" and "very nice."

The paper reported that Trump suggested the campaign between him and Biden, a Democrat, could be more civil from now on.

Biden calls for national unity, says time to 'cool down'

PTI ■ MILWAUKEE

US President Joe Biden on Sunday urged citizens to unite in the hour of crisis when a failed assassination bid was made on his predecessor Donald Trump and said it was time to "cool down" political rhetoric in the country.

In a prime-time national address from the Oval Office, "I want to speak to you tonight about the need for us to lower the temperature in our politics and to remember, while we may disagree, we are not enemies we are neighbours, friends, coworkers, citizens, and most importantly, we are fellow Americans."

Calling for national unity, he said, "We must stand together." "Yesterday's shooting at Donald Trump's rally in Pennsylvania calls on all of us to take a step back, take stock of where we are and how we go forward from here," he said.

The President spoke for the third time in less than 24 hours after Trump was shot at during an election rally in Pennsylvania. Biden said the motive of the shooter is not known yet. "We don't know his opinions or affiliations. We don't know whether



he had help or support or if he communicated with anyone else. Law enforcement professionals, as I speak, are investigating those questions."

"A former president was shot and an American citizen killed for simply exercising his freedom to support the candidate of his choosing. We cannot... we must not go down this road in America. We've travelled before throughout our history. Violence has never been the answer," he said.

"There is no place in America for this kind of violence, for any violence ever. Period. No exceptions. We can't allow this violence to be normalised," he said.

Disagreement is inevitable in American democracy, he observed.

"Political rhetoric in this country has gotten very heated. It's time to cool it down. We all have a responsibility to do that," the President said.

"It's part of human nature that politics must never be a little battlefield, or God forbid, a killing field. I believe politics ought to be an arena for peaceful debate, to pursue justice and to make decisions guided by the Declaration of Independence in our constitution," he said.

"We stand for an America not of extremism of fury, but of decency and grace. All of us now face atomic testing as the election approaches. The higher the stakes, the more fervent the passions become. This place is an added burden on each of us to ensure that no matter how strong our conviction was never descending into violence," he added.

In a passionate appeal to the nation, Biden said, "Let's remember here in America, all unity is the most elusive of gold goals right now. Nothing is more important for us now. And standing together. We can do this."

Anger and anxiety loom over the Republican convention

AP ■ MILWAUKEE

Donald Trump's campaign chiefs designed the convention opening this week to feature a softer and more optimistic message, focusing on themes that would help a divisive leader expand his appeal among moderate voters and people of colour.

Then came a shooting that rattled the foundation of American politics.

Suddenly, the Democrats' turmoil after the debate, the GOP's potential governing agenda and even Trump's criminal convictions became secondary to fears about political violence and the country's stability. The presumptive Republican nominee and his allies will face the nation during their four-day convention in Milwaukee unquestionably united and ready to "fight," as the bloodied Trump cried out Saturday while Secret Service agents at his Pennsylvania rally rushed him to safety.

Anger and anxiety are coursing through the party, even as



many top Republicans call for calm and a lowering of tensions. Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, known for his sunny and optimistic vision of Republican politics, suggested online the attempted assassination had been "aided and abetted by the radical Left and corporate media incessantly calling Trump a threat to democracy, fascists, or worse."

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson, another likely convention speaker, offered a more somber tone during a

Sunday appearance on NBC. "We've got to turn the temperature down in this country," Johnson said. "We need leaders of all parties, on both sides, to call that out and make sure that happens so that we can go forward and maintain our free society that we all are blessed to have."

There are no changes yet to the convention programme. In an interview on Sunday, Republican party chairman Michael Whatley said the convention's programming would-

n't be changed after the shooting. The agenda, he said, will feature more than 100 speakers overwhelmingly focused on kitchen table issues and Trump's plans to lift everyday working Americans.

"We have to be able to lay out a vision for where we want to take this country," he said.

Whatley said the central message would have little to do with President Joe Biden's political struggles. Trump's grievances about the 2020 election or the ex-president's promises to exact retribution against political enemies.

"We are going to have the convention that we have been planning for the last 18 months," he said. "We are a combination of relieved and grateful that the president is going to be here and is going to accept the nomination."

Beyond voting to formally give Trump the nomination, elected delegates from across the nation will update the GOP's policy platform for the first time since 2016. The scaled-

down platform proposal — just 16 pages with limited specifics on key issues, including abortion — reflects a desire by the Trump campaign to avoid giving Democrats more material on a key campaign issue.

The platform approved by a committee last week doesn't include an explicit call for a national abortion ban, two years after the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and ended a federally guaranteed right to abortion.

Many anti-abortion advocates strongly opposed the Trump campaign's rewriting of the platform. But after the shooting, at least one major religious conservative said he wouldn't press to reverse the committee's decision.

"More divisiveness would not be healthy," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council.

Perhaps most importantly, Trump will use the convention to unveil his choice for vice president, which could come as soon as Monday.

'Gunman acted alone; being probed as act of domestic terror'

PTI ■ MILWAUKEE

The gunman who shot at former president Donald Trump during an election rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday appears to have acted alone, according to the FBI, which is investigating it as a potential "domestic terrorism" act.

The gunman has been identified as Thomas Matthew Crooks (20).

"At this point in the investigation, it appears that he was a lone actor, but we still have more investigation to go," said Robert Wells, the executive assistant director of the FBI's National Security Branch.

The FBI, he said, is investigating this as an assassination attempt, and also as a "potential domestic terrorism act."

The counterterrorism division and criminal divisions are working jointly together to determine the motive, he added. The FBI is leading the investigation into the assassination attempt of Trump at an election rally in Pennsylvania. Trump was hit with a bullet

that pierced the upper part of his right ear. He is now safe and is continuing with his schedule that includes travelling to Milwaukee to attend the Republican National Convention, which would formally nominate him as the party's presidential nominee against incumbent Joe Biden.

"The shooter may be deceased, but the investigation is very much ongoing. And, because of that, we are limited in what we say at this point," FBI Director Christopher Wray said.

"What we witnessed yesterday was nothing short of an attack on democracy and our democratic process," he told reporters at a news conference in Washington DC.

According to an FBI official, the investigation into the gunman at Donald Trump's rally Saturday has not yet turned up any mental health issues, threatening posts or other motives, but cautioned it was still early. The shooter, as per FBI, used an AR-style rifle chambered in 5.56mm, a common calibre for such weapons.

Pak govt's bid to ban party act of desperation: Imran

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on Monday reacted sharply to the government's decision to ban the party, saying the move came "out of desperation" and is a "sign of panic" within the federal administration. The Pakistan government announced that it would ban the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for its alleged involvement in anti-state activities and slap cases against him and two of his senior party colleagues for treason.

Khan, 71, faces over 200 cases, has been convicted in a few of them, and is currently lodged at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. "The federal government has decided to ban PTI as a political party. Reasons cited by the information minister are the cipher case and the US Congressional Resolution on electoral rigging and politically motivated cases with no merit in sight. The PML-N is shooting its own foot for these reasons," the PTI said in a statement.

