OPINION 6

MODI 3.0: BANKING SECTOR

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT REFORMS

WORLD 9

HOUTHI REBELS CLAIM DRONE

ATTACK ON ISRAEL

MONEY 10

Late City Vol.160 Issue 195 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

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the pioneer



SNEH: INDIA WOMEN'S TEAM WILL WIN ICC TROPHY SOON 10 SPORTS

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INDIA AMONG MAJOR NATIONS HIT BY MICROSOFT OUTAGE

Flights, banks, media outlets disrupted globally | Indian aviation sector affected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $M_{
m including}^{
m icrosoft}$ users globally, including several in reported massive outages in services, with the outage tracking website Downdetector showing users flagging disruptions across various services. A new update Crowdstrike, from

cybersecurity software firm, is being cited as the cause of the outage, which has impacted Windows-based desktops and

laptops. Globally, long queues formed at airports in the US, Europe, and Asia, including India, as airlines lost access to check-in and booking services at a time when many travellers are heading away on summer vacations.

News outlets in Australia where telecommunications were severely affected — were pushed off air for hours. Hospitals and doctor's offices had problems with their appointment systems, while banks in South Africa and New Zealand reported outages to their payment system or websites and apps.

Some athletes and spectators descending on Paris ahead of the Olympics were delayed as was the arrival of their uniforms and accreditations. but games organisers said



and its associates regarding the

disruptions were limited and didn't affect ticketing or the torch relay. Amid the massive global outage that hit operations of airlines, banks and businesses across the globe, Microsoft on Friday said it is aware of the issue affecting Windows devices due to an update from a third-party software platform. A Microsoft spokesperson said, "We anticipate a resolution is

forthcoming." "We're aware of an issue affecting Windows devices due to an update from a third-party platform," software

global outage spokesperson said. The outage put operations of businesses and systems across the globe in

a state of limbo. On outage tracking website Downdetector, users reported problems across Microsoft line-up including Azure, and Teams. Microsoft said it is investigating the issue "impacting users ability to access various Microsoft 365 apps and services".

Our services are still seeing continuous improvements while we continue to take mitigation actions," according the to Microsoft 365 Status post on

The glitch caused users to see the Blue Screen of Death error messages, and there are widespread reports of disruptions in international airlines, banks and media outlets.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said MEITY is in touch with Microsoft and its associates regarding the global outage and assured that State run NIC network was not affected. The IT Minister said the reason for this outage has been identified and updates have been released to resolve the issue. CERT too issued a technical advisory.

"It has been reported that Windows hosts related to Crowdstrike agent 'Falcon Sensor' are facing outages and getting crashed due to recent update received in the product. The concerned windows hosts are experiencing a 'Blue Screen of Death (BSOD)' related to Falcon Sensor," CERT-In advisory said.

A widespread Microsoft outage disrupted flights, banks, media outlets and companies around the world including India. Escalating disruptions continued hours after the technology company said it was gradually fixing an issue affecting access to Microsoft 365 apps and services.

Multiple airports and airline operations on Friday faced major disruptions across the country due to outages of Microsoft Window cloud service. Several airports suspended operations as services like bookings, check-in and boarding process including issuance of boarding passes were carried out manually, thereby taking longer than expected time and leading to long queues at airports. It caused chaos for several low-cost airlines, posing security concerns.

The outage hit booking and check-in services of several airlines, including Air India, IndiGo, Akasa Airlines and SpiceJet. Flyers have been advised to get to the airport well in advance, as manual check-ins take more time. They have also been urged to carry dry food items and water in case the wait stretches.

Airlines are posting updates on their social media handles to warn passengers about delays.

Advising passengers to cooperate with airport staff during this period of disruption, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) said it is 'committed' to Continued on Page 8 | minimising inconvenience



Stranded passengers at the Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru amid Microsoft outage, in Bengaluru, on Friday. Indigo, Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa at the Bengaluru airport began checking in passengers manually on Friday, issuing handwritten boarding passes, after a global Microsoft outage led to the Navitaire Departure Control System stalling

and ensuring well-being of all travellers.

The airports and airline operations, whose systems were based on Microsoft, faced significant disruptions since about 10.40 am on Friday. IndiGo, SpiceJet, Air India and Akasa saw disruptions in their online check-in and boarding processes across their networks, forcing them to

Airlines are facing issues in making fresh bookings; urging passengers not to make multiple bookings for a journey and urging them not to contact call centres which are facing tremendous call volumes due to flight delays — unless their flight is scheduled to depart in 24 hours.

Union Minister for Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu said his Ministry and

Airports Authority of India (AÅI) are actively managing the situation arising out of a global Microsoft outage, which severely impacted airport and operations in the country. The Civil Aviation Ministry in collaboration with AAI has implemented manual backup systems to maintain operational continuity, Naidu said in a statement.

Continued on Page 8

Unease in NDA over Yogi's fresh order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

A fresh order by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directing the businesses in the Kanwar pilgrims route to display nameplates, has caused unease within a section of party as well as the BJP's partners in NDA like ID(U) and LIP. The Uttarakhand Government too followed the suit and issued similar directives besides verification of the shops and its owners enroute the Kanwar pilgrimage which orginates from Haridwar.

The fresh order came after the controversial directives of Muzzaffarnagar police which mandated the eateries enroute to display names of owners later to be withdrawn saying it was just optional advisory.

Not only the Opposition but senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Union Minister Chirag Paswan, JD(U) spokesman KC Tyagi amongst several others expressed concern over the communal directives. Congress said it as an "attack on the Constitution" and demanded the order be withdrawn. The BJP, which is in power at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh, has defended the measure, claiming that it allows fasting Hindus who may want to eat at a pure vegetarian restaurant, where the likelihood of them being served 'satvik' food is

"Nameplate will have to be put on the food shops on the Kanwar routes across Uttar Pradesh. The decision was taken to maintain the purity of the faith of Kanwar pilgrims. Action will also be taken against those selling products with Halal certification," the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's office said. UP State Minister Kapil Dev

Agarwal said most of the outlets with names of Hindu deities are run by Muslims and they sell non-vegetarian food. He said those outlets must be identified and prohibited. This is not a matter about every

food cart. Those who carry 'jal' from Haridwar and travel for 250-300 km cross this route to reach their destination. We had urged the district administration that all such people who run their dhaba/hotel after the names of Hindu deities are mostly from the Muslim community. Kanwariyas visit their shops where non-vegetarian food is sold. So, the name of the shop is after a Hindu deity, but non-vegetarian is sold there; all such establishments should be prohibited, they should be identified," the Minister said.

Agarwal said they are not against the sale of non-vegetarian food but Kanwariyas would not eat from such outlets. "We have no objection to the sale of non-vegetarian food, Kanwariyas would not purchase it. We have only urged that non-vegetarian food should not be sold by opening shops after the names of Hindu deities; so the administration has acted accordingly. Politicians are giving it a Hindu-Muslim angle. But it is not a Hindu-Muslim matter, it is a matter of social harmony. People can sit and eat wherever they want, but they should have the knowledge of where they are sitting," Agarwal

Nagvi slammed the decision and said the hasty orders may give rise to the disease of untouchability. "Faith must be respected, but untouchability must not be patronised," the former Union Minister in Narendra Modi's second term, said.

added.

Continued on Page 8

Centre to introduce six new Bills in Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has listed six new Bills for introduction, including the one which seeks to replace the 90vear-old Aircraft Act to provide enabling provisions for ease of doing business in the aviation sector, in the upcoming Parliament

Session beginning Monday.
Besides the Finance Bill, the
Government has also listed 'The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill' for introduction, Management consideration and passing. The proposed legislation aims to bring more clarity and convergence in the roles of different organisations working in the field of disaster management, a Lok Sabha bulletin

issued Thursday said. The Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak, 2024 seeks to replace the Aircraft Act of 1934 to provide enabling provisions for ease of doing business in the Civil Aviation sector. The Session beginning July 22 will conclude on August 12. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union

Budget on Tuesday, July 23.
Other Bills listed for introduction and passage during the Session are the Boilers Bill to replace the pre-Independence era law, the Coffee (Promotion and Development) Bill and the Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has also constituted the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), which decides the parliamentary agenda. The committee chaired by the Speaker has Sudip Bandyopadhyay (TMC), PP Chaudhary (BJP), Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu (TDP), Nishikant Dubey (BJP), Gaurav the strategy to raise the issues Gogoi (Congress), Sanjay Jaiswal (BJP), Dileshwar Kamait (JD-U), Monsoon cum Budget session.



Mahtab Bhartruhari Dayanidhi Maran (DMK), Baijayant Panda (BJP), Arvind Sawant (Shiv Sena-UBT), Kodikunnil Suresh (Congress), Anurag Thakur (BJP) and Lalji Verma (SP) as members. The Centre has also convened an all-party meeting on Sunday ahead of the Monsoon Session. The meeting has been called by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, the Ministry said in a statement.

This will be Leader of Opposition and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's first time at the customary Sessioneve meeting of the floor leaders from all parties if he attends it. Another large party in the Opposition ranks, Trinamool Congress, has regretted it won't

attend the meet. The Opposition parties under the INDIA Bloc too have convened a meeting of their Parliamentarians the same evening and another on July 22 morning ahead of the resumption of Parliament to discuss



switch to manual mode.

Shah for synergy among agencies to dismantle terror networks

country.
Addressing the meeting
Home Minister instructed heads of security agencies to adopt a whole-of-the Government approach towards national security.

He stressed upon greater synergy between all the agencies to dismantle the terror networks and their supporting eco-system, to address the evolving security threat scenario of the country. While reviewing the overall internal security situation in the country and the fight against terrorism, Shah impressed upon all the participants to increase engagement in the Multi Agency Centre and make it into a cohesive platform.



Governors from any kind of criminal prosecution.

PNS NEW DELHI

Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday chaired a high -level meeting with the various heads of security and law enforcement agencies to review the functioning of Multi Agency Centre (MAC) of IB, responsible for tackling security challenges in the

approach



The top court's order came on a plea of contractual woman employee of West Bengal 'Raj Bhavan' who has alleged molestation by Governor C V Ananda Bose and her wrongful confinement by the officials there.

immunity

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra also issued a notice to the West Bengal Government on the plea of the woman and granted her liberty to make also the Central Government a party.

It also sought the assistance of Attorney General R Venkataramani in dealing with the constitutional issue. At the outset, senior advocate

Shyam Divan, appearing for the woman whose name has been redacted from the judicial records, said, "It cannot be that there is no investigation. Evidence has to be gathered right now. It cannot be deferred indefinitely till the Governor demits office."

The plea said the immunity granted to the Governors under clause 2 of Article 361 cannot bar the investigation and moreover, the time is the essence in such probes. "The petition raises the issue

pertaining to the ambit of the protection which is afforded to the Governor under clause (2)



of Article 361 of the Constitution," the bench said in its order of issuing notice to the State Government and others. The Article deals with the protection of President and the Governors and its clause 2 reads, "No criminal proceedings whatsoever shall be instituted or continued against the President, or the Governor of a State, in any court during his term of office." The woman petitioner has also sought directions to frame specific guidelines under which Governors enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution.

"This court has to decide whether a victim like the petitioner can be rendered remediless, with the only option being to wait for the accused to demit his office, which delay will then be inexplainable during the trial, and render the entire procedure a mere lip service, without any justice to the victim herein," the plea said.

IAS officer Khedkar's career on the line as UPSC files FIR

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In twin disciplinary measures, Union Public Service Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has launched criminal prosecution of a controversial probationary IAS officer Puja Manorama Diliprao Khedkar and also issued a showcause notice to her for cancellation of her candidature from Civil Services Examination-2022/debarment from future examinations/selections".

In a statement issued on Friday, the UPSC said it had conducted detailed investigations against

Puja Khedkar for her alleged "misdemeanour". "From the investigation, it has been revealed that she fraudulently availed attempts beyond the permission limit under examination rules by way of changing her name and the names of her father and mother, her photograph, her email id, mobile number and address," the UPSC said. The UPSC said it had initiated a series of actions against her, including a criminal prosecution by filing a First Information Report (FIR) with the police, and served her a show



The UPSC said "in fulfilling its Constitutional obligations, it stringently adheres to its Constitutional mandate, and conducts all its processes, including all examinations, with the highest possible order of due diligence without any compromise". "The UPSC has ensured the sanctity and integrity of all its examination processes with the utmost fairness and strict observance of rules," the statement said.

"The UPSC has deservedly earned the trust and credibility of a very high order from the public,

especially the candidates. The UPSC is unequivocally committed to ensure that such a high order of trust and credibility remains intact and uncompromised," the statement added. It may recalled that on July 16, their daughter and probationary IAS officer Dr Puja Manorama Dilip Khedkar — who is under scanner for alleged misuse of power and privileges was ordered to return to her alma mater Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of on (LBSNAA), National Administration Mussoorie.

Continued on Page 2

Woman alleges cyberbullying, stalking

Awoman resident of Jankipuram accused her former acquaintance, associated with several religious insti-tutions and the RSS, of cyberbullying, violating her privacy, breaching her rights, physical and mental harassment, physical and verbal abuse, blackmailing, hacking her mobile and other gadgets, threatening, character assassination and assault, phone data stealing, and making cold calls and messages on Friday.

In her complaint, the woman alleged that Saurabh Mishra of

Alambagh stalked her and snooping on her daily activities and outings in the city. "He is cyber-tracking me everywhere I go, everyone I talk to, and associate with. He has made my life a hell. He is well-connected and indulges in muscle-flexing whenever a complaint against him is made. He is planning to usurp my parental house in Kanpur and has bribed the municipality clerks to gain ownership of the house," she alleged.

She said the accused was also trailing her on her social media accounts and tracking her activities online.

"He stole my data by hacking my phone and now he is calling my friends to turn them against me by insinuating wrongs about my character. He is portraying me as a woman of bad character," she alleged.

The complainant further alleged that the accused was threatening her friends, asking them to isolate her so that he could easily prey on her.

"He has set spies on me. I am certain he has bribed the washerman and his son and family vide every minute detail to the accused," she alleged.

to keep an eye on me and pro-

She said Saurabh used his con-

Kenyan citizen arrested for overstaying in city

PNS LUCKNOW

AKenyan citizen living in Indiranagar (Sector-9) has been arrested for overstaying, police said on Friday. The visa of the arrested Kenyan citizen, Morris Okiye (54), expired 19 years ago in 2005. The police registered an FIR against him under the Foreigners Act and informed the Ministry of External Affairs.

Morris came to India for studies in 1995. He completed BCom from Faizabad (now Ayodhya) in 1997, followed by MCom from Rohilkhand University, and later earned a diploma from ITI. He has a good command of Hindi and worked as an electrician. No suspicious items or documents were found with him.

Morris had previously gone to jail in a fraud case registered at Varanasi's Laxmi police station in 2002. Despite this, he was not deported. Ghazipur ACP

nections to prevent her from registering a case earlier. "He had beaten me in full public view at Alambagh police station crossing in 2023," she alleged. The police registered a case based on her complaint and started an investigation. Meanwhile, a man accused his real brother and sisters of beating him nearly to death, stealing his household items, and changing the electric meter in his name in Indiranagar to usurp his share of the house.



Vikas Jaiswal stated that investigations revealed Morris lived in a rented house. During interrogation, Morris revealed that he came to Uttar Pradesh only for studies and then did not return to Kenva.

Following his arrest, the police began investigating old cases of foreigners overstaying. The investigation revealed that a fraud case was registered against Morris in November 2002, where he, along with two companions, committed fraud in Varanasi. The case file number is 100. He was sentenced to four

The victim, Pradeep Dubey, said he had lodged a complaint with the police after his brother, Sandeep Dubey, and his sisters put a lock on his portion of the house, obstructing his entry on April 14.