The PML-N — Pakistan



Muslim League-Nawaz — is run by Khan's arch rival Nawaz Sharif and is a major coalition partner in the ruling dispensation headed by his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif.

"The PML-N is shooting its own foot for these reasons because Khan has been acquitted in a cipher case and the US congressional resolution points out the ordeal a political party has to face over the period of a few months," the PTI statement added.

Senior PTI leader Senator Ali Zafar told Geo News that the federal government was attempting to ban the party "out of desperation" as the Supreme Court had ruled in its favour in the reserved seats case

and said that his party would not allow the decision's implementation "even for a second" as it is against the law of the land.

He was referring to the key judgment of the Supreme Court last week that declared that Khan's PTI was eligible for the seats reserved for women and minorities in the national and four provincial assemblies. If allotted thus, the PTI will become the largest party in the National Assembly with 109 seats. "The government doesn't realise, the UN resolution wasn't a bilateral agreement but an independent observation made by a charter, Pakistan is a part of. Pakistan is a signatory of the UN and therefore any provocative comments could lead to Pakistan losing its membership," the party added.

The PTI statement also pointed out that the Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, who announced the government decision at a press conference, ignored all questions regarding the US and the UN working group observations, "maybe because he's either unaware of its implications or just doesn't have a clue."

KP Sharma Oli sworn in as Nepal's PM for 4th time

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

KP Sharma Oli on Monday was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the fourth time to lead a new coalition government that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the Himalayan nation.

The leader of Nepal's largest communist party was appointed as prime minister on Sunday by President Ram Chandra Paudel to lead the coalition government with the Nepali Congress (NC), the largest party in Parliament, apart from other smaller parties.

Oli, 72, succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who lost the vote of confidence in the House of Representatives (HoR) on Friday, leading to the formation of the new government.

Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Oli was sworn in by President Paudel at Shital Niwas, the main building of Rashtrapati Bhawan at a ceremony that was delayed by more than half an hour.

According to the news portal MyRepublica, the swearing-in



Outgoing Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (left) congratulates newly-elected Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli (right) after the oath of office at the Presidential residence in Kathmandu on Monday. AP/PTI

ceremony was delayed due to the failure of the Nepali Congress to finalise the names of its ministers to join the government amid disputes within the party.

The President also administered oaths to the two Deputy PMs — Prakash Man Singh and Bishnu Paudel — and 19 other ministers. Singh would also look after the Urban Development Ministry while Vishnu Prakash Paudel would look after the Finance Ministry. Arzoo Rana Deuba, wife of

Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba is the Foreign Minister in the cabinet. There are 10 cabinet ministers from the Nepali Congress; eight, excluding the Prime Minister, from the CPN-UML, two from the Janata Samajwadi Party and one from the Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party in the government.

Outgoing Prime Minister Prachanda was also present at the ceremony, which was attended by foreign diplomats and other dignitaries.

Rescuers in Nepal recover 11 bodies

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Rescuers in Nepal have recovered a total of 11 bodies from the river that two buses full of people were swept into by a landslide, officials said Monday.

Rescuers found the bodies in different spots along the riverbanks as they searched for the missing buses and some 50 people who were on board.

Government administrator Khima Nanda Bhusal said seven bodies were identified and relatives contacted. Three of the dead are Indians and the remaining four are Nepali nationals.

He said four more bodies were also recovered from the river, but because they haven't been identified, it was unclear if they had been on board the buses. "We will continue the search as long as it is needed and have no plans to give up. We will work until all of them are found," he said.

The buses were on the key highway connecting Nepal's capital to southern parts of the country when they were swept away Friday morning near Simaltal, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Kathmandu. Three people were ejected from the buses and were being treated in a nearby hospital.

China's Communist Party begins key meet to stem economic slowdown

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's GDP dipped to 4.7 per cent in the second quarter, the government said on Monday, as the ruling Communist Party began a key meeting to set a defining moment for President Xi Jinping's leadership to revive the world's second-largest economy.

The four-day meeting called the "Third Plenum" is being attended by 376 full and alternate members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee to primarily examine issues related to comprehensively deepening reforms and advancing China's modernisation to work out a course correction for the economy plagued by deepening demographic crisis, sluggish

growth and mounting local government debts.

Kicking off the meeting Xi 71, who is also general secretary of the party, delivered a work report and expounded on a draft decision of the CPC Central Committee on further comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernisation, the official media reported.

The meeting, however, began here on a disappointing note for the party leadership as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) announced the GDP for the second quarter expanded by 4.7 per cent well below the 5.3 per cent annual pace of growth in the first quarter of the year.

The silver lining for the CPC, which is searching for a new set of reforms to shake off the post-

COVID lockdown blues, the economy posted a five per cent growth in the first half, within the range of the official growth target fixed for the year.

"The current external environment is complicated, while domestic demand remains insufficient. We still need to consolidate the foundation for economic recovery," the NBS said on Monday.

While the third plenum of the CPC was regarded as important to set the reform agenda for the next decade, the meeting was seen as a defining moment for Xi, who is into the unprecedented third five-year term as the economy was unable to shake off its slowdown mode resulting in a sense of unease about the recovery in the near future. Ahead of the meeting, Xi

presided over a host of meetings to set the tone for the key plenum and chart the direction for the nation's future reform highlighting that "the furthering of reform must focus on refining and developing the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and advance modernisation of the country's governance system and governance capacity."

A readout of a key party meeting presided over by Xi in February said: "Reform measures need to be sharply focused, targeting the most pressing problems. Reform efforts must be substantial and impactful."

The event could be the most important "defining moment" of President Xi Jinping's rule since a similar gathering in 2013 that set out his vision for

reforming the country, a political researcher from Tsinghua University, who requested anonymity, told the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.

He said the watershed third plenum would be used by the party elite to review achievements under Xi's leadership and lay down plans to hit goals set for 2035, "which will lay the groundwork for the President's grand legacy of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by 2049."

The plenum is also taking place at a time when China, struggling with various curbs and sanctions from the US and the EU, especially its high-tech products, is trying to assure both foreign business and the private sector at home about the country's economic prospects to

attract investments.

Neil Thomas, a fellow for the Asia Society Policy Institute's Centre for China Analysis, said Xi would use the plenum to advance his existing agenda focused on party control, technological self-reliance, financial de-risking, social welfare, and supply-side industrial policy.

But the political challenges of economic pessimism could lead to some very modest "positive surprises," he told the Post.

The most intriguing new signals ahead of the plenum suggest the possibility of more pro-business policies in hi-tech domains, although Xi does not want to unleash entrepreneurs and markets but rather harness them to develop technology and boost manufacturing, he said.

WPI inflation surges to 16-month high in June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wholesale inflation in the country surged to a 16-month high of 3.36 per cent in June on account of rise in prices of food articles, especially vegetables and manufactured items.

This was the fourth consecutive month when inflation witnessed an upward journey. The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation was 2.61 per cent in May. It was (-) 4.18 per cent in June 2023.

Wholesale inflation had touched a high of 3.85 per cent in February 2023.

“Positive rate of inflation in June, 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, manufacture of food products, crude petroleum & natural gas, mineral oils, other manufacturing etc,” the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement on Monday.