"After the complaint, the police intervened and helped me gain entry to my portion of the house. On April 26, I went to the house and found the electric meter changed. When I confronted Sandeep about this, I was beaten by Sandeep and months in 2002. After his release from jail, he neither returned to Kenya nor was any information provided to any agency.

Morris's arrest raised questions about the verification rules for lease agreements. It was also concerning that a foreign national could stay in the country for so many years without any investigation agency being aware. The local police stated that investigation and action were taken once the matter came to their notice, and higher authorities have been informed.

According to Ghazipur police, Morris is originally from Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. He was living on rent in Abdul Kalam's house. A woman accused him of supplying drugs, and a complaint was made to the DCP. When the matter reached the Crime Branch, Morris was arrested, and an investigation was started. However, no charges have been proven

my two sisters. They beat me nearly to death. They then loaded me into an e-rickshaw and abandoned me in a lane close to the Takrohi police outpost. My wife, who had reached there, told me that my wallet, sans cash, and my broken mobile phone were lying on my unresponsive body, and I was unconscious. They abandoned me, thinking I had died," he said. The police registered a case under relevant sections of

KIN OF RAPE & MURDER VICTIM STAGE PROTEST

Anger among people protesting the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl, who was a resi-dent of Rahimabad, spilled onto the road as her kin and their supporters protested, blocking the Lucknow-Hardoi highway.

The irate villagers placed the body of the minor at Rahimabad crossing and raised anti-police slogans, demanding that the rapists and killers of the girl be hanged till death. Follow the protest, the traffic on the road remained affected for about three hours. The protesters did not budge and remained adamant on their seven-point demands.

On getting information, ADCP (West) Vishwajit Srivastava reached the spot and tried to pacify the irate protesters, but to no avail. Police were called from three different police stations to bring the situation

under control. The family members said that the culprits should be given death penalty. The protesters also demanded a land for the victim's parents in the gram sabha apart from government housing and financial assistance. After being assured that their demands would be forwarded to government officials for approval, the family lifted the blockade.

The incident took place in PGI police station area and the victim girl belonged to Rahimabad in Lucknow. On July 15, a primary school teacher, along with his friends. allegedly gang-raped the 14-year-old girl by locking her in a house. The police registered a case on the basis of the complaint. The prime accused was arrested and sent to jail. The minor girl was admitted to Lok Bandhu Hospital where she died during treatment.

GOC-in-C, Surya Command, Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta called on Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel at Raj Bhavan in Lucknow on Friday. The Army commander discussed the overall security situation and various initiatives by security forces for

2 held for duping people with fake notes

PNS LUCKNOW

The UP STF claimed to have arrested two members of a gang that cheated people by giving them fake notes worth double the value of the real notes they took from them.

The gang members lured young people with the promise of earning more money and convinced them to circulate fake notes in the market. They initially provided real notes, then gradually introduced fake ones. The STF recovered 50 wads of 500-rupee notes printed on coloured paper from the accused. It was reported that after circulating fake notes worth lakhs in a market, the gang would leave that area and

move to another location. The STF is currently searching for the remaining members of the gang. STF CO Deepak Kumar's team conducted a raid near Scorpio Club, Kursi Road, on Thursday night based on a tipoff by an informer and arrested Ramswaroop Vishnoi and Vishnu Sharma, residents of Nokh Naya village in Bikaner, Rajasthan, were arrested.

A large quantity of fake notes, three mobile phones, a stamp, eight IDBI Bank slips, two credit cards, an Aadhaar card, and Rs 2,810 in cash were recovered from them. The accused had come to Lucknow to supply fake notes to a youth. During interrogation by the STF, the accused revealed that their gang targeted people who aspired to get rich quickly. They would entice such people with the promise of easy money by circulating fake notes in the market. The youths who fell for their scheme were initially given real notes to circulate, followed by fake notes once trust was established.

To make the fake notes appear genuine, they placed real notes on the top and bottom of bundles of fake notes and attached bank slips. They laminated the bundles to prevent immediate inspection. Using a colour printer, they prepared bundles of fake 500-rupee notes on white paper, with real notes on the top and bottom to avoid suspicion.



NOTICE

Original allotment and possession letters of my house No.C-380 EWS Block C Scheme Original Gujaini, Kanpur Nagar, have indeed been lost somewhere, the use of which would be illegal. Mohit Sherkhadi S/o Shri Krishna Gopal.

NOTICE

name from Printika Khanna to Jitika Khanna D/o Rajendra Khanna R/o- 126/12 R-Block, Govind Nagar, Kanpur Nagar. In future she would be known by this name only.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Zafaruddin Sarfaraz khan To Mohd Zafruddin Khan S/o Sarfaraz Zahid Khan R/o 546, Rahmat Baba Lalauli, Fatehpur For all future purpose

NOTICE

my Army No. 4289325H NK M/K Avinash Singh D/o . Ayushi Singh ,Village Gaura Baramau Post Gaura Loharia Police Station Baldirai Tehsil Baldirai District Sultanpur Pin 227806 (UP) Unit Seventeen Corps Camp In the army documents my daughter's date of birth is mentioned as 15-07-2013 whereas His exact date of birth is 20-04-2015. Therefore, the correct date of birth should be recorded in my service record.

NOTICE

It is for general information that I NEETU W/O AJAB SINGH R/O 1-365, JAHANGIR PURI BHALSWA JAHNGIR PUR, NS MANDI, NORTH WEST DELHI-110033 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as RINA in my minor daughter namely KOMAL KUMARI aged 14 years in her school record. The actual name of mine is NEETU which may be amended accordingly

NOTICE

My name is recorded in my Aadhaar card (5709 8743 6711) as Priyanshu s/o Rajendra Yadav 21-01-2006), whereas in educational records my name is recorded as Rajdeep Yadav s/o Yaday (DOB Raiendra 23-01-2006), which is correct. I should be known and addressed as Rajdeep Yadav, S/o Rajendra Yadav. Rajdeep Yadav S/o Rajendra Yadav R/o Village Padankheda, Post Padri Kalan, Tehseel & District Unnao

12 flights cancelled, 20 delayed due to global IT outage

Lucknow (PNS): Twelve flights were cancelled while 20 flights were delayed at the Chaudhary Charan Śingh International Airport because of a global IT outage that affected systems across the world.

An airport spokesperson issued a passenger advisory on X, stating, "A global IT outage has affected operations impacting flights nationwide. During this time booking, check-in, access to boarding passes and flights are likely to be impacted. We are collaborating with airlines to manage operations and minimize delays. Please reach out to the respective airlines for information."

The spokesperson said that things were under control at the Lucknow airport. "There has been a minor delay because of the manual check in but the impact in Lucknow is less as compared to the bigger airports," he said.

Incidentally, most of the airlines also posted their advisory on X. A prominent airline wrote that their team was working relentlessly to ensure safe travels. "As systems are impacted globally we request you to refrain from making multiple bookings. We are experiencing high volumes at the contact centre, please contact us only if your travel time is within 24 hours."

Yet another airline posted on X that the passengers might experience slower check-ins and longer queues. "We are doing our best to address the situation. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this

Happiness Park: Lucknow's new hub of joy and nostalgia

SHARMILA KRISHNA LUCKNOW

Happiness Park, the latest addition to the city's recreational spaces, has officially opened its doors to the public. Situated within the bounds of Buddha Park, it stands as a unique attraction in Uttar Pradesh, meticulously designed to bring joy and smiles to the faces of residents. This park has been developed using Smart City funds, with the Lucknow Development Authority overseeing its creation. The park is distinguished by its lush greenery and creative waste-to-art sculptures. Covering an area of approximately 3 acres, it is themed around nostalgia and humour. It includes a variety of amenities, such as a children's play area with rides. One of the park's most notable features is its use of scrap materials—primarily metal scraps sourced from local junkyards, railways, and various government departments—to construct miniature heritage replicas and artistic installations.

Municipal Commissioner Inderjit Singh emphasised that the park aims to provide open spaces for families to enjoy. He noted, "As urban areas become increasingly encroached upon, any available open space becomes a source of happiness and relief for city dwellers. It is well-documented that exposure to open spaces stimulates the secretion



of dopamine in the brain, which has substantial benefits for mental health. This concept is central to the design and

purpose of this park."
Singh also highlighted that
the park is expected to draw
significant crowds, with projections of 1,000 to 1,500 visitors on weekends and 500 to 1,000 visitors on weekdays. He believes the park will contribute to promoting tourism, art, and cultural heritage. From an environmental perspective, the park is designed to have no carbon footprint. It includes a rejuvenated water body and provisions for groundwater recharging. Financial sustainability is achieved through a combination of entry fees, rental income from shops and restaurants, and parking

charges. The park's design also reflects a commitment to preserving and reviving elements from the past. Singh explained that the park features a variety of nostalgic elements, including Bollywood artifacts, traditional games such as 'gilli-danda', 'kanche' and other forgotten forms of entertainment.

We aim to reconnect the younger generation with past entertainment forms that have been overshadowed by modern technology like mobile phones and selfies," Singh said. Another distinctive aspect of the park is its 'ulta-pulta' theme, which incorporates elements of surprise and humour. The park offers a range of attractions, including boat rides, toy trains, and eateries set in green, humour-themed environments. Visitors can also experience traditional entertainment such as bioscope shows, puppet performances, and madari acts.

Singh noted that while the park expands upon the existing Buddha Park, it maintains the original park's essence and adds new features such as boating and skating areas, as well as a large King Kong representing sculpture Hollywood.

Transgender Clinical Care Unit opens at SGPGIMS

Lucknow (PNS): Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) inaugurated its Transgender Clinical Care Unit on Friday. As the transgender community faces a huge challenge in availing adequate healthcare in society, this pioneering initiative, first of its kind in North India, aims to provide multidisciplinary specialised medical services and compreensive care tailored to the snecific needs of the transgender community.

"This comprehensive facility is managed by the department of endocrinology as the nodal department and includes hormone replacement therapy, surgical procedures like reduction mammoplasty, genital reconstructive surgery, counselling, psychiatric support, and dermatology services," a senior doctor said. The departments of plastic surgery and burns, urology and renal transplantation, psychiatry, dermatology and venereal diseases, and microbiology are key care providers. Other medical issues will be dealt by other departments of the institute as and when required. The services will be provided through weekly OPD (every Friday) and admission facility by a dedicated six-bed ward.

"A transgender person is someone whose gender identity differs from that assigned to them at birth. In India, the transgender community has a rich cultural history dating back centuries. The 2011 Census of India found that nearly 5 lakh individuals are transgender. This community has traditionally been marginalised and stigmatised. However, recent years have seen positive shifts in societal attitudes and legal recognition in large parts due to efforts by the Uttar Pradesh Transgender Welfare Board under the Government of Uttar Pradesh," a doctor said. The chief guest at the inaugura-

tion ceremony was state execu tive member and advisor to the Transgender Welfare Board, UP, Devendra Devika Mangalamukhi. She emphasised the challenges faced by the community and the steps taken by the government in ensuring their welfare.

SGPGIMS director Prof (Dr) Radha Krishna Dhiman expressed enthusiasm, stating, "We are committed to ensuring that every individual receives compassionate and appropriate healthcare. The establishment of this unit underscores our dedication to serving all members of our community with dignity and respect."

Head of department of endocrinology Prof (Dr) Sushil Gupta, who is heading the unit, spoke about the challenges faced in the completion of this endeavour. He recalled how the first step in this direction was made at a multidisciplinary workshop on 'Medical Issues of Transgenders - Right To Health Initiative' conducted in the latter half of 2023 to raise awareness on the health issues faced by this community.

Land acquisition for IT City project to begin on Aug 7

PNS LUCKNOW

 $T^{
m he\ process\ for\ acquiring}_{
m land\ for\ the\ ambitious\ IT}$ City project is set to commence on August 7. The land, located across 13 villages along Sultanpur Road, is essential for the development of this township. This information was provided in an official press communiqué sent to the Housing and Urban Development department on

The IT City project is a top priority for Prathmesh Kumar, the newly-appointed Vice-Chairman of Lucknow Development Authority. Kumar emphasised the significance of the IT industry in driving progress and innovation, country's advancement and modernisation. He added that the proposed township would provide a valuable environment for students to enhance their skills and make significant contributions in the

The IT City will cover 1,600 acres and is estimated to cost Rs 43,000 crore. Finance analyst Jayant Seth said that the project could generate Rs 51,000 crore upon comple-

However, there have been disputes with farmer leaders regarding compensation. Currently, the market price for land in the Sultanpur area is approximately Rs 20 lakh per bigha, with potential increases anticipated. Some farmers which will contribute to the are demanding compensation

at the rate of Rs 2 crore per bigha before agreeing to sell their land. Kumar described this as a minor issue that will be resolved through discussions in a roundtable confer-

According to the layout plan, the IT City will feature several key areas: the IT centre will occupy 350 acres, group housing will cover 300 acres, and residential plots will be developed on 150 acres. Additionally, a green belt is planned for 200 acres.

As of now, there has been no response from the farmer leaders. Notices have been posted in each village, and announcements regarding land acquisition have been made through public address systems by LDA

Looking forward to shooting in Lucknow, says Kaushal

Lucknow (PNS): Bollywood actors Vicky Kaushal and Amy Virk visited the city on Thursday to promote their upcoming movie titled 'Bad Newz'. Addressing mediapersons, Kaushal expressed his eagerness to shoot in Lucknow, noting that spending an extended period in a city provides a deeper sense of its character. "I am keen on having the opportunity to shoot in Lucknow. So far, my visits have been brief, primarily for promotional activities where I stay for just one or two days," he said. Reflecting on his experiences in Lucknow, Kaushal shared his impressions of the city's people, describing them as warm and welcoming. He recalled previous visits for the promotions of 'Zara Hat Ke' and 'Sam Bahadur' in the Cantonment area, as well as a visit to the Hanuman temple

with actress Sara Ali Khan. Kaushal described his experience working on the film as a mix of nervousness and excitement. "I've been eagerly discussing with my parents how the audience will receive the film," he said. He also mentioned his initial reaction to the film's unusual subject-a rare medical condition called Heteropaternal Superfecundation, where a child can have two biological fathers. "When the script was first explained to me. I was taken aback and asked the director if such a condition really existed or if it was a creative exaggeration. I was informed that there have been 18 documented cases in India. While it's certainly challenging for those involved, it offers a unique comedic angle for the rest of us," he

Tender Notice (ISR/GPS/2024/001)

INSTITUTE OF SEISMOLOGICAL RESEARCH Knowledge Corridor, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India 382007 www.isr.gujarat.gov.in Phone: 079-66739009

Online global tenders are invited from reputed OEM/Indian suppliers for the supply of Geodetic GNSS Reference System (Reference Receiver and Choke Ring Antenna) with accessories The e-tender may be downloaded from https://tender.nprocure.com or www.isr.gujarat.gov.in. The last date for submitting the tender form with offer is 12-08-2024. Tender will be opened on the same day at on

INF/518/2024-25

Director General

NTPC Limited (A Govt. of India Enterprise)

Walk-in interview for Visiting Doctor (Dentist)

- 2. Qualifying requirement BDS with established practice of 03 years
- 3. Period of engagement 01 year (02 halfday visit per week of 04 hours)
- 4. Compensation-Rs. 5500 (per half day visit of 04 hours)
- 5. Conveyance (outside city limit) as applicable

Interested doctors who are meeting the above criteria may appear for the walk-in interview with relevant certificates in original at the office of CMO Jeevan Jyoti Hospital, NTPC Unchahar, Raebareli, Pincode-229406 or 29 July 2024, Monday from 10 am onwards.

Leading the Power Sector

Yogi: Need to revisit ancient farming practices to address health issues

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said excessive use of fertiliser is adversely affecting not only humans but also animals and birds and there is a need to revisit ancient farming practices to address health issues. "There is a significant difference between the farming practices that we have been taught in the last 100-150 years and the science of ancient times. We will have to turn the pages of history again. Today, due to excessive use of fertiliser, a 'slow poison' is entering our arteries, which is adversely affecting not only humans but also animals and birds," he said while addressing a programme on natural farming

Observing that agricultural production has definitely increased due to the Green Revolution, he said, "this is an incomplete truth. There is need to examine the production rates from natural farming in India in the 17th and 18th centuries when the earth was in its natural form and the grain production was also high."

Adityanath added that soon an agricultural university will exclusively work on natural farming in Uttar Pradesh.

He also said that a large number of people now a days request money for treatment of



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath participating in programme on natural farming in Lucknow on Friday

cancer from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. A few years ago, the situation was not so horrifying, he added.

Today, in every village, some youths are suffering from kidney disorders, heart problems and cancer. The reason for this is that our food habits have changed giving rise to new diseases. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a new mantra of natural farming to prevent this," he added.

He said that 12 to 14 cows suddenly died at the destitute cow shelter in Amroha. After investigation it was found that the fodder contained large quantities of fertiliser resulting in death of cows.

"If cows cannot tolerate excessive fertilisers, then what will be the condition of humans?" he wondered.

The chief minister said there is a huge possibility for natural farming in UP which has 12 per cent of the country's land and 17 per cent of the country's population. Also, UP produces 20 per cent of the country's food grains. There is adequate water resources in the state. "We need to focus on the quality as per today's requirement as it can take our happiness index to a higher level," he said. Adityanath said that UP has

four agricultural universities, with plans underway for a fifth one. The state is home to 89 Krishi Vigyan Kendras and two Central Agricultural Universities. He also emphasised the need to accelerate the certification process for products derived from natural farming. Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat and Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan and others were also present on

Appeal to NMC to start teaching in 13 new

medical colleges
Lucknow (PNS): An appeal
has been made to the National Medical Commission (NMC) to commence MBBS courses in 13 new medical colleges in Uttar Pradesh for the academic session 2024–25. This appeal has been made

under Section 28(5) of the NMC Act, 2019. In September 2023, applications were submitted to the NMC seeking Letters of Permission (LoP) for the admission of 100 MBBS students for the 2024-25 academic session at new medical colleges across 13 districts in Uttar Pradesh. These districts include Bulandshahr, Auraiya, Sonbhadra, Lalitpur, Chandauli, Sultanpur, Gonda, Lakhimpur Kheri, Kushinagar, Kanpur Dehat, Kaushambi, Bijnor and

In this context, the NMC began inspections for the LoP at all the new medical colleges, which concluded on June 24. Following this, on July 4, the NMC issued a Letter of Disapproval, denying permission for the admission of 100 MBBS students in the specified colleges. Consequently, an appeal has been made by the medical colleges to the NMC to initiate the academic session.

SP, Congress to contest UP bypolls in alliance

ongress and Samajwadi Party, the opposition INDIA bloc partners in Uttar Pradesh, have reached a consensus for contesting the by-elections to 10 assembly seats

in the state together. Sources in the SP said the Congress would contest three seats and the SP the remaining seven seats.

The sources said Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi would take the final call on this issue and matter was likely to be decided after the Lok Sabha budget session commencing on July 22 and ending on August 12.

In the recent Lok Sabha elections, the SP-Congress alliance made a massive impact in Uttar Pradesh, securing 43 seats collectively and reducing the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance to just 36 seats.

Upbeat by this success, the INDIA bloc partners are now focusing on a strategic seat-sharing arrangement for the by-elections to the 10 UP assembly seats scheduled for later this year.

According to sources, a meet-

ing of all district presidents has been called by UP Congress on July 21 in Lucknow for consultations. Sources in Congress also confirmed that the SP was likely to contest seven seats while Congress may get three seats.

Of the 10 assembly seats set to go to the polls, five were previously held by the SP, three by the BJP, and one each by BJP allies Rashtriya Lok Dal and the NISHAD Party.

Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee chief Ajay Rai has already confirmed that highlevel discussions regarding seat-sharing are ongoing, with both parties determined to present a united front in the by-

While the exact distribution of seats between the SP and Congress remains undecided, senior Congress leaders have indicated that the party will likely seek seats previously held by the BJP and its allies. The UP assembly declared these 10 seats vacant between June 7 and 18, and the by-elections are to be held within six months from the date of vacan-

The Election Commission of India is expected to conduct the by-elections alongside the assembly elections in Harvana, Iharkhand and Maharashtra later this year.

The five seats held by the SP included Katehari (Ambedkar Nagar), Karhal (Mainpuri), Milkipur (Ayodhya), Kundarki (Moradabad), and Sisamau (Kanpur). The Sisamau seat was declared vacant following the disqualification of sitting SI MLA Irfan Solanki after his conviction in a criminal case with seven-year imprisonment. Katehari assembly seat was vacated by SP MLA Lalji Verma, who won the Ambedkar Nagar Lok Sabha seat. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav resigned from the Karhal (Mainpuri) assembly seat after his election to Lok Sabha from Kannaui.

The ruling BJP has already started preparations for the bypolls to 10 assembly seats. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has constituted 10 teams comprising 30 ministers for these 10 assembly seats. This week, on Wednesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a marathon meeting with the ministers and finalised the details of the election and campaign strategy.

Chouhan for natural farming on part of land

PTI/PNS LUCKNOW

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday asked farmers to carry out natural farming in at least one part of their farms and the government will give subsidies for their crop losses for initial two years.

In the initial two years, when farmers practice natural farming, the yield will be less and in such a situation the government will give subsidies, times, farmers do chemical-

Chouhan said at a programme on natural farming here. UP Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath and Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat were also present at the programme — 'Praakritik kheti ki vigyaan par kshetreey paraamarsh karyakram'.

While fulfilling the prime minister's dream of saving mother earth from chemicals, we will try our best to ensure that in the coming free farming, so that the coming generations remain healthy," Chouhan said.

He said that farmers will get 1.5 times more price by selling grains, fruits and vegetables grown through natural farming. The union minister also said that laboratories will be set up in the agricultural universities of the country to facilitate research on natural farming, which will help in filling the food reserves of the

At least one crore farmers will be made aware about natural farming so that they can go to every corner of the country and promote it, he said, adding that the central government will carry out a nation-wide awareness campaign in consultation with all the stakeholders.

In his address, Gujarat Governor Devvrat said natural farming requires less water and is very beneficial for

Govt enhances online transport services **Vehicle owners can now update mobile numbers online on 'parivahan portal'**

PNS LUCKNOW

In a bid to enhance online transport services, the Yogi Adityanath government has introduced a new initiative for vehicle owners.

Those who need to update or correct their mobile number in their vehicle registration can now do so by visiting the department's website at http://www.parivahan.gov.in. This new service allows vehicle owners to update their details from the comfort of their homes, ensuring they

stay informed about challans or any other actions.

Uttar Pradesh's Additional Transport Commissioner (IT/Enforcement) AK Singh said that during inspections by the enforcement team, it was found that many vehicle registrations either had incorrect or outdated mobile num-

He explained that to update their mobile numbers, vehicle owners should go to the vehicle portal, click on online services, and select the vehicle-related service. Then, they should choose their state, enter their vehicle number, and click the proceed button. Among the provided services, select the mobile number update (Aadhaar-based) option and fill in the registration number, complete chassis number, complete engine number, registration date and the fitness/registration expiry date in the form, then click the show details button. Enter the Aadhaar number, the name as on Aadhaar, and the mobile number, click the

agree checkbox, and then

click the verify button to see your details. Click the mobile update button and see the success message displayed by the portal. The new mobile number will now be updated on the vehicle portal.

The additional transport commissioner (IT) mentioned that the mobile number will only be updated if the Aadhaar card data matches 85 per cent of the data in the vehicle registration certificate. Otherwise, the applicant will need to visit the relevant

Bundelkhand transformed into key investment hub

Work commences on projects worth ₹8,000 cr

PNS LUCKNOW

Tn February, the fourth edition of the groundbreaking ceremony (GBC 4.0) saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi launch investment projects totaling approximately Rs 69,000 crore for Bundelkhand. Remarkably, within just five months of the launch, commercial production has commenced for projects valued at around Rs 8,000 crore, creating job opportunities for thou-

sands in the region.
This initial wave of projects constitutes 11 per cent of the total investment allocated for Bundelkhand in GBC 4.0, with the remaining projects expected to start soon. Once considered a backward region, Bundelkhand is now emerging as a prominent investment destination thanks to the efforts of the Yogi government.

According to the data of Invest UP, the agency responsible for monitoring and promoting

investments in the state, commercial production has begun for 3,984 projects worth a total of Rs 1,14,345 crore. Among these, Bundelkhand has 156 projects worth Rs 7,894 crore. This amount represents 11 per cent of the project funds allocated for Bundelkhand in the GBC 4.0.

During GBC 4.0, 693 projects in Bundelkhand were launched with a total investment of Rs 68,933 crore, which is 7 per cent of the total projects worth Rs 10 lakh crore launched during the event. The start of these projects is expected to create large-scale job opportunities in Bundelkhand. reducing the need for residents to seek employment in other regions or states.

the districts in Among the districts in Bundelkhand, Jhansi has seen the highest investment, with 62 projects worth Rs 6,237 crore now in industrial production. This has created job opportunities for local youth. During GBC 4.0, Jhansi saw the launch of 246 projects worth Rs 27,533 crore. This means that over Rs 21,000 crore worth of projects are still to be started in Jhansi, and they are expected to begin soon. Similarly, Hamirpur has 14 projects worth Rs 963 crore, Lalitpur has 23 projects worth Rs 246 crore, Mahoba has 24 projects worth Rs 195 crore, Banda has 15 projects worth Rs 58 crore, Ialaun has 11 projects worth Rs 46 crore, and Chitrakoot has seven projects

worth Rs 22 crore. During GBC 4.0, Hamirpur had launched projects worth Rs 2,187 crore, Lalitpur Rs 15,735 crore, Mahoba Rs 1,682 crore, Banda Rs 1,060 crore, Jalaun Rs 13,577 crore and Chitrakoot Rs 7,157 crore. In Bundelkhand, several major companies are making significant investments. In Chitrakoot, Tusco Ltd. is investing Rs 4,700 crore, Sahasrabhuja Food Products Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 500 crore, Varun Beverages Ltd is investing Rs 496 crore, and Shri Cement Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 202 crore. Similarly, in Hamirpur, Rajendra Singh Sharma is investing Rs 660

crore, Hindustan Unilever Ltd is investing Rs 230 crore, Ugr Silos Hamirpur Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 54 crore. In Jalaun, Bundelkhand Solar Energy Ltd is investing Rs 6,000 crore, Sanchay New Age Developers Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 1,000 crore, Roaming Souls Technology Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 900 crore, and Paliwal Foods Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 55 crore. In addition to this, in Jhansi, Tusco

Ltd is investing Rs 3,430 crore, RVNL Ltd is investing Rs 2,840 crore, Fourth Partner Energy Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 1,200 crore, and Sun Source Energy is investing Rs 600 crore. In Lalitpur, Tusco Ltd is investing Rs 3,450 crore, UGR Silas is investing Rs 48 crore, and V&S Enterprises is investing Rs 30 crore. In Mahoba, Tusco Ltd is investing Rs 1,008 crore, IB VOGT Solar Four Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 80 crore, Desi Bhog is investing Rs 50 crore, and GRS Hotel Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 50 crore. In Banda, Avaada Indosolar Pvt. Ltd is investing Rs 350 crore.

UP Kinnar Kalyan Board vice-chief submits resignation

PTI LUCKNOW

Sonam Chishti, the vice-chairperson of Kinnar Kalyan Board in Uttar Pradesh, has submitted her resignation, saying she was "hurt by the performance of the BJP" in this year's elections.

. Chishti, a transgender woman. told PTI that she has sent the resignation letter to the Uttar Pradesh governor. Her post enjoys the status of a minister of state. The resignation comes amid speculations of a rift in the Uttar Pradesh unit of the BIP ahead of the bypolls on 10 seats of the state that are expected to be announced shortly. In a signed letter addressed to the governor, Chisti wrote, "Hurt by the results of BJP candidates in various Lok Sabha constituencies, I take responsibility for the defeat as despite having the status of a minister of state, I have failed to strengthen the BJP among the people."



Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra paying a courtesy visit to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his 5, Kalidas Marg official residence in Lucknow on Friday

Govt sets ambitious goals for horticultural expansion

PNS LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government of Uttar Pradesh has placed a significant emphasis on increasing farmers' income through agricultural diversifica-tion. Horticulture and vegetable farming play the most crucial roles alongside traditional farming in this effort. Due to its nine agro-climatic zones, Uttar Pradesh has ample potential for this diversification.

In a recent meeting of the Rajya Mandi Parishad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath issued directives to establish tissue culture laboratories at the four agricultural and technological universities across Uttar Pradesh. These laboratories aim to ensure highquality planting of horticultural crops, with funding provided by the Mandi Parishad. Additionally, the chief minister emphasised the need to establish a horticulture

college in Rae Bareli. State Minister Dinesh Singh stated that land has already been

identified for the horticulture college in the village of Padhera in Harcharanpur, Rae Bareli. The Agriculture department has transferred this land to the Horticulture department. Funds have also been released for the first phase of work. Along with degree courses, short-term training courses will also be offered. It is noteworthy that due to the continuous efforts of the state government, fruit and vegetable farming is becoming a field of possibilities for the farmers here. This new initiative by the government will further enhance the potential of this region.

According to the 2023 Agroforestry Report, UP's share in fruit and vegetable farming has increased from 7.2 per cent to 9.2 per cent over the past decade. Correspondingly, the Gross Value Output (GVO) from these has risen from Rs 20.6 thousand crore to Rs 38 thousand crore. This growth is significantly attributed to the Yogi government's efforts in promoting agricultural diversification and encouraging farming that meets market demands. Key contributions include producing quality plants in Centres of Excellence and Mini Centres of Excellence and providing them to farmers at minimal rates, promoting controlled farming by regulating temperature and humidity and modernising mandis.

It is well known that the cultivation and processing of fruits and vegetables is a field with vast potential. Recognising these possibilities, the Yogi government has been continuously promoting their cultivation since its first term. About two years ago, after Chief Minister Yogi was elected for the second consecutive time, ambitious goals were set for the next five years to expand the area under cultivation, increase yield and enhance processing. Work is being carried out accordingly. According to the target, by 2027, the area under horticultural crops is to be increased from 11.6 per cent to 16 per cent, and food processing from 6 per cent to 20 per cent. For the processing units required to achieve this, there will be a substantial need for fruits and vegetables as raw materials. In achieving the set targets for horticulture, the most important role is played by high-quality planting material (plants and seeds). To this end, the government will establish Centres of Excellence, Mini Centres of Excellence, or high-tech nurseries in every district within the specified timeframe. Work is already underway in this regard. The government intends to have such infrastructure in place in every district by 2027. Due to the incentives received from the government and these very possibilities, in the past seven years, the area under fruit and vegetable cultivation has increased by more than 1,01,000 hectares and the yield has grown by over 0.7 per cent. To ensure that farmers receive high-quality planting material, Indo-Israel Centres of Excellence for fruits and vegeta-

bles have been established in Basti and Kannauj, respectively. To promote protected cultivation of off-season, high-quality plants and vegetables, efforts are continuously being made to advance protected farming using Indo-Israel technology, which regulates moisture and temperature. Vegetable Scientist, Dr SP Singh

said that in Uttar Pradesh, the most effective way to increase farmers' income is through the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and spices. With nine different agro-climatic zones, it is possible to grow all kinds of fruits, vegetables and flowers in various regions. Small and marginal farmers will play a crucial role in this, as they make up about 90 per cent of the total farmer population. Typically, these farmers engage in the traditional cultivation of crops like rice, wheat and sugarcane. To increase their income as per the government's intent, they need to be encouraged to cultivate fruits, vegetables,

Salempur to be developed as a major industrial area

For accelerating industrial development across Uttar Pradesh, various plans are being fast-tracked by state industrial authorities. A detailed action plan has been set to develop Salempur in Hathras district into a major industrial

The Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) has now begun the transformation process, which will be executed through the appointment of a contractor agency and work allocation. The development will be conducted in two phases using Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) methods, with a total investment of Rs 325.54 crore. The contractor agency is tasked with completing all construction and development work within 18 months.