As per the data, inflation in food articles rose 10.87 per cent in June, as against 9.82 per cent in May.

Inflation in vegetables was 38.76 per cent during June, up



from 32.42 per cent in May. Onion inflation was at 93.35 per cent, while potato was 66.37 per cent in the month under review. Pulses inflation rose 21.64 per cent in June. During the month, inflation in other food items like fruits stood at 10.14 per cent, cereals at 9.27 per cent, and milk at 3.37 per cent. The upmove in the WPI inflation in June 2024 was broad-based, driven by all the

major segments except fuel and power, ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said. Looking ahead, she said, the headline WPI inflation is expected to dip to about 2 per cent in July 2024, driven by a favourable base, as well as some cooling in global commodity prices.

With regard to oil prices, she said, the average price of the Indian basket of crude oil has been quite

volatile in July 2024 so far, on the back of supply-demand mismatches, witnessing a month-on-month rise (USD 86.6/bbl up to July 11).

Higher crude oil prices might exert an upward pressure to the headline WPI inflation in the ongoing month, she added. In the fuel and power basket, inflation stood at 1.03 per cent, marginally lower than 1.35 per cent in May.

However, price rise in crude petroleum & Natural gas was in double digit at 12.55 per cent during the month. In manufactured products, inflation was at 1.43 per cent in June, higher than 0.78 per cent in May.

The rise in June WPI was in line with the retail inflation data for the month. Retail inflation rose to a four-month high of 5.1 per cent in June, data released last week showed.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mainly takes into account retail inflation while framing the monetary policy.

India's exports rise 2.56% to USD 35.2 bn in June



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports in June increased 2.56 per cent to USD 35.2 billion from USD 34.32 billion in the year-ago month, according to government data released on Monday.

Imports rose by about 5 per cent to USD 56.18 billion in June against USD 53.51 billion a year ago.

The trade deficit, or the gap between imports and exports, during the month under review stood at USD 20.98 billion.

Briefing media on the data, Commerce Secretary Sunil

Barthwal said going by the current trend, the country's total exports of goods and services may cross USD 800 billion this fiscal.

During the first quarter of 2024-25, the exports of goods and services stood at about USD 200 billion, he added.

India's merchandise exports rose by 9.1 per cent to USD 38.13 billion in May, even as the trade deficit widened to a seven-month high of USD 23.78 billion.

Exports during April-June this fiscal increased 5.84 per cent to USD 109.96 billion, and imports grew 7.6 per cent to USD 172.23 billion.

Sai Life Sciences files IPO papers with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Private equity major TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO).

The company's proposed IPO comprises fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 6.15 crore shares by a promoter, investor shareholders and other shareholders, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

Under the OFS, one of the promoter entities -- Sai Quest Syn Pvt Ltd -- and investor shareholders -- TPG Asia VII SF Pte Ltd, HBM Private Equity India -- will partly offload their respective stakes.

At present, Sai Quest Syn holds 5.61 per cent stake in the company, TPG owns 39.69 per cent shareholding and HBM Private Equity India has 5.5 per cent stake.

Of the IPO proceeds, funds to the tune of Rs 600 crore will be used for debt payment and a portion will be used for corporate general purposes, the draft papers filed on Friday showed.

The Hyderabad-based Sai Life



Sciences provides end-to-end services across the drug discovery, development, and manufacturing value chain, for small molecule new chemical entities (NCE), to global pharmaceutical innovator companies and biotechnology firms.

According to a F&S report, India CRDMO market (contract research, development and manufacturing organization) was amongst the fastest growing markets in APAC over 2018-2023. This growth is expected to continue, with the Indian market projected to grow by 14 per cent between 2023 and 2028 reaching an estimated value of USD 14.1 billion in 2028.

Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, IIFL Securities Ltd, Jefferies India Private Ltd and Morgan Stanley India Company Private Ltd have been appointed as merchant bankers to manage the company's IPO.

Hindustan Zinc contributes ₹13,195 cr to exchequer in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) on Monday said it has contributed Rs 13,195 crore to the exchequer in the last financial year, representing about 46 per cent of its total revenues.

In FY 2023-24, Hindustan Zinc's total contribution to the exchequer stood at Rs 13,195 crores, the Vedanta group firm said in a regulatory filing.

With this, HZL's cumulative contribution to the exchequer over the past five years stood at Rs 77,803 crore.

“As our businesses grow, so will these numbers. At Hindustan Zinc, we are committed to continuing to do business with a purpose in a manner that is sustainable,



transparent and creates value for all our stakeholders,” Hindustan Zinc Chairperson Priya Agarwal Hebbbar said. Over the past five years, that company has consistently contributed an average of approximately Rs 3,250 crore per year to Rajasthan in the form of royalties, contributions to the District Mineral Foundation (DMF), and other levies.

“This substantial contribution underlines Hindustan Zinc's commitment to the state's

economic development,” the company said.

Over the past five years, Hindustan Zinc has consistently contributed an average of approximately Rs 3,250 crore annually to the state of Rajasthan in the form of royalties, contributions to the District Mineral Foundation (DMF), and other levies.

In the past five years, the company said it has paid Rs 16,350 crore in government royalties, Rs 10,100 crore as corporate income tax, Rs 18,008 crore as corporate dividend and Rs 26,384 crore as indirect taxes.

Hindustan Zinc Limited, a Vedanta Group company, is the world's second-largest integrated zinc producer and the third-largest silver producer.

Imports from Bangladesh aggravate jute sector crisis: Stakeholders

PTI ■ KOLKATA

A body of jute suppliers have written to Union Minister Giriraj Singh, alleging that raw material imports from Bangladesh, either directly by mills or through third parties, have adversely impacted the industry and farmers.

In a letter to the textile minister, the Jute Balers' Association has raised concerns over the “unregulated import of raw jute” from the neighbouring country and “low orders” for mills have led to a severe payment crisis for domestic raw jute suppliers.

Indian Jute Mills Association has also raised concerns over the issue and sought intervention from the central and state governments to tide over the crisis.

A meeting between the industry stakeholders and the

ministry is expected later on Monday, an official said. The balers' association, which has been serving the sector for over 115 years, outlined the critical issues threatening the industry's survival.

“Despite a bumper crop year in 2023-24, where domestic supply was sufficient, mills have continued to import large quantities of raw jute from Bangladesh. In June 2024 alone, 73,000 bales, or 22 per cent of the total 3,34,000 bales, were imported,” Jute Balers' Association secretary Pulak Jha said in the letter.

“There is an opening stock of 3 million bales of raw jute for the jute season as of July 1, 2024, and the new crop is also around the corner. These factors caused prices to plummet below the minimum support price (MSP),” Jute Balers'



Association senior functionary Om Prakash Soni told PTI.

Prices of the golden fibre fell below Rs 5,000 per quintal, while the minimum support price (MSP) is Rs 5,335 per quintal for the 2024-25 season, he said.

There has been a bar on the use of imported jute in

making bags for food grain packaging but the “influx of cheaper and low-grade jute from Bangladesh has exacerbated the crisis”, an industry stakeholder said.

“With mills facing liquidity issues, payments to suppliers are getting delayed, hindering their ability to purchase fresh jute from farmers. This has

created a vicious cycle, where mills are obligated to buy MSP-linked jute, which reduces their market purchases, further depressing prices and pushing more farmers towards MSP dependency. “Already six mills are closed. The current dues are about Rs 1,400 crore of which Rs 400 crore is legacy dues from the mills,” Soni said explaining the current situation.

The association called for a rigorous crackdown on illegal jute imports and a reaffirmation of commitment to lawful practices.

“The future of millions of livelihoods is at stake,” the letter said, urging immediate government intervention to curb the menace of “unregulated imports” and address the issue of reduced orders.

Cardiac ward inaugurated

PNS ■ NEW RAIPUR

In a significant step to help children born with congenital heart diseases from economically weaker sections of society, REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, inaugurated the “REC Gift of Life-Cardiac Ward” at the state-of-the-art Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in New Raipur.

Vivek Kumar Dewangan, Chairman and Managing Director, REC Ltd inaugurated the “REC Gift of Life-Cardiac Ward” in presence of distinguished guests, hospital management, doctors, medical staff, patients and their family members, and senior officials from REC Ltd.

Induction ceremony for 2024 freshers held

PNS ■ CHENNAI

It was a field day for first year students of Allied Health Sciences and Health Sciences Colleges when they received a warm welcome during an induction ceremony at Kattankulathur near Chennai today.

N Ram, Director, The Hindu Group said learning always is a must to stay updated in one's field of study. Skills have to be constantly upgraded. He was the chief guest at the ceremony held at Dr T P Ganesan Auditorium on SRMIST premises at Kattankulathur near Chennai. They must also have good conduct and humbleness, as these are very essential while interacting with the patients, he said.



Showering praises on SRMIST, N Ram said the institution has a very robust entrance exam system designed to intake students into various courses.

The entrance exam can be said to be an ideal one as it is designed taking into view all streams in school education in India. “Colleges of Allied Health Sciences and Health Sciences have over 100 courses and have an enrolment of 1500 students.

Govt aims to cover 25% of kharif paddy area with climate-resilient seeds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to combat the growing challenges posed by climate change, the government is targeting to bring 25 per cent of the total kharif paddy area under climate-resilient seeds, a senior agriculture ministry official said on Monday.

The move comes as erratic rainfall patterns have become increasingly common in recent years, threatening rice production in the country.

India, the world's second-largest rice producer after China, cultivates paddy on over 410 lakh hectares during the kharif season.

Speaking on the sidelines of ICAR's 96th Foundation and Technology Day celebrations, ICAR Director General



Himanshu Pathak said, “While we have achieved 75 per cent coverage of climate-resilient seeds in wheat cultivation, the adoption in paddy is still limited.”

Pathak revealed that ICAR has developed paddy seeds resistant to drought and lodging. These seeds were sown in 16 per cent of the total paddy area during the 2023 kharif season.

“For the ongoing kharif season, we aim to increase this

coverage to 25 per cent,” he added.

The push for climate-resilient seeds comes at a crucial time. Research studies indicate that climate change could reduce rice yields in India by 3-5 per cent under a medium emissions scenario, and up to 31.3 per cent by 2030 under high emissions.

India's estimated rice production for the 2023-24 crop year (July-June) stands at 136.7 million tonne. The top rice-producing states include West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.

Pathak attributed the record wheat output of 112.9 million tonne in 2023-24 to the widespread use of climate-resistant seeds, despite weather aberrations.

Automobile retail sales up 9% in April-June: FADA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Automobile retail sales increased 9 per cent year-on-year in June quarter FY25 with all segments, barring tractors, reporting growth, dealers' body FADA said on Monday.

Overall retail sales rose to 61,91,225 units in the April-June period from 56,59,060 units in the same quarter of FY24.

Passenger vehicle retails increased 2.53 per cent to 9,20,047 units as against 8,97,361 units a year ago.

“Despite strong bookings and customer flow, high competition, excess supply and discounting presented challenges for sustained growth in the PV segment,” FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said in a statement.

Dealers reported significant impacts from elections, extreme heat and market liquidity issues, he noted.

The extreme heat led to 18 per cent drop in showroom walk-ins in May, with inventory levels reaching an all-time high of 62-67 days by the end of June, Singhania said.

“Despite improved product availability and substantial discounts aimed at stimulating demand, market sentiment remains subdued due to the extreme heat and delayed monsoons, resulting in 15 per cent fewer walk-ins,” he added.

Two-wheeler retails stood at 45,54,255 units in April-June, up 12.56 per cent as compared with 40,46,169 units in the year-ago period. “The recovery in the two-wheeler segment is



promising, largely due to the emerging performance in rural areas, although these are early trends,” Singhania said.

The segment also faced significant challenges from extreme heat and the election period, resulting in 13 per cent reduction in walk-ins in the showrooms during May and June, he stated.

Three-wheeler sales rose 11.36 per cent to 2,72,691 units in the first quarter from 2,44,878 units in the same period last fiscal.

Commercial vehicle retail sales witnessed marginal increase at 2,46,513 units against 2,44,834 units earlier. “Commercial vehicle segment experienced a slowdown due to the elections and a pause in infrastructure projects. In April, elections dampened sentiment, causing delays in expansion plans. Additionally, limited financing options and regional challenges, such as water scarcity, further impacted performance,” Singhania said.

Tractor retail sales declined 12.44 per cent to 1,97,719 units from 2,25,818 units a year ago.

Next round of talks for proposed trade, investments agreement between India, EU likely in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) are expected to hold the next round of talks for the proposed free trade agreement, which aims at boosting commerce and investments, in September, an official said.

Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce Darpan Jain said that the eighth round of talks was concluded on June 28.

He said that discussions were held on all 21 chapters in the meeting and progress was made in number of areas such as government procurement, digital trade, technical barriers to trade,

goods, and market access. “We plan to hold more inter-annual meetings in July and August and we intend to have another round (of talks) in the last week of September,” Jain told reporters here.

On June 17, 2022, India and the EU formally resumed negotiations on the proposed agreement, after a gap of over eight years. They are negotiating Trade and Investment Agreement, and a pact on Geographical Indications (GI).

India had started negotiations for a trade pact with the EU in 2007, but the talks stalled in 2013 as both sides failed to reach an agreement on key issues, including customs duties on

automobiles and spirits and the movement of professionals. The trade agreement with the EU would help India further expand and diversify its exports of goods and services, including securing the value chains.

India's merchandise exports to EU member countries have increased to USD 75.92 billion in 2023-24 from USD 74.83 billion in 2022-23. Imports also rose to USD 59.38 billion in 2023-24 from USD 61 billion in 2022-23.

The EU accounts for over 17 per cent of India's total exports and about 8.8 per cent of the country's total imports. Talking about the proposed

trade pact with the UK, another official said that with the new government taking charge in Britain, the two countries will take forward the negotiations. The official said the new government in the UK will look into the agreement.

The India-UK talks for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) began in January 2022. The 14th round of talks stalled as the two nations stepped into their general election cycles.

Britain's newly-elected Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently and said he stood ready to conclude an FTA that worked for both sides.