Following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, the UPSIDA will develop 483 acres of land in Salempur as an industrial area. This area may be expanded further if needed. According to

the master plan, the first phase will involve developing 799,899 square metres and the second phase will cover 328,572 square metres as industrial plotted areas. Additionally, 40,118 square metres will be designated for warehouse areas, 26,579 square metres for commercial areas, and 122,467 square metres for amenities. The development will also include the construction of roads totaling 10.57 kilometres in the first phase and 10.15 kilometres in the second phase. Furthermore, 92,312 square metres in the first phase and 111,335 square metres in the second phase will be developed as landscape areas. The Salempur industrial area will be connected to the Hathras-Mathura road

(Hathras-Sikandara Rao main road). According to the master plan, the development will include road construction, a potable water supply network, a rising main network, bore well development, a recycled water supply network, a domestic sewage collection network, a solid waste treatment plant, and a CETP network for industrial waste collection and transportation.

Shravan Mondays: Lord Shiva to be adorned in different forms

Lord Vishwanath will appear in different shringar (forms) on every Monday during the upcoming auspicious month of Shravan at Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT), one of the Dwadasa Jyotirlingas. There will be five Mondays during Shravan month to be held from July 22 to August 19. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has already given instructions for smooth darshan and security of devotees coming to Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Shravan month. At the same time, the temple administration is busy in making proper arrangements so that devotees do not face any problem in 'darshan'. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust Vishwa Bhushan Mishra said that this year Baba (Lord Shiva) will be adorned in his different forms on all five Mondays of Shravan and the devotees coming to see Baba will be able to see the different forms of Shri Kashi Vishwanath.

On the first Monday on July 22, Lord Shiva (Vishwanath) will



have a shringar of Chal Pratima (decoration of moving idol) while on second Monday on July 29, Lord Shiva will have a shringar of Gauri Shankar (Shankar Parvati); on third Monday on August 5 the Almighty will have a shringar of Ardhanarishwar; on fourth Monday on August 12, there will be shringar of Rudraksha and on the fifth and last

Monday on August 19, Lord Shiva will appear in decoration of Shankar Parvati Ganesh and Shravan Purnima Varshik Jhula (annual swing) Shringar. BHU TEMPLE: All preparations have been completed for

Shravan Mahotsav- 2024 to be celebrated in Shri Vishwanath Temple, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) from July 22 to August 19. During the month there will be separate lines for men and women for 'darshan' in the temple as well as separate lines for university employees and students so that there is no chaos for the visitors. On any Sunday and Monday falling between July 22 to August 19 or on any other day if there is excessive crowd, Rudrabhishek Puja of the yajamans will not be performed in the sanctum sanctorum in Shri Vishwanath Temple, BHU. Under Shravan Mahotsav-2024, along with the arrangement for wheel chairs for the darshan of the disabled people, arrangements have also been made for first aid box, cold water etc. The temple will be open for devotees to visit every day from 4 am to 12 noon and from 1 pm to 9 pm.

Ganga, Yamuna continue to rise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Although the people of Sangam city are desperately waiting for rain for the past several days here, but the water level of Ganga-Yamuna is continuously increasing. After the release of water from Kanpur, the water level of both the rivers is increasing by two cm per hour. In view of the increasing water level, an alert has also been issued by the Prayagraj district administration. People living on the banks of the rivers are also shifting to safer places. Due to the increasing water level of Ganga-Yamuna, the scenario of Sangam nose has also changed. Boatmen have also been warned that they will not go into the water with passengers during strong winds or after 6 pm.

Temporary shopkeepers at Sangam nose, VIP Ghat, Ram Sangam nose, VIP Ghat, Ram Ghat, Daraganj and other ghats have started packing their goods and planks. They are shifting their goods back and are taking shelter in safer places. The flood control team and the water police team are continuously active. In view of the possibility of flood, the administration is already in alert mode. Flood posts are being built. The maximum number of 26 flood posts have



The swollen Ganga at Ram Ghat in Sangam area of Prayagraj.

been built in Sadar tehsil area. Similarly, 13 flood posts have been built in Phulpur, 20 in Karchana, 7 in Soraon, 6 in Handia, 10 in Bara, 13 in Meja and 3 in Koraon. These posts will be activated immediately as soon as the danger of flood increases. The water level is being monitored twice a day by the control room of the irrigation flood section. SUICIDE: Fed up with domes-

tic discord a couple committed suicide after consuming pesticide in Achhola Saraykhurd village under Manda police station area late on Thursday night. When their health deteriorated, the family took them to Ramnagar CHC from where they were referred to the SRN Hospital. On reaching the hospital, the doctor declared them dead. Early in the morning, the family cremated both the bodies at the Ganga ghat. The family is not ready to tell anything

about the incident. Ratnesh Shukla (32) of Achhola village used to support the family by doing farming and running a tractor and flour mill. About 10 years ago, he was married to Ritu (30). On Thursday night the couple, fed up with domestic discord swal-

lowed pesticide. When they vomited and their health deteriorated, the family took them to Ramnagar CHĆ. On seeing their critical condition the doctor referred them to SRN Hospital. On reaching there the doctor declared Ratnesh and Ritu dead. Mother Angura Devi, sister Vandana and brother-in-law are inconsolable. On getting information Ritu's father Amar Nath along with

other family members reached Achhola village. The couple was cremated at the Ganga Ghat. Manda SHO Shailendra Singh said the couple committed suicide after consuming pesticide. However, the family members without informing the police cremated the bodies. Investigation is being done in this connection.

FRAUD: Cyber thugs have now started cheating people in the name of films and web series. Since Prayagraj has been a cultural center, cyber thugs are taking advantage of this and are now cheating people by luring them to get work in films and web series and making them actors. Manish Kumar Singh of

Auraiya Kandwa in Chandauli, is living in Kydganj area. He was cheated in the name of making him a film actor. In the complaint he said that he became friends with Ashish Singh through a social networking site. Ashish used to share photos of actors associated with many films. He used to call himself an actor. During the conversation, he took the mobile number and talked about making a web series. He said if Manish wanted he could get him the role of an actor. In the greed of working in the film, Rs 1.60 lakh was transferred in three installments. After the money was transferred, more money was demanded. When Manish refused, the numbers from which calls were coming started getting disconnected. After this, Manish realised that he was cheated. Manish has registered a case at Kydganj police station on the basis of mobile number and chatting. Kydganj inspector Sanjay Kumar Singh said that the man transferred money to fraudster in the greed of becoming a hero. The numbers from which calls were made are switched off.

Emphasis on 100 pc vaccination of children, pregnant women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The quarterly review meeting of National Routine Immunisation Programme was organised under the chairmanship of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary at the Training Centre (CMO office) here on Friday. At the meeting the CMO conducted an in-depth review of the quarterly data of the programme, laying emphasis on getting 100 per cent vaccination of children and pregnant women as per the target in urban areas as well as rural 'There should be intensive

monitoring for this. Ensure vaccination of children and pregnant women by motivating families indifferent towards vaccination. Encourage health workers to vaccinate children of dense and slum areas, remote areas, nomadic families", he said, directing all the health centres to ensure 100 per cent vaccination as per the target and said that the regular vaccination programme should be done properly so that furber continuously strengthened.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

"As you move from college to career, you will realise

you never achieve anything

alone", said the CEO (South

East Asia), GroupM Himanshu Shekhar, while delivering a talk

on 'Campus to Corporate' on the third day of the Induction

Programme of the new batch of

MBA/MBA-International

Business students, organised at

the Institute of Management

Studies, Banaras Hindu



CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary addressing health workers on vaccination programme in Varanasi on Friday.

"If negligence is found in this, action will be taken against the officer and health worker concerned", he warned. The CMO directed the nodal officers of all blocks and urban CHCs/ PHCs to regularly visit, monitor and review their blocks.

District Immunisation Officer and ACMO Dr AK said that regular data should be fed on the U-WIN app. The work of data validation should

Thursday. Shedding light on

the importance of teamwork, he

said, "Ît's never my life, it is our

life. It's the teams that win, not

Talking about change, he said

that in future, young people will

have to compete with AI. No

of the marketplace. AI is the

future and familiarising them-

selves with AI is the best thing

aged students to be curious, try

youngsters can do. He encour-

curriculum can match the speed

individuals".

Talk on 'Campus to Corporate'

University (IM-BHU) here on new things themselves and

in data feeding. The sessions being planned on the U-WIN app should be organised 100 per cent every Wednesday and Saturday. Chiraigaon, Harhua, Pindra and Misirpur have performed better in organising 100 per cent sessions as per the target, he said, adding that children om birth to five years are at higher risk of external infection. Therefore, along with the birth dose at birth, all the vaccines should be administered on time at one and a half months, two

accept change. The institution

also conducted a panel discussion on the first half of the day

on 'Career Development:

Setting Goals & Achieving

Success, with faculty members having former directors of the

IM-BHU Prof PS Tripathi, Prof

SK Dubey and Prof Raj Kumar,

Dr Ashutosh Mohan, and Dr

Arun Kumar Deshmukh as panel

members. Dr Abhijeet Biswas

welcomed the panelists and acted

as a moderator for the panel. Prof

and a half months, three and a half months, nine months, 16 to 24 months and five years. Apart from this, DPT vaccine should be administered at 10 and 16 years. He informed that under the reg-

ular vaccination programme, children are vaccinated against 11 diseases which include diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis-B, meningitis, pneumonia, haemophilus influenza type-B infection, diarrhoea, rotavirus and measles-rubella (MR). Pregnant women are administered tetanus- diphtheria (TD) vaccine. In the meeting the officials were sensitised on the microplan of regular vaccination for front line workers. On the occasion DHEIO Harivansh Yadav, Deputy DHEIOs Kalpana Singh and Usha Ojha, ARO Anoop Upadhyay, SMO Dr Chelsea from WHO, Dr Satrupa, Mohsin Jamal, DMC Dr Shahid from UNICEF, VCCM Reena Verma from UNDP, HEO, BPM, BCPM and other health workers were present.

Tripathi talked about happiness

stating that achieving success is a

continuous process and the end result is happiness. While Prof

Dubey suggested students to know themselves before goal-set-

ting break down goals into small-er goals. Prof Raj Kumar high-

lighted the fact that BHU has

been on an upward trajectory

since its inception, he encouraged

students to explore various

departments of the campus,

and work with a forward-

thinking attitude.

Miscreants rob bullion trader

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRAJ

Abullion trader was robbed of a bag containing cash and gold and silver ornaments worth Rs 12 lakh at gunpoint by miscreants near Sahason police outpost. When a youth riding a scooty chased them, the miscreants opened fire and fled towards Phulpur.

Ankit who lives near Sahason police outpost under Sarai Inayat police station area, has opened a jewellery shop in the market. On Thursday night he was returning home after closing the shop. As soon as he turned towards Sahason intersection near Ram Janaki temple, a car blocked the way. Three motorcycle borne miscreants looted a bag containing jewellery and cash from Ankit Kesarwani.

The victim told the police that items worth about Rs 12 lakh. including jewellery and cash, were in the bag. When Divyanshu, who was riding a scooty and also a resident of Sahason market, who was folowing them, chased the mis creants, they fired and fled towards Phulpur. On getting information, ACP Tharwai, Sahason police post incharge and other police officers reached the spot. Sarai Inayat Inspectorin-charge Pankaj Kumar Rai said the incident was investigated with the help of CCTV footage from nearby shops. A report of this case was registered on the basis of the complaint given by victim a search for miscreant had been launched.

Meanwhile a 26 year-old youth was killed when the motorcycle on which he was riding was hit by an unidentified vehicle in Baraut Bazaar under Handia police station area late on Thursday night. After the incident, the police sent him to the community health centre where the doctors declared him dead.



Two trucks collided and caught fire at Rath (Hamirpur) intersection late on Thursday night

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

wo truck drivers were burnt l alive while two cleaners seriously injured when their vehicles collided with each other near Rath trisection on the Kanpur-Sagar highway in Hamirpur late on Thursday night. The incident took place around 12.30 am. After the collision, both the trucks caught fire burning their drivers alive. Two seriously burns cleaners were admitted to a hospital. On getting information the fire brought the fire under control. There was massive jam on both sides of the highway till Friday morning. The identity of the deceased drivers could not be ascertained. Circle Officer (CO) Rajesh Kamal and traffic police were present on the spot. The traffic movement could be restored on Friday morning. Meanwhile in Auraiya an elder-

brigade rushed to the spot and

ly man was battered to death by some disgruntled element in Roshanpur village under Phaphund police station area of the district late on Thursday night. He was identified as Ram Sewak (65). In a bid to rescue the elderly man, the assailants also beat up his sis-ter-in-law Pushpa. On getting information the police rushed to the spot and took the injured man to the Chichauli hospital where the doctors declared him dead. The sons of the deceased were also informed who arrived in the village from Police sent the body for an autopsy. According to police, Ram Sewak had asked the neighbour to bring some goods for him from the market. When the latter failed to deliver the required goods, the former lodged a complaint at his place. Thereafter, on returning his home his neighbour along with accomplices attacked him with a stick due to which he died. ELECTROCUTED: An adolescent boy was electrocuted while closing the door of his house in Durauli village under Reuna police station area late on Thursday evening. He was identified as Lalit Kumar Savita (16), son of late Vipin Kumar Savita. The Reuna police carried out a probe and sent the body for an autopsy. When he was closing the door, he came in contact with the electric current and succumbed to his burns on the spot. The SO said on the basis of complaint, further action will be initiated in

Gurugram on Friday morning.

Rajbhasha meeting held in BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

The half-yearly meeting of the Nagar Rajbhasha Implementation Committee was organised by Rajbhasha department of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) on Friday. Addressing the meeting, Chairman of the committee and General Manager (GM) of and General Manager (GM) of BLW Abhay Bakre said that Hindi is a very simple and effective language. "It is the lan-guage of the common people. We are all public servants and are here only to serve the public, so we can provide satisfac-

He said that original thinking and writing in the technical field is necessary for the creation of a developed India and

GM said

tion to the public only by working in their language", the



General Manager Abhay Bakre releasing e-magazine of Rajbhasha committee at BLW in Varanasi

this is possible only in Hindi. He urged all the offices to write the technical knowledge of their respective fields in Hindi and send it to the magazine 'Banaras Darpan' of the committee.

In the meeting, the e-magazine 'Banaras Darpan' was launched. Earlier, Chief Rajbhasha Officer, Banaras Locomotive Works and vice-president of the committee Trilok Kothari

welcomed all the representatives and apprised them of the creative efforts. While conducting the meeting, member secretary of the committee and Senior Rajbhasha Officer of BLW Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh apprised the committee of the progress of all items of the annual programme issued by the Government of India. On the occasion Divisional Railway Manager (DRM),

(Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway) Vineet Kumar Srivastava, representative of Central Secretariat Hindi Parishad Suresh Kumar Srivastava, as well as the heads of departments / representatives of the offices of central government, public sector undertakings, and autonomous organisations also expressed their views.

Samne Ghat to be ready before Dev Deepawali

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

One more ghat is going to be added to the series of internationally famous 85-odd Ganga ghats in this holy city. Under the guidance of Bharatiya Janata Party-led central and state governments, a new concrete ghat is being redeveloped at Samne Ghat in the southern part of the city near river bridge connecting Samne Ghat to Ramnagar. Across the river, Lal Bahadur Shastri Ghat in Ramnagar has also been developed. In the recent time, Khirkhia Ghat near Rajghat bridge in the northern part of the city, has been redeveloped as a big tourist/picnic site as Namo Ghat with the initiative of local MP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a grand manner and its second phase has also been completed up to Adikeshav Ghat. Besides, Nagwa and Assi ghats were also given grand shape apart from development of Ganga Dwar, river side of Shri Kashi

Department Rajendra Rawat said that this ghat is being rede-veloped at a cost of Rs 1055.43



Samne Ghat being redeveloped in

Vishwanath Dham at Lalita

At Samne Ghat, special attention is being paid to the architecture like the other historical ghats of Kashi apart from additions of modern amenities in the construction of the ghat. Special attention has also been given to the amenities of tourists on this modern ghat being built, so that along with religious activities, tourists can get all the facilities there. The semicircular ghat of Kashi on the banks of Uttar Vahini Maa Ganga has always attracted the whole world.

Deputy Director of Tourism

lakh. The length of this ghat is 110 metres. Most of the work on the ghat has been completed, such as platform for aarti and puja, Chunar stone umbrellas, changing rooms, high mast lights, street lights, signage, drinking water, pathways, parking, stone pitching, ramp for the disabled and the elderly, beautification of horticulture etc. The working agency has been instructed to complete the remaining work before forthcoming festival of Dev Deepawali. Keeping in mind the antiquity, Chunar stones are being used in the reconstruction of the ghats of Kashi. Rawat said the local people will get a lot of convenience in celebrating religious events like Chhath and Dev Deepawali etc on this concrete ghat being built at Samne Ghat. Religious tourism will increase due to the redevelopment of this kutcha ghat a little away from the series of ghats of religious and historical importance of Kashi. There is also a plan to organise water sports activities here.

Tree plantation programme organised at CHBS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

A tree plantation programme Cadet One Tree Campaign' in the premises of Central Hindu Boys School (CHBS), a school run by Banaras Hindu University (BHU), here on Friday. The campaign was carried out by the cadets of Army and Air NCC.

On the occasion, Principal of the school Dr Swati Agarwal, Rajiv Kumar, Mahesh Chandra Jaiswal, Soni Kumari, NCC Officer Captain Dr Sanjay Keshari, Second Officer Rajesh Kumar Verma, Third Officer Dr Ajay Kumar Singh, Caretaker Shailesh Kumar Patel, Naib Subedar Kaushal Kumar and Naib Subedar Ram Lakhan Singh cooperated in the tree plantation.

On the occasion students and teachers of the school were also present.

KDA organises plantation drive

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) organised tree plantation drive in the presence of its Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Garbyal, MLA Surendra Maithani and about 200 students of different schools at the Mama Talab campus here on Friday. The drive was carried out as part of the target to plant 36.50 crore saplings given by the state government. The speakers apprised the children of the importance of planting trees and principles of continuous development. Students were inspired to plant trees near their houses also. Highlighting the development of historical Mama Talab, it was informed that there was a need to conserve different reservoirs and small parks for all-round development of the city.

It may be recalled that the development of Mama Talab project is being carried out by the KDA with an investment of Rs.13.65 crore which includes protection of the pond, construction of walking track for general masses, swings for children, open gym etc. Secretary



KDA Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Garbyal along with MLA Surendra Maithani taking part in the tree plantation programme at Mama Talab on Friday.

Shatrohan Vaishya, chief engineer Ajay Pawar and other officers of KDA were present on the occasion.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRO-**TECTION:** A tree plantation programme was organised by the National Service Scheme Unit and Environment Committee of Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar, on Friday in which the faculty members and students planted "one tree in the name of mother" and also took the responsibility of taking care of it. NSS Programme Officer Dr

Saba Yunus said that according

to the direction of the Government of India, "Maa Vatika" has been created in the college and these saplings have been planted in it. The aim of the programme is to make the earth green and give the message of environmental protec-

Convener of the Environment Committee, Dr Rashmi Singh said, "to keep our environment clean, we must plant trees and conserve them". Dr Mamta Gangwar, Dr Rashmi Singh, Dr Preeti Dwivedi, Dr Archana Mishra and others were present in the programme.

Thieves target two houses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Tewellery, cash and other valuables worth lakhs of rupees were stolen from two houses burgled in Juria village under Mangalpur police station area of Kanpur Dehat on Thursday night. On getting information police carried out a probe and launched raids to nail the suspects. Farmer Rupram Mishra of Juria village was sleeping with family on Thursday night. The miscreants broke into his house late at night and stole Rs18,000 cash and jewellery worth lakhs of rupees from the box and almirah.

Thereafter, they broke into the house of Subhash Rathaur in the village by crossing the backside wall and stole jewellery, Rs 50,000 cash, two gas cylinders and other valuables from there. With the incident coming to light on Friday morning, panic prevailed among the family members. Police rushed to the spot and quizzed the victims. Police also carried out investigation. Outpost incharge Anuj Awasthi said raids are on to nail the mis-



BRS tops income chart among regional parties, says ADR

 $T^{
m he\ Bharat\ Rashtra\ Samithi}_{
m has\ topped\ the\ income}$ chart among regional parties for the financial year 2022-23 with Rs 737.67 crore, 42.38 per cent of the total, according to poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms(ADR).

The top five parties with the highest expenditure are All India Trinamool Congress which spent Rs 181.18 crore or 37.66 per cent, followed by YSR-Congress which spent Rs 79.32 crore or 16.49 per cent, BRS, which spent Rs 57.47 crore or 11.94 per cent, DMK, which spent Rs 52.62 crore or 10.94 per cent, and the Samajwadi Party, which spent Rs 31.41 crore or 6.53 per cent of the total expenditure, ADR said.

In a revealing analysis of the financial health of India's regional political parties, the ADR has disclosed detailed income and expenditure reports for 39 out of 57 regional parties for the fiscal year 2022-23.

After BRS, the TMS had the highest income of Rs 333.45 crore or 19.16 per cent, while the Dravida Munnetra



Kazhagam (DMK) reported an income of Rs 214.35 crore or 12.32 per cent of the total income of the 39 regional parties analysed in the ADR report.Collectively, the top five parties accounted for Rs 1,541.32 crore, or 88.56 per cent of the total income of the parties analysed while the total declared income of the 39 regional parties stood at Rs 1,740.48 crore, according to the analysis.

The ECÍ had set October 31, 2023, as the deadline for submission of annual audited accounts of political parties, however, only 16 of them

unimaginable few years back, is

a reality, he said, adding, impact

on the defence forces, on the

warfighting, has made it clear

that 'we need to be agile and

Russia-Ukraine conflict, the

multi-domain battlespace. It is

a 'classic example of what is

likely to face in our future con-

flicts, the Vice Chief of the Air

'This conflict has also demon-

strated the integration of mul-

tiple forces in domains of air,

land, sea, cyber, information,

space and how they are united

am sure everyone present

here, including my friends from

other services will agree that the

air domain has clearly emerged

as a singular trans-domain link

and strong force across

domains, a strong method for

cross-domain application of

force. It is not just an enabler,

it has become a force multipli-

The VCAS also referred to the

Israel-Hamas war to underline

the importance of air domain.

Even in the urban warfare con-

struct that is seen in Israel-

Hamas war, the air domain has

been used extensively, whether

it is utilising those fighter air-

craft with precision weapons or

the formidable Iron Dome (air

defence) system or utilising

those low-cost rockets and loi-

ter munitions by Hamas in

challenging that very formida-

ble and very costly system itself,

oing on today and what we are

about the

that has been alluded

Staff (VCAS) said.

to achieve the goal.

er, he asserted.

adhered to the time limit. Twenty-three parties submitted their reports late, with delays ranging from three to 150 days.

The audit reports for 18 regional parties, including prominent ones like Shiv Sena SHS), Bodoland People's Front (BPF), Jammu & Kashmir National Conference, Nationalist Congress Party, and Shiv Sena (UBT), were not available on the ECI website at the time of the report's preparation, the ADR said. A total of 19 regional parties declared unspent income for the fiscal

unspent income of Rs 680.20 crore, followed by Biju Janata Dal with Rs 171.06 crore and DMK with Rs 161.72 crore. Conversely, 20 parties reported expenditures exceeding their income, with Janta Dal (Secular) spending 490.43 per cent more than its income. Voluntary contributions including donations and elec-toral bonds, were the primary sources of income for the parties, amounting to Rs 1,522.46 crore or 87.47 per cent of the total income.Of this, Rs 1,285.83 crore came from electoral bonds. Only eight regional parties declared receiving donations through electoral bonds.

ADR's report recommended that the ECI enforce stricter deadlines and penalise parties for late or non-submission of audit reports. A full disclosure of donor details under the Right to Information Act is also urged to ensure transparency in political funding. The report calls for rigorous enforcement of laws like Section 13A of the Income Tax Act and Section 29 (C) of the Representation of People Act, which mandate financial disclosure by political parties.

Jaishankar holds phone talks with his Ukrainian counterpart

PNS NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday held a phone conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba less than two weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Moscow.

the conversation was to further develop the bilateral relationship. 'A good conversation with FM @DmytroKuleba of Ukraine this afternoon. Spoke about further developing our bilateral relationship,' he said in a social media post.

Jaishankar said the focus of

The phone conversation between the two Foreign Ministers came against the backdrop of Ukrainian Volodymyr



Zelenskyy's criticism of Modi's visit to Moscow .On July 9, the Ukrainian president described Modi's visit to Moscow as a 'huge' disappointment and a

efforts.

In a social media post, Zelenskyy specifically referred to Russia's missile attacks on Ukraine, including on a chil-'devastating blow' to peace dren's hospital in Kyiv.

'A Russian missile struck the largest children's hospital in Ukraine, targeting young cancer patients. Many were buried under the rubble, Zelenskyy had said.

'It is a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow on such a day, he said. Modi vis-ited Moscow on July 8 and 9 in his first trip to Russia since its invasion of Ukraine.

In his summit talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Modi delivering an unambiguous message said a solution to the Ukraine conflict is not possible on the battlefield and peace talks do not succeed amidst bombs, guns and bullets.

India calls protests in Bangladesh as its internal matter

PNS NEW DELHI

Tndia on Friday described the violent protests in Bangladesh as an 'internal' matter of that country. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said around 15,000 Indians including 8,000 students are currently residing in Bangladesh and they

As you are aware, there are ongoing protests in Bangladesh. We see this as an internal matter of the country,' he said. We have issued an advisory for Indian nationals, including our students, resident in Bangladesh for their safety and assistance if required.

Helpline numbers are activated operating on 24x7 basis for people to reach

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is himself following the matter closely, Jaiswal said. 'Our High Commission will be providing regular updates.

I will also be posting regular updates. I would urge family members to follow us for latest developments,' he said. We remain committed to providing all possible assistance to our nationals in Bangladesh,' Jaiswal said.



Make sure weapons developed, made in India: AP Singh

PNS NEW DELHI

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict has demonstrated the integration of multiple forces in domains of air, land, flexible in our thoughts as well sea, cyber, information and as actions. The ongoing conflicts how they are 'united' to achieve the goal, Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal AP Singh, on Friday

In his address at a CAPS seminar here, he also said 'Atmanirbharata' is 'not just a buzzword, it is something that all stakeholders need to put their heart and soul into, and make sure technologies and weapons are developed and manufactured in India, 'so that we are not relying on an outside agency who could change its alliance or stop flow of weapons to our country' when the time comes. During the seminar exhibition on air and missile defence hosted by the thinktank at Subroto Park here, many speakers also spoke about various lessons from ongoing

conflicts in the world. 'One thing is certain, if we need to do something, we need to stay... In the game, we need to modernise, we need to continue to grow, continue to innovate and we need to continue being ahead of the curve. Otherwise, we lag behind and we are just chasing, Air Marshal Singh said. Technological advancements, the rapid pace that is being seen in people's normal life, has also 'infused themselves into our weaponry, defence

Today, what was unthinkable or he said.

Viksit Bharat to be theme of 78th I-Day celebrations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The theme for 78th Independence Day celebrations is 'Viksit Bharat', in sync with the Government's vision to transform the country into a developed nation by 2047.

Ministry of Defence spokesperson A. Bharat Bhushan Babu made the announcement in a social media post in which he also shared a poster depicting the Red Fort and the 'Viksit Bharat' slogan. In 2047, India will mark 100th year of its freedom from colonial rule. theme for

#IndependenceDay 2024 is harat' in Govt's vision to transform country into a Developed Nation by 2047, marking the 100th year of Independence. @giridhararamane,' the spokesperson said.

SC refuses to entertain remission plea of 2 convicts in Bilkis case PTI ■ NEW DELHI $T_{ m Friday}^{ m he\ Supreme\ Court\ on}$ a plea of two of the 11 convicts

in the Bilkis Bano case challenging the January 8 verdict cancelling their remission. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar termed the plea as 'absolutely misconceived' and said how can it sit in appeal over an order passed by another bench of the apex court.

'What is this plea? How is this plea maintainable? This is absolutely misconceived. How can an Article 32 petition be filed? We can't sit in appeal over an order passed by another bench, the bench said. Advocate Rishi Malhotra appearing for convicts Radheyshaym Bhagwandas Shah and Rajubhai Babulal Soni sought permission to withdraw the plea.

sel to withdraw the plea. Shah has also applied for interim bail. In March, both the convicts moved the top court contending that its January 8 verdict cancelling remission

of their sentence was 'in teeth of' a 2002 constitution bench order and sought the issue to be referred to a larger bench

for 'final' adjudication. Shah and Soni, both lodged in Godhra sub-jail after the apex court verdict, said an 'anomalous' situation has arisen wherein two different coordinate benches (benches of the same strength) have taken diametrically opposite views on the same issue of premature release as well as on which policy of the state government would apply to the The plea, filed through

petitioners for remission. Malhotra, said while one bench on May 13, 2022, categorically ordered the Gujarat government to consider Shah's application for premature release in terms of the state government's remission policy of July 9, 1992, the bench that pronounced the verdict ed that it was Maharashtra and not the Gujarat government that was competent to grant

'That with greatest respect the judgment rendered on

remission.



January 8, 2024, is directly in teeth of the constitution bench decision in Rupa Ashok Hurra's case of 2002 and the same needs to be set aside, as if the same is permitted then it would lead to not only judicial impropriety but to uncertainty and chaos as to which precedence (sic) of law has to be applied in future?

In other words, if any party being not satisfied with the Supreme Court judgment on e entitled an issue he woul to file a writ petition challenging the said judgment by taking recourse to the law laid down in Bilkis Bano case,' the plea said.