The two leaders agreed to work towards the early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-UK FTA. There are pending issues in both the goods and services sectors.

The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its skilled professionals from sectors like IT and healthcare in the UK market, besides market access for several goods at nil customs duty. On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, electric vehicles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items.

Britain is also looking for

more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services (banking and insurance).

The two countries are also negotiating a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which include goods, services, investments and intellectual property rights.

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24 from USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23. The Labour Party's election manifesto for the recent polls also committed to clinching the deal.

ARGENTINA WINS RECORD 16TH COPA AMERICA TITLE, BEATS COLOMBIA 1-0 AFTER MESSI GETS HURT

AP ■ MIAMI GARDENS (USA)

Argentina won its second straight Copa America championship, overcoming Lionel Messi's second-half leg injury to beat Colombia 1-0 on Lautaro Martínez's 112th-minute goal.

Messi appeared to sustain a non-contact injury while running and falling in the 64th minute and covered his face with his hands as he sat on the bench and sobbed on Sunday night.

Martínez later ran to that bench to hug his captain after the goal that propelled Argentina to its record 16th Copa title. In a match that started 1 hour, 22 minutes late because of crowd trouble at Hard Rock Stadium, Argentina won its third straight major title following the 2021 Copa America and 2022 World Cup and matched Spain, which won the 2008 and 2012 European Championships around the 2010 World Cup.

Argentina also stopped Colombia's 28-game unbeaten streak dating to a February 2022 loss to the Albiceleste. Martínez entered in the 97th minute and scored from Giovanni Lo Celso's perfect through pass. Just inside the penalty area, Martínez sent a right-foot shot through the upraised arms of sliding goalkeeper Camilo Vargas for his 29th international goal, his tournament-high fifth.

Making his 39th and possibly last Copa America appearance at age 37, Messi had one goal in the tournament. He went down after an ankle was stepped on in the first half but remained in the game.



The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner looked to the bench as soon as he fell to the field in the second half, appearing to know his tournament was over. He took off his right boot as he walked off and slammed it in frustration, and his ankle appeared to swell.

The start was delayed from 8 p.m. EDT to 9:22 p.m. Because of crowd control issues outside the stadium, including troves of fans breaching security gates at a venue to be used for

the 2026 World Cup. Days after Uruguay players were involved in a brawl with Colombia fans following their semifinal match in Charlotte, North Carolina, video showed fans climbing fences and railings to get inside the championship match, with officials unable to keep track of who had purchased tickets and who didn't. Colombia was more aggressive and forced goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez to make four saves in the first half, but Argentina began to threaten more in

the second. Nicolás Tagliafico thought he scored in the 75th minute but was ruled offside. Nicolás González, who replaced Messi. Was stopped by Vargas in the 95th minute.

Numerous players lost their footing during the second half of Sunday's match. The grass was heavily watered with sprinklers following the halftime performance by Colombian pop star Shakira, which caused an extended halftime break.



Spain wins record fourth European Championship title by inflicting another painful loss on England

AP ■ BERLIN

Spain is the king of European Soccer for a record fourth time. For England, it's another agonizing near-miss in the team's decades-long tale of underachievement.

Completing a tournament the team dominated from start to finish, Spain beat England 2-1 in the European Championship final on Sunday with Mikel Oyarzabal the unlikely match-winner in the 86th minute.

Oyarzabal, a backup striker who came on as a substitute for captain Alvaro Morata, slid in to poke home a left-wing cross by Marc Cucurella, just when the game at Berlin's Olympiastadion seemed destined for extra time.

through the Sahara desert. "I believe there is a historical change, we are really grateful," said Williams, the player of the match with his darting runs and his second goal of Euro 2024.

"My parents have suffered a lot to get here. They are the ones who have suffered the most and they have instilled this sort of respect and loyalty in me," he said. "I'm really happy because we are making history.

Unlike his brother Inaki, who is a Ghana international, Nico chose to play for Spain and will now be regarded as a national hero there.

Spain is back as a major player in senior soccer after winning both the Women's World Cup - also against England - and the men's UEFA Nations League in 2023.

Since 2001, Spanish men's teams have won 23 consecutive major finals in club and international soccer. "I said before the tournament, nobody can hang with us," Williams said.

Spain won all seven games at this European Championship - an unprecedented feat - and broke the record for goals scored in a single tournament, with 15.

There were joyous scenes after the final whistle, with defender Dani Carvajal piled on by jubilant teammates after slumping to the ground. Spain coach Luis de la Fuente was thrown into the air by his players. Both Cucurella and Yamal led Spain's players in jumping over the advertising boards to reach the red-and-yellow-clad Spanish fans in the stadium's east end.

"This is the best (birthday) gift I could have asked for," Yamal said. "It is a dream come true."

After getting his medal, the teenager turned and shook his fist in celebration, stuck his tongue out and showed off a beaming grin. By then, Yamal and his team mates were wearing Spain jerseys with "Kings of Europe" and the number "4" on the back. Meanwhile, fans who had watched the game on a big screen in Madrid celebrated wildly, chanting "champions, champions" in Spanish. It was

another painful loss for the nation, with Carlos Alcaraz winning the Wimbledon men's singles title for a second straight year hours before the Euro 2024 final.

As for England, the men's team has now lost back-to-back Euro finals - it was defeated in a penalty shootout by Italy on home soil in the final in 2021 - and this was another painful loss for a team that will have gone six decades without a major title by the next World Cup.

England's women have been more successful, though, winning the European Championship in 2021 and reaching the World Cup final two years later.

"This time it just wasn't meant to be," Prince William, who attended the final alongside other dignitaries including Spain's King Felipe, wrote on social media. "We're all still so proud of you."

It was the fourth straight game that the English came from behind since the group stage, but their resilience wasn't rewarded this time.

A team that has produced big moments when it really mattered at Euro 2024 - including Jude Bellingham's 95th-minute overhead kick against Slovakia in the round of 16 - couldn't deliver another one, with Spain midfielder Dani Olmo clearing the ball off the line at a corner in the 89th minute.

England's Harry Kane and Spain's Dani Olmo end Euro 2024 in 6-way tie for Golden Boot top scorer

AP ■ BERLIN

England striker Harry Kane finished Euro 2024 in a six-way tie for the Golden Boot top scorer as his team lost the final 2-1 to Spain. It was another individual accolade for a player yet to win a major trophy for club or country.

Kane ended the tournament tied on three goals with Spain midfielder Dani Olmo, Germany midfielder Jamal Musiala, Netherlands forward Cody Gakpo, Slovakia winger Ivan Schranz and Georgia striker Georges Mikautadze.

Kane has now been a runner-up in back-to-back European Championship finals after England's loss to Italy three years ago, and a runner-up in one Champions League final and two English League Cups. He's won a string of individual awards, including Bundesliga top scorer last season at Bayern Munich, but the German club had its first season without a trophy since 2012.

"It's an opportunity missed. It's not easy to get to these finals," Kane told British broadcaster ITV of England's loss to Spain. "It takes unbelievable resilience and character to get to where we are but ultimately you take the opportunity when it comes and we haven't done it again. It's extremely painful, it's going to hurt for a long, long time."

Kane is one of four men's players to have been top scorer at both a European Championship and a World Cup, something he achieved in 2018.

Olmo's main contribution to Spain's win in the final was defensive, as he cleared Marc



Guéhi's header off the line to keep his team in the lead late on.

"I told him that he is my top scorer because his save counts as a goal for me," goalkeeper Unai Simón said. "It was our planned defense for him to protect that post, but he remembered to do just that and cleared it off the line. It was incredible."

For Olmo, being joint top scorer at Euro 2024 is a moment in the spotlight for a player who has faced repeated injury setbacks. He took an unorthodox path to the top of European soccer, leaving Barcelona's renowned youth academy at the age of 16 in 2014 and making his pro debut with Croatian club Dinamo Zagreb. He's played in Germany with Leipzig since 2019.

UEFA allowed multiple players to share the Euro 2024 top scorer award if they scored the same number of goals, in a

change from recent tournaments. At the last men's European Championship, Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo and Czech striker Patrik Schick both had five goals but Ronaldo was named the winner because he had an assist and Schick had none.

Under the old system, Olmo would have won the tiebreaker with two assists, the most among the players tied on three goals.

The last time that three goals proved enough to win the Golden Boot was at Euro 2012, when Spain's Fernando Torres took the prize. At the time, the tiebreaker was which player had played the fewest minutes. If that had applied at Euro 2024, the award would have gone to Slovakia's Schranz.

UEFA named Spain midfielder Rodri its player of the tournament and Spain forward Lamine Yamal, who turned 17 on Saturday, was the young player of the tournament.

Kate, the Princess of Wales, hands Carlos Alcaraz his Wimbledon trophy in rare appearance for her

AP ■ LONDON

Kate, the Princess of Wales, handed Carlos Alcaraz the champion's trophy after the Wimbledon men's final at the All England Club in only her second public appearance since announcing she was diagnosed with cancer.

Kate, wife of heir to the throne Prince William, was greeted by a standing ovation when she arrived in the Royal Box at Centre Court on Sunday to watch Alcaraz's victory over Novak Djokovic. After leaving the court following the trophy ceremony, the princess and Alcaraz had a conversation in a room inside the tournament's main stadium.

"You played so well," Kate told him. "Enjoy the win."

Earlier, Kate - wearing a purple dress, one of Wimbledon's official colors - went from the stands down to the playing surface to present the trophies, part of her duties as patron of the All England Club, which hosts the annual tournament.

She shook hands with some of the ball kids who worked at the tournament, then exchanged words with both players and applauded for Alcaraz after giving him the winner's trophy for the second year in a row.

"It was, of course, a privilege to be in her presence again. I've said to her that it is very nice to see her in good health; she seems to be in good health," Djokovic said at his postmatch news conference.

"That's obviously very positive news for everyone in this coun-



try, but also for Wimbledon."

Kate and her 9-year-old daughter, Princess Charlotte, got to the site of the grass-court Grand Slam tournament in southwest London in a motorcade about a half-hour before the final was scheduled to begin. They went to a terrace at the club that is connected to the main stadium by a pedestrian walkway and greeted several people, including 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu and other young British tennis players.

Also in the Royal Box for the final were Kate's sister, Pippa Matthews, actors Tom Cruise and Benedict Cumberbatch and several past Wimbledon champions, including Rod Laver, Andre Agassi and Stefan Edberg.

Since 2016, Kate has been the patron of the All England Club. She did not attend Saturday when Barbora Krejčíková defeated Jasmine Paolini for the women's title.

Kate revealed in March that she has an unspecified form of cancer and was undergoing chemotherapy. Her lone public appearance since then had been attending last month's birthday parade for King Charles III. Before that event, she released a statement saying she was "making good progress" but still had "good days and bad days."

Athletics biggest gainer in Govt funding for Paris Olympics preparations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

One Olympic medal is all it takes to raise the profile of a sport and if the colour happens to be gold, it is just icing on the cake.

Ask the practitioners of track-and-field disciplines in India, who were the biggest beneficiaries of government funding in this Olympic cycle after javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's top finish in the Tokyo edition three years ago.

According to official data from the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), which is available with PTI, the government has spent a whopping Rs 96.08 crore for athletics.

It's the biggest chunk in the close to Rs 470 crore which has been spent on India's preparation for the Games this time across 16 disciplines. In the previous Olympic cycle, athletics received Rs 5.38 crore from TOPS funds.

A strong 28-member contingent, led by Chopra, will represent Indian athletics at the Paris Games starting July 26 where the country's overall representation will stand at 118.

The full details of the funding for Tokyo preparations are sketchy but sources say the expenditure this

time is substantially higher keeping in mind higher expectations after the seven medals achieved last time.

The country's shuttlers were the second biggest gainers, receiving Rs 72.02 crore followed by boxing (Rs 60.93 crore) and shooting (Rs 60.42 crore).

India secured a total of five badminton quotas for Paris, which includes two-time medallist PV Sindhu (women's singles), HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen (men's singles), Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty (men's doubles) and Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto (women's doubles).

Hockey, in which the bronze-medallist Indian men's team will compete to match or better the Tokyo performance, received funding of Rs 41.29 crore in the last three years, while archery got Rs 39.18 crore from the government.

The wrestlers received Rs 37.80 crore funding, while weightlifting got Rs 26.98 crore.

Equestrian received the least financial support -- little more than Rs 95 lakh, while tennis got Rs 1.67 crore, followed by golf (Rs 1.74 crore), rowing (Rs 3.89 crore), swimming (Rs 3.9 crore), sailing (Rs 3.78 crore) and judo (Rs 6.3 crore)



The Indian table tennis team, which will be spearheaded by star paddler Achanta Sharath Kamal, who will be India's joint flag-bearer along with Sindhu during the opening ceremony, got a funding of Rs 12.92 crore from the government.

According to the official data, in terms of foreign exposure trips, the country's shuttlers received the maximum support, 81 trips to be

precise.

The shooters got 45 foreign exposure trips, followed by tennis (40), athletics (31), table tennis (28), wrestling (27), archery (24), boxing (23), sailing (22), hockey (18), judo (15), golf (12) and swimming (11).

The funding by the government has been done in three categories -- Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC) Senior Paris

Cycle, Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Elaborating on the process, a SAI source told PTI that it kicks in after proposals are received from the athletes and respective national federations.

Besides, an athlete or a sport's performance is also monitored and analysed over a period of time.

"The athletes who are interested in government support for their preparations for major events send their proposals to SAI, which puts those proposals in front of Mission Olympic Cell and after serious deliberations and debate, they are approved," the source told PTI.

"It's not just that, SAI also keeps track of athletes' performances and the approvals are passed after analysing all these factors."

During the last three years, 41 national camps were conducted in shooting, which is the highest among all 16 disciplines.

Archery comes a close second with 41 camps, followed by athletics (36), hockey (33), boxing (17), rowing (16), wrestling (15) and badminton (13). There were no national camps for equestrian as most of the riders train abroad, while only one camp was organised for golf.

"We have been getting the best of facilities provided to us at SAI, Bengaluru, from food to accommodation to gym and other training facilities. We have been based here for a long time. We are also getting plenty of foreign exposure trips," a Paris-bound hockey player said.