Ît said a fundamental issue

arises for consideration as to whether a subsequent coordinate bench can set aside its judgment rendered by its earlier co-ordinate bench and contradictory orders/judgments overruling its earlier view or the proper course would have been to

refer the matter to a larger

bench in case it felt that the

earlier judgment was passed

in wrong appreciation of law

The plea sought a direction to the Centre to consider the case of the petitioners for premature release and clarify which judgment of its coordinate benches of May 13, 2022, or January 8, 2024,

would apply to them. It said since two benches of the apex court of the same strength have passed conflicting orders, the matter should be referred to a larger bench for final adjudica-

On January 8, in a massive munal riots that broke out setback to the Gujarat government, the top court quashed the remission it had granted to 11 convicts in the high-profile gang-rape case of

Bilkis Bano and the killing of her seven family members while slamming the state for being 'complicit' with the accused and abusing its discretion.

It ordered all the convicts, who were released prematurely on Independence Day in 2022, back to jail within two weeks. Critcising the Gujarat government, the apex court said it 'usurped' the power of the Maharashtra government to grant remission to the convicts. It held as nullity the May 13, 2022, judgment of another bench of the apex court, which had directed the Gujarat government to consider the remission applications of the 11 convicts in the case, saying it was obtained by 'playing fraud on the court'.

Bilkis Bano was 21 years old and five months pregnant when she was raped while fleeing the horror of after the Godhra train burn ing incident in February 2002. Her three-year-old daughter was among the seven family members killed.

76 Saudi Naval personnel complete training in India

PNS NEW DELHI

eventy six trainees from King Fahd Naval Academy of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) completed their Afloat Training Course at First Training Squadron (1TS) of the Indian Navy on Thursday, navy said here on Friday. Giving details here, officials

well as a sea phase. The harbour phase focussed largely on simulator-based training on navigational, fire-fighting and damage control

said the three weeks training at

Kochi comprised harbour as

During the sea phase, the trainees were introduced to nuances of life at sea providing first-hand experience on ship handling, communication procedures and seamanship evo-

Besides this, the trainees were introduced to sail training at



Watermanship Training Centre and onboard INS Tarangini. Participation of RSNF trainees alongside Indian Naval trainees of 107 Integrated Officers Training Course (IOTC) has immensely contributed towards enhanced bon homie and friendship amongst the trainees of both maritime nations

The training program also facilitated cultural exchange and engagements through organised visits to historical and local places of interest and friendly sports fixtures with Indian trainees.

In an event marking culmination of the training, Rear Admiral Upal Kundu, Chief of Staff, Southern Naval Command, interacted with the trainees and Directing Staff of RSNF.During interaction, the trainees shared their sea experiences and the directing staff expressed their appreciation on the high quality training imparted. During the valedictory function onboard INS Tir course completion certificates and alumni badges were presented to the trainees.

A course memoir highlighting the journey of the trainees was also unveiled during the occa-

3The conduct of two successive training courses (2023 and this year) with enhanced participation bears testimony to growing maritime partnership between the two Navies.



Vinay Kwatra named India's **Ambassador** to US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

 $F^{\rm ormer\ Foreign\ Secretary}_{\rm Vinay\ Kwatra\ was\ on\ Friday}$ appointed as India's ambassador to the United States. 'He is expected to take up the assignment shortly,' the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. The post of India's envoy to the US has been lying vacant since Taranjit Sandhu retired January.Kwatra served as the foreign secretary from May 1, 2022, to July 14, 2024.

He joined the Indian Foreign Service(IFS)in 1988 and served in India's Permanent Mission in Geneva in the initial years of his service.

Between 1993 and 2003, he served as a desk officer at the external affairs ministry's headquarters in Delhi dealing with the United Nations, and subsequently in the diplomatic missions in South Africa and Uzbekistan.

From 2003 to 2006, he served as the counsellor and later as the deputy chief of mission at the Indian embassy in Beijing.



Pradesh Government challenging the Allahabad High Court's verdict acquitting Surendra Koli in the sensational 2006 Nithari serial killings case. A bench of Justices B R Gavai, K V Viswanathan, and N Kotiswar Singh issued a notice and sought a response from Koli on the petitions and tagged them with similar pleas which are already pending before the apex court. Notice. Tag, the bench said. The top court on July 8 sought

a response from Koli on separate pleas filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against the high court's October 16 last year verdict. The apex court in May agreed to hear a plea filed by the father of one of the victims challenging the high court's order acquitting Koli in the case. In this case, Moninder Singh Pandher was acquitted by the sessions court while Koli was awarded the death penalty

on September 28, 2010. The high court had acquitted domestic help Koli and his employer Pandher in the Nithari serial killings case in which they were facing a death sentence, holding that the prosecution failed to prove the guilt 'beyond reasonable doubt' and that the investigation was 'botched up'. Reversing the death sentence given to Koli in 12 cases and Pandher in two cases, the high



court had noted that the prosecution had failed to prove the guilt of both the accused beyond reasonable doubt, on the settled parameters of a case based on circumstantial evidence' and the probe was 'nothing short of a betrayal of public trust by responsible agencies'. Pandher and Koli were charged with rape and murder and sentenced to death in the killings that horrified the nation with their details of sexual assault, brutal murder and hints of possible cannibalism. The high court had allowed

multiple appeals filed by Koli and Pandher, who had challenged the death sentence awarded by a Central Bureau of Investigation court in Ghaziabad. Further digging and searches of drains in the area around the house led to more skeletal remains. Most of these remains were those of poor children and young women who had gone missing from the area. Within 10 days, the CBI had taken over the case and its search resulted in the recovery

Budget unlikely to address people's concerns: Congress

PNS NEW DELHI

Days ahead of the presentation of the Union Budget, the Congress on Friday alleged that it would be aimed at making a few crony capitalists richer rather than addressing concerns such as unemployment, rising inequalities and drying up' of FDI. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget on July 23.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate also alleged that this government has nothing to do with common people, farmers, youth, women and middle class,

and claimed that the upcoming budget, like in the past years of the Modi government, is being prepared to build more monopolies in various sectors.

In the wake of the recent train accidents, she also asked what is being done to make the railways safer and will Finance Minister Sitharaman allocate more funds which would in turn be used to protect people. 'On July 23, 2024, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present her seventh budget. Before preparing this budget, she met some industrialists, bankers and farmer organisations and discussed issues with



them but has she met the families who are unable to eat three meals a day? Has she met the women who are struggling with inflation? Has she met the farmers who are struggling to get fair prices for their crops? Has she met the youth who are suffering due to paper leaks? Has she met the real India?' Shrinate asked.

'It is clear that she has not met them. This budget is being prepared to make a few crony capitalists richer, she said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here.

Displaying slides with economic data at the presser, Shrinate said the foreign direct investment (FDI) is drying up and India has traded deficit with nine of the top 10 trading

She claimed that monopolies

them. Shrinate said the crumbling

have been increasing in sectors such as cement, telecom, aviation and tyres, and said this budget will see more monopolies being built. Citing a farmer's suicide,

Shrinate said Finance Minister Sitharaman or Prime Minister Narendra Modi do not know anything about them, hence the budget has not been made for

railings in Gujarat with jobseekers at a hotel and the lakhs of people flocking to Mumbai for aviation jobs exposes the false arguments of this government on unemployment.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Taking on terrorism

PM Modi's decision for full deployment in Jammu is a welcome step aiming to ensure the safety of the citizens

n a decisive move to bolster security and address rising concerns over terrorism, Prime Minister Modi has ordered a comprehensive deployment of security forces in the Jammu region. This strategic decision underscores the government's commitment to ensuring peace and stability in one of India's most sensitive areas. Jammu has been a focal point in the nation's ongoing fight against terrorism. The region has experienced a series of violent incidents in recent years, prompting heightened vigilance and response from the security forces. The Prime Minister's recent directive comes amid increasing reports of terrorist activities and attempts to disrupt the region's stability. Recently four army personnel were killed in Doda calling for immediate measures to bring such incidents to a halt. The full deployment will see an increase in the number of troops and resources allocated to the Jammu region. The operation will involve not only the deployment of



additional army personnel but also enhanced coordination between various security agencies. This includes intelligence agencies, paramilitary forces, and local law enforcement.

The deployment strategy will concentrate on several key areas. Firstly, there will be an emphasis on enhanced surveillance and intelligence gathering to preempt and disrupt terrorist activities before they occur. Secondly, security forces will establish increased patrolling in vulnerable areas to deter potential threats and provide reassurance to the local population. Lastly, efforts will be made to engage with local communities to gather vital infor-

mation and build trust, which is essential for effective counter-terrorism operations. No wonder, Prime Minister Modi's decision has got support from various quarters, including political leaders, security experts, and the general public. The government has emphasised that this move is part of a broader strategy to address the challenges posed by terrorism and ensure the safety of the citizens in Jammu. In a statement, PM Modi highlighted the importance of maintaining vigilance and resilience in the face of such threats. He reassured the public that the government's primary objective is to safeguard lives and maintain peace in the region. The full deployment in Jammu represents a significant step in India's ongoing efforts to combat terrorism. It is expected that the increased presence of security forces and improved coordination will help in curbing terrorist activities and restoring normalcy in the region. As the situation evolves, the Government's commitment to a robust security framework will be closely watched. The deployment's effectiveness will depend on the successful execution of the strategies outlined and the ability to adapt to emerging challenges. But it would be a clear signal to the terrorists that India will not tolerate any mischief in its territory.



Devotees perform rituals at Amman temple during the Tamil month of 'Aadi', in Chennai

Modi 3.0: Banking sector optimistic about reforms

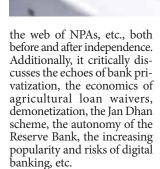


Over the years, Indian banks have grappled with scams, loan defaults, and rising NPAs. Recent Govt initiatives have led to significant recovery and a notable reduction in NPAs

he re-election of the Narendra Modi government at the centre has raised hopes for concrete steps to be taken towards making the banking sector more transparent and efficient. In recent years, Indian banks have faced more ups and downs than perhaps any other country's banks. Indian banks have been plagued by numerous scams, loan defaults, frauds, increasing non-performing assets (NPAs), and wrong policies of loan waivers, leading to their sinking or facing huge losses. While previous central governments took some steps to address these issues, their half-hearted implementation did not yield the desired results. Fortunately, the Modi government took swift action to address the irregularities in the banking sector, leading to a gradual improvement in the banks' condition.

Many banks are not only recovering from losses and moving towards profits but also bringing scams under control. Many fraudsters' assets have been seized to recover loans, banks have been recapitalized, and the burden of NPAs has been significantly reduced. Isn't it a positive situation that NPAs, which were 12.47% between 2013 and 2017, have gradually reduced to 3.2% in September 2023, even though the government's recapitalization of banks played a crucial role in this reduction? The question now is whether this current state of improvement in banks will continue in the future or will the adage "The fool returns home" prove true.Indian banks are witnesses to the fact that they have been sinking or suffering huge losses both before and after inde-

This turbulent state compels us to ponder that until the reform process continues for a long time, a permanent solution to the problem is not possible. A recent publication by senior writer Shri Pal Iain, "Bharativa Bankon Ka Badalta Chehra" (The Changing Face of Indian Banks), analyzes these various aspects in detail. It provides a detailed account of scams, mega-fraudsters, fraudulent tricks, cybercrime in banking, the rise and fall of Yes Bank,



After independence, both private and public banks existed in the country, but numerous scams and failures occurred within them. Nonetheless, public banks remained a key driver of economic growth and business expansion. Private banks generally did not even open accounts for ordinary people. The nationalization of banks in July 1969 led to increased access to banks for the general public. During this period, many banks merged, which led to some positive outcomes. However, gradually, corruption, bribery, and political interference in public banks led to the issuance of huge loans to genuine and fake companies, many of which went unrecoverable or partially recoverable. This resulted in massive losses for both public and private banks

In the early 1990s, liberalization policies were adopted, and shortly after, private banks like HDFC, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, etc., became popular due to their use of modern technology (credit operations, debit



THE MODI

GOVERNMENT HAS TURNED PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OPPORTUNITIES, IN WHICH THE KEY CONTRIBUTION OF

THE RESERVE BANK'S **SUPERVISION** CAN BE SEEN

operations, fast clearing of checks, insurance, mutual fund opening, etc.). The new products, schemes, and modern technology of private banks posed stiff competition to public banks. This forced public and other private banks to adopt new products, schemes, and modern technology. As a result, some improvement in the condition of public and private banks was recorded, but the wave of liberalization also saw a continuation of scams, bribery, corruption,

and political interference. Events like the Harshad Mehta, and Ketan Parekh scams, and the sinking of banks like Global Trust occurred during this period. In the first term of the Modi government, a major crisis arose due to scams in PNB Bank, PMC Bank and other cooperative banks, Yes Bank, and the flight of megafraudsters to foreign countries. The burden of NPAs of banks reached record levels. In this context, the commendable initiative of merging smaller banks with large public banks to reduce their number was taken. Meanwhile, India's trade The Reserve Bank's supervision was made more robust. Demonetization, the Jan Dhan scheme, housing schemes, and significant boosts were given to Atmanirbhar Bharat, manufacturing, and other sectors. In the meantime, the COVID-

19 pandemic struck, giving a severe blow to the economy. However, within a few months, the Modi government made concrete efforts to regain control over the economic front. During the pandemic, transactions via digital banking increased significantly, breaking all records worldwide.

UPI is making its mark not

only in India but also abroad. Despite this, the health of banks cannot be considered worry-free. Sporadic bank scams are still occurring, digital banking frauds are on the rise, and the network of cyber criminals in banking is constantly expanding. This is causing serious damage not only to banks but also to account holders. A foolproof control over this issue has not yet been established. Shri Pal Jain correctly stated in the conclusion of his book, "Currently, most banks are moving towards profits. The Modi government has turned problems and challenges into opportunities, in which the key contribution of the Reserve Bank's supervision can be seen." However, until corrupcontinued to grow rapidly, tion, lending based on fake maintaining liquidity in banks. documents, and infiltration of cybercriminals into banking are stopped, the dream of bank strengthening and foolproof security will remain half-fulfilled.

(The writer is a senior journalist and author of two books; views are personal)

Finding focus in an age of information overload



The relentless influx of information highlights the futility of hoarding content and the ill effect it has on our intellect and well-being

n my weekly routine of phone and computer upkeep, there is a ritual that I detest - clearing my inbox. My mailbox is inundated with dozens of notifications and newsletters from sites that I have subscribed to. I don't understand the logic of getting so many letters delivered to me when I don't find time to open more than half of

Yet I desist from unsubscribing to them because all the emails carry loads of matter and meaning, gallons of insight and information, and heaps of dispensable literature. In my overenthusiasm to stay up to speed with the times, I invite an excess of knowledge which eventually gets junked because my mind and memory are not commensurate with the incoming barrage.

With barrels of scattered information already laid to waste in the brain and fresh bulks languishing in the inbox, I have begun to see the futility of hoarding them. The writer and columnist in me is forever greedy to add fresh knowl-

edge in the hope of widening my horizons, but I am now beginning to burst at the seams with an overload. There is a lot out there to absorb into the intellect, and the attic is smarting, unable to withstand the pressure. All that finds a parking space on the internet is meant to grab attention and impact the reader, and how easily we have fallen prey to the enticements of the information age! We are now in an end-

chewing anything that we see on our screens. Our decision-making is based on external influences rather than on our convictions. Midway through research, we deviate and branch out to something unrelated, and then

less cycle of grazing and

we are all over the place, ferreting about, lost and unsure of what we had wanted in the first place. And oh, how does one deal with the digital amnesia that follows all the bingereading of fluffy, oversimplified material created with comment and development the only intention of grabbing eyeballs and garnering

We don't read anymore; we skim through shorts. nourishment to my mind American journalist and writer Nicholas Carr, in his best-seller, The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains highlights how the internet is changing us superficially.