In terms of individual or sport-

specific expenditure, the Indian men's hockey team got the highest of Rs 41.81 crore, which includes 76 national camps and 19 foreign exposure trips.

Chopra is second on the list with Rs 5.72 crore, spent towards assistance for hiring current foreign coach Dr Klaus Bartonietz, assistance towards pre-Olympic camp in Europe, and competition in Europe, USA and South Africa.

Men's doubles badminton pair of Satwik and Chirag received Rs 5.62 crore for assistance towards appointment and extension of tenure of their coach Mathias Boe, hiring of video analyst and assistance for sparring partners.

Sindhu got Rs 3.13 crore, mainly towards hiring of current foreign coach Agus Dwi Santoso, and training at Hermann-Neuberger Sportschule (LSVS) in Saarbrücken, Germany for 36 days.

Besides she also got assistance towards 17 foreign exposure trips through TOPS for her personal support staff, appointment of former foreign coaches Mohd Hafiz and Park Tae Sang.

Tokyo silver-medallist weightlifter Mirabai Chanu received Rs 2.74 crore.

REMEMBER THEIR FACES: KOHLI SAYS GOOD LUCK TO INDIA'S OLYMPIC-BOUND ATHLETES

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian cricket's reigning superstar Virat Kohli has urged the nation to get behind its Olympic-bound contingent, asking the fans to join him in supporting the athletes as "they inch closer to the podium with dogged determination" in the quadrennial showpiece starting July 26 in Paris.

In a little over a minute long video post on social media, featuring some Paris-bound athletes like javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and boxing hope Nishant Dev, Kohli said it is time for India to be recognised as a global sporting powerhouse.

"There was a time when the world could only think of India as a land of snake charmers and elephants. Over time, that has changed. Today we are known to the world as the largest democracy, a global tech hub," he said.

"We are known for cricket and Bollywood, for start-up unicorns and as the fastest growing economy in the world. So, what is the next big thing



for this great nation? Well, that will be more gold, more silver and more bronze," he added.

He then went on to address Indian sports fans, asking them to support the 118-strong group of athletes, who

would be aiming to better the country's best ever performance of seven medals achieved in the previous

Games in Tokyo.

"Our brothers and sisters are headed to Paris, hungry for medals. A billion of us will be watching them nervous and excited as our athletes set foot in the tracks and fields and courts and rings.

"Every neighbourhood, every corner of India will hear a chorus of voices chanting 'India, India, India'. Join me in remembering their faces as they inch closer to the podium with the dogged determination of waving the Tiranga with pride. Jai Hind and good luck India," Kohli, who is currently in London on a break after India's T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies last month, said in his monologue.

Most of the Indian competitors are currently training abroad and will head to the French capital from their respective bases. India's medal hopes will rest on shooting, badminton, wrestling, and boxing aside from the expectations of a second successive podium finish from Chopra, who scripted history with his javelin throw gold in Tokyo.



It is good thing that everyone performing: Gill on competition for openers' slots

PTI ■ HARARE

The competition for the openers' slots has intensified following India's T20I series win in Zimbabwe and for contender Shubman Gill, that can only be a "good thing".

Gill, who is expected to open alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal in the three T20Is in Sri Lanka later this month, was the leading run getter in the five-match series in Harare. He was not part of the T20 World Cup squad in the USA and the Caribbean.

For the major part of the series, India played as many as four openers in the playing eleven and all of them did well including Gill, Jaiswal, Abhishek Sharma and Ruturaj Gaikwad.

Gill captained India's second string team and played as an opener in all the five matches with Jaiswal joining him at the top from the third game onwards.

For the first two games, he opened with Punjab teammate Abhishek Sharma who scored a hundred and a fifty in his debut series. Among the four openers, Gill had the lowest strike rate, 125.92, compared to Jaiswal's 165.88, Gaikwad's 158.33 and Abhishek's 174.64.

"It's a good thing that everyone's performing. It shows that everyone is hungry and nobody is ready to take it easy. For any country or board, that's always a good thing," said Gill on Sunday referring to the openers.

Following the retirement of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli from T20Is, the selectors will have a problem of plenty when it comes to picking the openers for the Sri Lanka series.

"Anyone who got the

opportunity grabbed it with both hands. The openers to bowlers to all-rounders to spinners, everyone made a mark and I think the selectors have now seen everything and it's up to them to name the squad for the next series," he said after India's 4-1 series win over Zimbabwe.

On captaining the team through the series, Gill said he enjoyed every bit of the challenge.

"One thing about captaincy I feel is how much confidence you can show in your players. I try to do that and make them believe that if you try and execute the plans, the results will always follow," Gill said.

"After losing the first match, we were under a bit of pressure. It's not easy to play back to back games and the series was planned in a way that there were two back-to-back games, a couple of days rest and then again back-to-back games.

"It's never easy playing a series like that but I think the way we came back after losing the first T20I was really remarkable." India bounced back to win the series 4-1 after losing the opener.

"Seeing everyone hungry and so quickly adapting to the situation and assessing the conditions was truly spectacular to watch," said Gill. With the ball moving around in the powerplay, the opener thought it was important to be a little cautious early in the innings.

"I think, as per the conditions of the wicket, there were some challenging conditions, especially in the powerplay, the ball was always doing something or the other. As an opening batter, my focus was to see out 4-5 overs and not concede any wicket," he added.

Our planning is that he will not be there in Pakistan: Bailey on Warner in Champions Trophy

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian national selector George Bailey has said that the national team plans to move on from the recently-retired David Warner despite the southpaw's desire to be considered for the Champions Trophy in Pakistan next year.

The 37-year-old Warner retired from international cricket following the T20 World Cup in the Americas last month, where the Aussies failed to progress beyond the Super 8 stage. However, he had insisted that he will keep the door open for a return for the Champions Trophy, a One-Day International format ICC event.

"Our understanding is that David is retired, and [he] should be commended on what has been an incredible career across all three formats. Certainly, our planning is that he won't be there in Pakistan," Bailey was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Warner had a decent run during the T20 World Cup, finishing as the side's second-highest run-scorer, after Travis Head.

On his remarks on making a comeback during the Champions Trophy, Bailey said that Warner might be "stirring the pot",



with the team planning "to transition to some different players".

"You never know when Bull's joking...think he's just stirring the pot a bit. He's had a wonderful career, can't celebrate it enough, and think as time goes

by, his legacy of what he has done for Australia and we reflect back on that, the legend of a player is only going to continue to grow," added Bailey.

"But, as far as this team goes and the journey to transition to some different players, in his case across all three formats, it's going to be exciting."

The Australians will have a young squad during their upcoming tour of the United Kingdom, which includes limited-overs meetings against Scotland and England.

With the likes of Matthew Wade, Mitchell Starc and Glenn Maxwell missing out, Bailey said the Kangaroos might see a more youthful squad going forward, with an eye on the next T20 World Cup in 2026.

"I don't think there's anyone who's not there that we've put a line through permanently besides David (Warner). This is the way we are going with this squad," he continued.