He writes that browsing through huge quantities of information often results in

shallow processing, pre-

venting us from deeply

understanding subject.It's time to know what I need and what I don't as a professional writer, compassionate human and rational thinker. I need to bring focus and mindfulness into my reading and information-gathering exercises so that I don't bombard my senses

with junk. Why do I need all the facts, figures and findings that exist on the information highway? I must learn to curate and consume stories that strictly contribute to my growth. Trying to catch up with every incident, around the world in the fear and guilt of missing out is

overkill. Not all that I find there is and soul; neither will they enhance my life experience on the whole. If only I can be discreet and prudent enough henceforth, I will perhaps be saved before I become a rubbish dump of useless narratives.

(The author is a columnist and author based in Dubai; views are personal)

YET ANOTHER TRAIN ACCIDENT

Madam — It is shocking and heartbreaking to learn about yet another "heart-attack" train accident in India. This latest incident occurred in Uttar Pradesh on 18 July 2024. This time, the Dibrugarh Express, traveling from Chandigarh to Dibrugarh, derailed near Jhilaahi Railway Station in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh. The derailment of 10 to 12 coaches underscores the severity of this tragic accident. The immediate assistance provided by villagers is a noble and commendable act.

It is high time for the relevant Indian railway experts to convene and brainstorm foolproof solutions to prevent accidents such as train collisions, derailments, fires, rail-track crossings, signaling errors, and trains running late, which jeopardize the safety of passengers and other trains. These measures are crucial to saving lives, properties, and assets. We suggest implementing an additional charge of Re.1 on every train ticket as accident insurance. This small fee could significantly aid commuters from poor and middle-class families in the event of an accident, providing financial support if the family's breadwinner is lost. Additionally, it would contribute to government rev-

We hope the relevant administrators and the army will promptly provide the necessary assistance, including medical care, financial support, hospitality, and alternative arrangements for the stay and expenses of those accompanying the

hospitalized victims. PV Srinivas Sreelekha | JSecundrabad

HIGHER EDUCATION REVAMP

Madam — The government has planned to double higher education intake by 2030. This initiative, however, might do more harm than good given that the Indian organized sector currently lacks the capacity to absorb such a large influx of job seekers. While a less educated person can adapt more easily to employ-

Controversial bill withdrawn

 he criticism from business and industry forced the Karnataka government to put the contentious reservation bill for

ment in the unorganized sector, a graduate often develops a distaste for it, potentially becoming a highly frustrated and alienated individual. A possible solution would be to limit college enrollment and instead open thousands of new polytechnics, where humanities courses are mandatory in every semester.

Without such measures, the frustrations of unemployed youths may lead to severe consequences for both individuals and the nation. To avoid widespread frustration and potential social issues, the government should limit college enrollment and establish more polytechnics with mandatory humanities courses.

Devesh Vijay | Delhi

CPR IS A LIFE SAVER

Madam — CPR – or Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation - is an emergency lifesaving procedure performed when the

heart stops beating. Immediate CPR can double or triple chances of survival after cardiac arrest.

Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories, and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, was cleared by the state cabinet. According to the bill, "any industry, factory, or other establishment shal appoint 50 percent of local candidates in management categories and 70 percent in nonmanagement categories.

"It's baffling that Karnataka, India's tech hub and one of the best-performing states in terms of ease of doing business, has introduced this regressive bill. NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) has cautioned the Congress government that the restrictions could force companies to relocate as local skilled talent becomes scarce. Karnataka would be well advised to quietly abandon the bill.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

No one dies of cardiac arrest if attend-

ed in a timely manner. A video of the incident was shared on social media platform X and quickly went viral, garnering millions of views and countless praises from netizens. The doctor's actions were hailed as a testament to the importance of quick response and lifesaving skills in emergency situations. According to reports, the man collapsed on the floor, prompting the doctor to spring into action and begin administering CPR.

With passersby watching in amazement, the doctor asked others to call for emergency services at the airport. Her efforts paid off, as the man began to show signs of revival. The timely medical assistance is a dear life. This was how Ewan Chatfield, who almost felt dead, was resuscitated after being hit by a cricket ball in New Zealand a long time ago. Everyone must be trained to give CPR. Jayanthy Subramaniam | Mumbai

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FIRST COLUMN

TRANSCENDING DAILY TRIFLES

We can rise above minor disruptions in life by adopting spiritual path



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

avindra Nath Tagore prays for strength to raise his mind high above daily trifles. Why does such an exalted personality do so? Because daily trifles do capture our minds. Aren't we, souls, small, ignorant, helpless and unsafe in absolute terms? The word trifle is defined as something of little value. Trifles are matters that are not very important and those that do not merit a lot of consideration. Still, we are defeated repeatedly by them. Why? Because, as stated earlier, we are small, very small in the overall context, whatever we may feel we are. Sure enough, daily trifles bring us down. We go in cyclic thinking. Our minds drag us to small matters.

What is the solution? The first step is to accept that this happens and is very common. What we consider important may appear insignificant to others, but they are very important to us. Then, as our role model did we must pray for help. It makes a lot of sense for us as small entities. And help is available. We are not helpless in absolute terms; God is there to help. But we have to take His shelter; God will not force Himself on us. Why? Because that will be a violation of our free will. Then, we must avoid cyclic thinking. Can thinking of the same thing repeatedly provide solutions? Solutions come from other sources, mostly from God, if we step outside ourselves. We must not lose to our minds, which unfortunately, are our worst enemies, as warned by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Geeta, "One should uplift self by self; shouldn't degrade self, because otherwise self will be enemy of self." (6.5) Control over the mind requires practice and detachment. (6.35)These are general instructions.

Let me take up some of the most common daily trifles. Someone is not well in the family. Surely, one would be disturbed. But one must go beyond it. There will be duties like getting medical help. What more can be done? Many of us do pray, but the prayer should be more for guidance than just cure. Why? Because major sicknesses are the results of our impious/sinful past acts. God will not act interfere in it, but God can guide us to deal with it effectively. God does also help if one is a devotee of God. Are we? There is nothing to despair, guidance is a great help. The next matter which keeps the mind occupied is financial trouble. Mostly,



It is a paucity of funds, which hurts. The 'Karamphala Principle' is very clear. We get parents, birthplace, minds, looks, intelligence, wealth and lifespan according to what we deserve based on our 'Karmas' in our past lives. Can anyone explain otherwise about someone getting richer by billions in a short period? If it was hard labour, this was impossible. So we have to accept this reality and try to manage with what we have. Yes, wastage in showing off, etc. can be surely avoided. The third trifle, if we can call it as such, is being in trouble.

We should swear to ourselves not to act foolishly from now onwards. Troubles will still come but they will be less. Here also God can help, but, as pointed out earlier, we must take shelter from God. Then, not only any trouble but God promises to get us out of all troubles. (18.58) But again there is a rider. We must not continue to act in wrong or bad ways. The fourth problem that gets almost all of us is getting attached to results. This is illogical because what can we control? Is God not the sole controller? We have been advised by Lord Krishna to strictly stick to our role, i.e. to act dutifully. (2.47) Because what we will end up with is not just based on what we have done recently, but earlier like last life. I have given just four examples, but the underlying philosophy is to act properly from now onwards and remain in shelter in God. Then, daily trifles will not bother me so much. We will be able to get over them soon. What do I do? I seek guidance and help from God for anything that bothers me. Surely, God has taken charge of my life. Yes, God is micromanag-

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

The critical role of family planning in women's health SUDHA SHARMA

The awareness about contraception can significantly enhance women's health and contribute to better population management in India

orld Population Awareness Fortnight, starting from July 11th, brings attention to the fact that India is the most populous country in the world, having surpassed China last year. According to UN projections, India's population is expected to peak at 1.7 billion in 2064, beyond which it will decline. Out of 4 births each second across the world, one birth occurs in India. It is important to understand what can be done to balance the resources with the requirements of the population in the country. With only 2.4% of the world's land, India supports 17.76% of

the world's population.

Nowhere is a discussion on contraception and mother and child health services more relevant and meaningful than here.Demographers use a parameter called Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which is the number of children a woman has in her lifetime. The TFR, which should be 2.1 for the population to remain steady, has already dipped below 2 in 2022. But keeping it within that range will require constant efforts to increase the awareness of the youth and adolescents towards these matters. Moreover, family planning offers many more benefits beyond the prevention of pregnancies. Uttar Pradesh ranks first among the states in India with a population of 257 million and a TFR of 2.18 (2015-16). It is relevant to mention here that our country was the first to launch an official family planning program way back in 1952. In the decades that have followed, the options have increased and so have the availability and accessibility.

With the basket of contraceptive choices available at all government hospitals free of cost, social marketing of contraceptives, and home delivery of contraceptives by ASHAs in rural areas, accessibility to these methods has improved. This has translated to an increase in the Couple Protection Rate by 13%, which is 67% at present, and a decrease in unmet need for family planning WITH THE BASKET of 3.5%, which now stands at 9.4%. The country has made substantial progress in the delivery of family planning services across the country. The reach of family planning services has extended from target couples to eligible couples to all women and adolescent girls and should extend to all men of reproductive age.

Their share in decision-making and supporting women in using these methods makes it imperative for them to have this information as well. They can make an important contribution. If the present discussion gives a message that each couple should be forced to use a contraceptive to limit family size to stabilize the population, that is not true.

Family planning methods should help to fulfil the unmet needs of 9.5% of couples and help many others plan pregnancy at a proper time. According to the Guttmacher Institute, India Country Profile, 2022, between 2015-and 2019, there were a total of 485 lakh pregnancies annually in India, of which 44% were unintended. Of these, 2/3rd of these unplanned pregnancies ended in abortion. It is these couples who are in dire need of contraception.

These abortions could have been avoided had they received counselling and proper contraceptive measures at the right time. Contraception is not just a method of preventing unwanted pregnancies. It is a means to provide freedom to couples to exercise their reproductive rights. The freedom to choose when to plan a pregnan-





CONTRACEPTIVE CHOICES GOVERNMENT

HOSPITALS FREE OF COST, SOCIAL MARKETING OF CONTRACEPTIVE, AND HOME **DELIVERY OF**

RURAL AREAS, ACCESSIBILITY TO THESE METHODS HAS IMPROVED

CONTRACEPTIVES

BY ASHAS IN

cy. It essentially allows responsible voluntary decision-making based on correct knowledge, the right attitude, and access to quality services, which together promote the welfare of the family unit and contribute to the social development of the country.Contraception prevents unwanted pregnancies and many more unwanted situations that follow. For married couples, it allows them to time their pregnancies and help

determine the number of children in the family. It also helps in tim-ing the births, particularly the first and last, about the age of the mother, which is particularly important because teenage pregoF important because teenage preg-nancies and pregnancies at a mater-nal age of 35 years or more carry their risks. Each of these aspects is very important for the welfare of all family members. So, family plan-AVAILABLE ning has to emerge from whispers in private quarters to a basic human right and an important aspect of family health and social welfare. Contraceptives are primary prevention for pregnancy and primordial prevention for high-risk

pregnancies. These high-risk pregnancies, if not detected in time and managed properly, can lead to serious complications and even deaths. At the individual level, the morbidity and mortality of the mother and neworn associated with an unplanned pregnancy can be avoided. If all couples had access to family planning services, it would help reduce maternal deaths by 25% and infant deaths by 20%.

Apart from deaths, the diseases associated with HRPs (20-30%) are also prevented. High-risk pregnancies are those pregnancies where the mother/baby has an increased risk of adverse outcomes. This could be due to anaemia, high BP, or high sugar levels during pregnancy. Pregnant women with obesity, twin or breech pregnancy, history of preterm labour, or cesarean section are also HRPs. This is particularly true for teenage

and elderly pregnancies because they have a higher share of morbidity. Moreover, pregnancies beyond the age of 35 have a high risk of congenital anomalies. So, preventing these births improves the quality of the population and reduces the burden on parents in particular and society in general. It also reduces early and late fetal deaths. Women's health also benefitted

from the improvement of nutritional status and the reduction of complications by addressing modifiable risk factors before the next conception, like weight reduction, management of medical illnesses, and allowing a reasonable gap of at least 3 years between two deliveries. Proper use of contraceptive methods would also reduce the need for abortions and thus decrease abortion-related complications like septic abortions and even death.

This issue is most sensitive for unmarried girls who are forced to seek abortion services at unrecognized centres and are unable to seek normal pregnancy care. This also calls for greater awareness about emergency contraceptive pills.Good health of the infant and siblings, proper care, nutrition, and reduced vulnerability to diseases are all seen in families with a limited number of children. Hence, contraceptives play an important role in the overall well-being of the family. Thus, the importance of contraception for the health of women and children is clear and government facilities, NGOs, and private providers are all working to offer and improve family planning

The availability of better clientfriendly methods, from daily pills to once-a-week pills, lactational pills, self-administered threemonthly injections, devices work-

ing for 10 years, along good followup facilities, have made modern women's lives easier. What remains is to connect the dots so that maximum benefits can be reaped from the services. What also needs to be worked upon is the change in attitude of not only the clients but also the caregivers. The clients need to work upon the hesitation in accessing these services and the caregivers need to refrain from underscoring the importance of family planning services. Let us all reflect on our roles as stakeholders in this solvable problem which is so important for our health and progress.In conclusion, the discourse on contraception and maternal health underscores the critical need to prioritize reproductive rights and access to family planning services.

As we bridge the gap between rights and reality, it is imperative to foster an environment where informed choices and comprehensive education empower individuals and cou-

Collaborative efforts among government bodies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and the community are essential to ensure that family planning services are accessible, acceptable, and utilized effectively.

By doing so, we not only enhance maternal and child health but also reduce the risk to women arising from unplanned pregnancies, highrisk pregnancies, and abortionrelated complications which are entirely preventable. So, let us all contribute to the broader socio-economic development of our nation. The journey towards a healthier, more informed society begins with each of us advocating for and embracing the significance of contraception in our collective wellbeing.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine in MLB Medical College Jhansi UP. Views are personal)

How restaurants can save water and promote sustainability

Initiatives like the 'Blue Star Rating' demonstrate how restaurants can conserve water, writes SONIA GROVER and NATHANIEL BHAKUPAR DKHAR

tantalize one's taste buds and enjoy conversations with friends and family, is the picture that comes to mind, yet no one can imagine that these restaurants can also be a place to conserve a huge amount of water and inculcate water conscious behaviour. Water often plays a supporting role, unnoticed yet indispensable. Water is needed for everything from kitchen operations to guest services. The world is increasingly becoming conscious of environmental sustainability, and the restaurant sector is one of the main ones where water conservation practices could result in huge water savings. We are witnesses to the recent water stress situation in Bangalore city, where residents had to face a severe water

restaurant, a place to crisis, and there is almost a Mission LiFE puts an individperpetual shortage of around 500 million litres every day. Limited water sources, a depleting groundwater table, and erratic monsoon patterns have all conspired to bring Bangalore to this crisis. Demand-side water management strategies are needed to salvage the situation and balance the disproportion of water demand and supply

This common urban water stress scenario calls for every demand sector, including the hospitality sector, to shoulder the responsibility of water conservation. Mission Life, launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, called for lifestyle-related changes for environmental conservation.

ual and collective duty on everyone to live a life that is in tune with Earth and does not

As part of this mission, a global call for ideas and papers (GCIP) was launched, and the best 5 entries were awarded to pilot test their ideas. One of the award-winning ideas led by Dr. Sonia Grover focused on - Promoting water conservation in restaurants through the 'Blue Star Rating' system. The team pilot tested this idea in a few restaurants in Delhi that were selected on a random basis in the North Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) areas of Delhi. Restaurants were in different categories, including fine dining, casual dining, and state canteens. The two main

tasks of this project included developing a star rating system to grade and score the restaurants based on the water-saving interventions adopted by the restaurants.