"The next T20 World Cup is 2026, so I imagine there may be some more changes than what we are seeing in this squad. But specifically, to those guys (Starc and Maxwell), no we haven't had any conversations about where they think their T20 journey may finish.

Rohit says he will continue to play Tests and ODIs at least for a while



PTI ■ DALLAS (USA)

India captain Rohit Sharma says he will continue to play Test and ODI cricket "at least for a while" after ending his T20 international career with a World Cup win last month. Rohit has been on a break since the title win in the West Indies and is set to miss the limited-overs tour of Sri Lanka later this month, which includes three ODIs.

"I just said it. I don't look that far ahead. So clearly, you will be seeing me play at least for a while," the 37-year-old said at an event here on Sunday night.

His statement was reiteration of a position he made clear after announcing his T20 retirement after the final in the West Indies in which India defeated South Africa by seven runs.

Earlier this month, BCCI secretary Jay Shah had confirmed that Rohit will captain India in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle and the Champions Trophy next year in February-March.

Rohit had led India in the 2022 T20 World Cup where the team was ousted in the semifinals by eventual champions England.

A year later, India reached the final of the 50-over World Cup at home under his leadership, but succumbed to Australia in the summit clash at Ahmedabad. Rohit left T20Is with 4231 runs from 159 matches, having made five hundreds and 32 fifties.

Cummins to miss Australia's limited-overs cricket tour to England and Scotland

AP ■ MELBOURNE

World Cup-winning skipper Pat Cummins will be rested for Australia's upcoming limited-overs tour to Britain and Mitchell Starc will miss the Twenty20 portion of the trip as part of a workload management program.

Australia is scheduled to play three T20s against Scotland and five one-day internationals against England in September. Cricket Australia said Cummins' absence was part of a "pre-planned, long-term load management strategy" as part of preparations for the Champions Trophy next year.

Mitchell Marsh, who led Australia at the recent T20 World Cup in the United States and Caribbean, will be captain for the tour.

Veteran opener David Warner has retired and wicketkeeper Matthew Wade wasn't selected, with selectors looking at the future.

Young batter Jake Fraser-McGurk was included in both the ODI and T20 squads after being a designated traveling reserve for the T20 World Cup. "This tour gives us a great opportunity to bring in some new players in the absence of David Warner and Matthew Wade, as well as giving some senior players time to prepare for the home summer and a busy first half of next year," George Bailey, Australia's selection chairman, said.

The likes of Fraser-McGurk, Spencer Johnson, Xavier Bartlett and Aaron Hardie "are exciting



prospects to join the likes of Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis and Josh Inglis in the white ball setup," Bailey said. "With the Champions Trophy next year... There has been a lot of planning invested into these next six months.

"That has included gradual integration of new players into our white ball squads who have earned international opportunities via excellent form." Australia is the World Cup champion in the 50-over format and holder of the World Test Championship title, but didn't reach the semifinals of the T20 World Cup.

T20 squad: Mitch Marsh (captain), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Cameron Green, Aaron Hardie, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa. **ODI squad:** Mitch Marsh (captain), Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Adam Zampa.

Mental conditioning camp ahead of Paris Olympics will help India handle pressure better: Abhishek

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian men's hockey team forward Abhishek feels the mental conditioning camp the players underwent at renowned adventurer Mike Horn's base in Switzerland ahead of the Paris Olympics has helped them prepare for high-pressure situations.

The Indian team has completed a three-day mental conditioning camp at Horn's base and are slated to play a

few practice matches in the Netherlands before making their way to Paris Games. The expectations from the team will be high after India's bronze medal win at Tokyo Olympics. India will start their Paris Olympics campaign against New Zealand in their first Pool B match.

"After months of focusing on the physical aspect of the game, this camp is exactly what we needed," Abhishek said in a Hockey India release. "The team has been spending time



connecting on and off the field, improving our bond and learning to handle high-pressure situations better," he said.

Abhishek, who has played 74 matches for India since his international debut in 2022, is set for his maiden appearance at the Olympics. "Ever since I was 14, it has been my dream to play for India in the Olympics." Abhishek asserted that he is someone who doesn't buckle under pressure. "The pressure in big tournaments

doesn't deter me or change my approach. I just try to execute on the pitch," he said.

For Abhishek, playing for India in the Olympics will be an achievement which is far beyond what his family had thought.

"When I started doing well in hockey, the most we expected was a government job. Seeing me reach this level is thrilling for them. My brother, especially, has always been my biggest supporter," he said.

Indian cricket has lot of depth but transition should be gradual: Vikram Rathour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Outgoing batting coach Vikram Rathour knows that a tough transition period awaits India in the near future but having worked with the available talent pool, he feels the side is well-equipped to handle the phase provided it unfolds in a "controlled and gradual manner".

While Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will still play ODIs and Tests for now, India will have to grapple with the transition phase in another couple of years when they move towards the last phase of their respective careers? "It is never going to be easy to replace people of Rohit and Virat's calibre," Rathour, also a former selector, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"The recently-concluded series against Zimbabwe (on Sunday)

gave us some glimpse into how the T20 team will look like in future. But we still have a few years in Test and ODI cricket to get to that point," said one of the key members of Rahul Dravid's coaching team.

Having served as both national selector and one of the coaches of the senior team, Rathour has an inside view of Indian cricket's talent pool and he finds it reassuring.

"I won't be too concerned about it. We have a lot of depth in Indian cricket. There are lots of very talented and skilful players who are coming through the system. The only thing we need to make sure is the transition is done in a controlled manner. It needs to be gradual.

He feels that by the time, Rohit and Kohli bid adieu to all formats, the younger stars would be well-settled, forming



the nucleus for the next 10 years. "I am hoping that by then, players like Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel to name a few, would establish themselves and will make the transition smooth. "In ODIs also, we have experienced players like

Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya to take over," Rathour said in a confident analysis.

Just as Kohli and Rohit carried India's batting on their shoulders for more than a decade, the next decade could well belong to Gill and Jaiswal. "There are many exciting players coming through but

these two are equipped to play all three formats for a long time. They are going to be the backbone of Indian batting in years to come," the former Punjab skipper said.

Rathour was a good sounding board for Dravid in the last three years and when he says that Rinku Singh would make a good Test batter, the statement does carry weight. "When I see him (Rinku) bat in nets, I can't find any technical reasons why Rinku cannot be a successful Test batter. I understand he has made his name as a terrific finisher in T20 cricket but if you look at his first-class record, he is averaging in high 50s.

"He (Rinku) is also blessed with a very calm temperament. So all these factors indicate that if given an opportunity, he can develop into a Test cricketer," Rathour said.

"ALWAYS TOLD VIRAT TO BELIEVE IN HIS METHODS": One question that Rathour would face at every second press conference during his tenure was Kohli's extended lean patch after the 2019 World Cup and he maintained it was a "phase that everyone has to go through".

"There were no technical issues that we worked on specifically during this phase. The constant messaging to him was to keep working hard and believe in his methods. Eventually he came back stronger and an even better player," he said.

RAHUL GAVE US SPACE AND HONEST FEEDBACK: Rathour and Dravid made their Test debuts in the same series against England in 1996 and have played against each other in domestic cricket even before that.