These included both technical and behaviour change-related interventions. This rating framework is called the 'Blue Star Rating'. This was developed because ratings serve as a powerful tool for quantifying and monitoring interventions toward water-saving practices. This includes behaviour change by providing feedback, promoting awareness, fostering healthy competition, incentivizing action, leveraging social influence, and informing policy decisions, all of which ultimately lead to huge water savings and a ripple effect.The second important



task was to visit the restaurants to identify water-saving potential through simple interventions such as low-flow aerators, which facilitate reducing the flow rate of water from faucets. They achieve this by mixing air into the water stream, which maintains the pressure while using less water. This results in decreased water

consumption without compromising the functionality of the faucet. It's one of the

most cost-effective solutions to save water in both commercial and residential settings. For handwashing taps, it was observed that flow rates at some restaurants were as high as 15 litres per minute. By installing these aerators, the flow rates were reduced on average by a range of 30-60%, which is a significant saving. In addition, for some taps, the flow was regulated by adjusting the pressure valves to optimize the flow. Also, visible leakages were fixed to save the water. With just these few interventions, around 5000 litres per day of water were saved in just less than 50 restaurants. Delhi has around 1,00,000 eateries, both organized and unorganized. If all of these restaurants strive

towards water conservation

help us tide over the water stress situation to a significant level. If a Blue Star Rating is placed in the system, restaurants can be encouraged to take more water-saving interventions that are feasible and economically beneficial for them. Together, this sector can elevate water conservation, which also makes business. For restaurants, adopting water-saving practices not only helps to mitigate environmental impact but also reduces operational costs. Water savings easily translate into monetary benefits accrued due to reduced utility bills. Simple yet effective measures like lowflow faucets and repairing leaks promptly are small adjustments that yield signif-

with such simple solutions, the

amount of water saved can

icant savings over time. In addition, sensitizing staff ensures the sustainability of the interventions undertaken. By championing sustainability through various interventions, restaurants can inspire consumers to consider the environmental implications of their choices. Restaurants can also be a platform for learning by engaging diners through information, education, and communication (IEC) collateral to raise awareness about the restaurant's water-saving initiatives, which can foster a sense of community around sustainability.

(Dr Sonia Grover is Senior Consultant and Nathaniel Bhakupar Dkhar is senior research scientist at Mu Gamma Consultants, Gurugram; views are personal)

Evils like child

society: Report

ABHI SINGHAL ■ NEW DELHI

marriage still

prevalent in

Silica sand shortage sends TN industries WB Govt to bring resolution reeling as 1.5 lakh workers lose work

More than one lakh workers and thousands of families in Tamil Nadu have been left clueless and without a source of income as illegal mining of river sand in neighboring Andhra Pradesh have peaked over the last two months, according to CD Meyyappan, Secretary,All India Congress Committee. Meyyappan, himself an entrepreneur, told The Pioneer that more than 300 foundries in Tamil Nadu which directly employ 50,000 workers have been shut down because of the non-availability of silica-rich river-bank sand in Andhra

"Foundries are dependent on silica for their survival but the political developments over the last two months by change

Pradesh.

government in the State has led to this situation. The cartel of illegal sand miners is a law unto themselves and they do not allow even approved contractors to quarry from the river banks," said Meyyappan.

The Congress leader, who is in charge of Andhra Pradesh Congress, has written to N Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister, asking him to resolve the issue at the earliest so that workers in foundries would not lose their monthly income.

"The sudden stoppage of silica sand supply has had a significant impact on the foundry industry in the region leading to the closure of many foundries and putting the livelihood of numerous workers at risk. As a result thousands of families directly and indirectly dependent on the foundry industry are facing severe

Meyyappan says in his letter to Naidu. He has urged the Chief Minister to take immediate steps taking into consideration the gravity of the situation and ensure uninterrupted supply of silica sand to the foundry industries.

"More than 300 MSME units in Tamil Nadu have been shut down because of the silica shortage," sand Meyyappan.

The disruption in silica sand supply has come at a time when there is indiscriminate looting of river bank sand in the ten districts of Telangana which was exposed by The Pioneer. Suresh Reddy, the US returned entrepreneur and a leader of the BJP is waging a relentless battle against the sand mafia in Telangana at the peril of his

asking for urgent help to tide over the financial crisis faced "The illegal mining of sand in

in House against 3 new laws

As a measure to open a new battle front against the BJP --- particularly when the saffron outfit is passing through a leaner phase --the Mamata Banerjee government is planning to bring a resolution in the Bengal Assembly against the three new criminal laws brought into force by the Centre from July 1.

The new laws are Bharatiya Sanhita (BNŚ), Nyay Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (BNSS) Sanhita and Sakshya Bharativa Adhiniyam (BSA) which have replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC),

Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act in that order. According to inside sources the Trinamool Congress Government will not only bring a resolution but also try to find out ways of State-level

"Mamata Banerjee had committee to deliberate on already drawn the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he returned to power requesting him to postpone for the time being the promulgation of the new laws as it is an open secret how the Government muscled its way in the last Lok Sabha and got laws passed by suspending all the opposition MPs... "there was no discussion held before passing them ... this is like an undeclared Emergency our Chief Minister has already gone on record saying ... in any case this arrogant government would not defer their promulgation ... so there is no way but for Bengal to show the way by getting these laws amended as per the State's requirements," said a senior Trinamool MP adding the Chief Minister has asked them to raise the issue "non-

stop in Parliament." has already Baneriee constituted

the three new laws. The Panel comprises State Lokayukta Justice Ashim Roy, State Law Minister Maloy Ghatak, Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya --- also a lawyer by profession, Advocate General Kishore Dutta, State standing council in Supreme Court Sanjay Basu, Bengal Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar and Kolkata Commissioner of Police Goyal. Vineet committee may suggest change of the names of the laws "at the state level" apart from recommending other amendments, the TMC MP said. A State Government notification said, The committee shall have the power to engage academic experts, senior advocates, research assistants and other legal experts for seeking

their views on the subject

⊤he nation mav Celebrating Amrit Kaal, but social evils like child marriage is still prevalent. For Pushpa Lohar, now into her 30s says she wanted to study but forced marriage to a double the age of her when she did not even attained her puberty.Pushpa from Rajasthan and Shakuntala Devi were married off at the The early age of 12 to 13 years. "Mein padhana chahti thi magar mujhe koi padhane nhi deta tha" (I wanted to study but

nobody allowed me to do so). Similar stories of more than 14,000 child marriages could be prevented across 265 districts in 17 states and Union Territories by civil society, according to the report by the India Child Protection (ICP) research team which was released by child rights body matter. It shall also have the power to carry out public the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

The India Child Protection (ICP) on the World Day for International Justice released a research report on Wednesday that highlighted the status and role of legal action and prosecution in ending child marriages in India which cited data from Assam and other parts of the country. The broader objective of the report was to enquire about the government's actions and interventions on child marriages in India. The event was graced by real-life child marriage survivors.

The report has been prepared in consultation with the survivors and big research teams for the eradication of child marriages. The report found that there has been a 71 percent reduction in the instances of child marriage between 2021-2024.

The data, in the report has stated that Assam state has witnessed the complete eradication of child marriage in 30 percent of its villages, while 40 percent have reported a significant decline in the oncerampant practice of child marriage. Also, the report further states, "In 12 out of the 20 districts, over 90 percent of respondents believe that taking legal action such as arresting individuals and filing FIRs in cases related to child marriage can effectively address the

Kargil Vijay Diwas Rajat Jayanti

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the run-up to the Kargil Vijay Diwas Rajat Jayanti celebrations, the security forces have been kept on a state of high alert across Jammu Kashmir to prevent any other 'provocative' strike by Pakistani terrorists aimed at breaching the threshold of the Indian armed forces.

With each provocation, the security situation is turning bleak and the pressure is building up on the Indian government to punish the perpetrators of terrorist violence by carrying out punitive strikes on the active terror factories across the line of control.

The troops have been asked to remain extra cautious during their routine patrolling duties to prevent any fresh infiltration attempt from across the line of control and the International border.

Intelligence agencies have also alerted the security grid in Jammu and Kashmir about the presence of small groups the area. A similar attack was



be pushed inside the Indian boundaries) across different launching pads close to the line of control in the North Kashmir district of Kupwara and the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch, south of Pir Panjal region.

A fresh security audit of the vital installations is being done to plug the gaps in the

peripheral security.
In recent days Pakistani terrorists have attempted to target security posts in the border areas of Rajouri and Poonch. However, the attacks were repulsed due to swift action by the sentry on duty forcing these terrorists to flee

contract term till 31 December 2049. Baku-Tbilisi

Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline carries oil from the Azeri-

Chirag-Deepwater Gunashli (ACG) field and condensate from Shah Deniz across Azerbaijan, Georgia and

Türkiye. It links Sangachal terminal on the shores of the Caspian Sea to Ceyhan marine terminal on the

Turkish Mediterranean coast.

Turkish Mediterranean coast. ONGC Videsh Ltd., which is a wholly owned subsidiary of ONGC, the flagship NOC of India, is engaged in overseas E&P operations and is India's largest international Oil and Case E&P Company beging 22

Gas E&P Company having 32 Assets in 15 countries. This

in the Kastigarh area of Doda late Thursday night at a time when the soldiers were resting for a while during ongoing combing and and search inside a

operations government school building. Since July 8, the day Pakistani terrorists ambushed two army vehicles in the Badnota village of Machhedi in the Billawar tehsil of Kathua the security forces across different district headquarters of the Jammu region have been conducting search operations following inputs of movement of suspected armed persons in the region.

Recently, Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi visited Northern command headquarters in Udhampur where he was briefed by the senior army officers about the prevailing security situation in the region.

According to a recent assessment made by the various military and central intelligence agencies around three dozen terror training camps remain active across the line of control.

Forces on high alert in run-up to DMK moves court against three new criminal laws introduced by Centre

PTI ■ CHENNAI

sand

politicans, police and bureaucrats. Despite the

verdict of the High Court and

the National Green Tribunal's

order asking for a stoppage of

unauthorized sand mining, these districts are robbed off

the sand with which the

youth in Telangana could have made their livelihood,"

Mini, Small and Medium

enterprises in Tamil Nadu

(MSMEs) that employ 1.5

crore workers are facing

uncertainty due to the indifferent attitude of the

State administration, said S

Secretary, Tamil Nadu Small and Tiny Industries

The TANSTIA has written to

the Union Finance Minister

Executive

politicans,

said Reddy.

Vasudevan,

Association.

confractors,

The DMK on Friday approached the Madras High Court to declare as ultra vires and unconstitutional, the three new criminal laws brought in by the Union government. The three laws--Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam have come into effect from July 1. They have replaced the Indian Penal Code, The Code of Criminal Procedure Code and the

Indian Evidence Act. A division bench comprising Justices S S Sundar and N Senthil Kumar before whom the petition filed by DMK Organising Secretary R S Bharathi came up for hearing, ordered notice to the Centre, returnable by four weeks.

According to the petitioner, the government introduced the three Bills and got them passed by the Parliament without any meaningful discussion.

In the absence of any substantive changes, mere

shuffling of sections was unnecessary and will cause a lot of inconvenience and confusion regarding the interpretation of provisions, he added. of

He said shuffling of sections will make it very difficult for the judges, advocates, the law enforcing authorities and the general public to correlate the new provisions with the old ones to search for precedents. It seems the exercise was being done only to "Sanskritise" the titles of the Acts without any devotion to revisit the laws, he

claim that it was an act of Parliament. The enactments were made by only one limb of the Parliament viz., the ruling party and its allies, keeping away the opposition parties, he claimed.

contended. Bharathi further

said the government cannot

He said the naming of the Acts in Hindi/Sanskrit was violative of Article 348 of the Constitution, which mandates, inter alia, that the authoritative texts of all Bills to be introduced in either house of Parliament shall be in English.

Kerala can expect heavy rain in next few days: IMD

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The India Meteorological Department on Friday said Kerala will receive heavy to very heavy rains in the next few days due to weather conditions and wind patterns prevailing over peninsular India.

The IMD said that a low

from north Kerala coast to south Gujarat coast, another well marked low pressure area over northwest Bay of Bengal and the strong westerly/ northwesterly winds along the Kerala coast would result in moderate to heavy rains in the southern state for the next five days.

orange alert in the four northern Kerala districts of Wayanad, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod for the day and a yellow alert in five other districts.

An orange alert means very heavy rain (6 cm to 20 cm). A vellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 to 11 cm. Heavy rains in the state, pressure trough located The IMD also issued an especially in the northern

Malabar region, caused flooding, uprooting of trees, minor landslides and traffic snarls.

In Wayanad, due to flooding of the Muthanga National Highway (NH 766), 25 vehicles with around 400 passengers were stranded there for several hours since district midnight, the administration said.

of armed infiltrators (ready to attempted by these terrorists **ONGC Videsh Limited** signs SPA to acquire stake in ACG oil field in Azerbaijan

PNS NEW DELHI

ONGC Videsh Limited, a Schedule "A" Navaratna Central Public Sector Enterprise, has signed a The other partners in the field definitive Sale Purchase are SOCAR, MOL, INPEX, Agreement (SPA) for directly acquiring 0.615% and Itochu. The field has a Agreement (SPA) for directly acquiring 0.615% Participating Interest (PI) in Offshore Azeri Chirag Gunashli (ACG) oil field in Azerbaijan from Equinor. The agreement also includes acquiring 0.737% shares of the Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline company through its wholly-owned subsidiary ONGC BTC Limited. The acquisitions are expected to be completed in the upcoming months. Total investment for these acquisitions would be up to USD 60 million. These acquisitions are in addition to ONGC Videsh's existing 2.31% PI in the ACG field and 2.36% shareholding in the BTC pipeline.

BTC pipeline.

ACG is a super-giant offshore oil field in the Caspian Sea operated by oil major BP since 1999. The

Gas ECT Company naving 32 acquisition is consistent with its strategic objective of energy security of the nation by adding high-quality

Training Workshops organised for **GNDU** students field has been developed in phases and a seventh production platform, Azeri Central East, has been commissioned in early 2024. PNS NEW DELHI The Department of Placement & Career The other partners in the field

Enhancement of Guru Nanak Dev University organized Employability Skills Training Workshops in the university premises for the final year female students under the able leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Jaspal

He emphasized students to work hard in life and keep on

Employability Skills IAS officer... From Page 1

Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Jaspal Singh Sandhu,.
Dr. Palwinder Singh, Dean Academic Affairs of the university distributed the certificates to students on successful completion of this program. He expressed his appreciation for the diligent efforts of the Directorate of Placement & Career Enhancement in conducting such useful skill development workshops for the students. He said that such programs are very much necessary for the overall personality development of the students. He emphasized students to learning new skills so as to be successful in their careers.

Acting on a letter received from the LBSNAA which recalled Puja "for further action", the

Puja "for further action", the Maharashtra government kept her District Training Program on hold and relieved her from the District Training Programme of the Maharashtra government and directed her to join the Academy on or before July 23. Puja's recall to LBSNAA came in the wake of her transfer to Washim from Pune, amid allegations of manipulation of disability and OBC certificates for getting into the civil services. The authenticity of various certificates submitted by her to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is

being probed. Having completed MBBS, Puja appeared for the Civil Services Examination in 2021 and cleared the preliminary exam, main exam and interview, securing the 821st rank. She had refused a medical test at the All India Institute of Medical Science in Delhi to confirm her disability claim of suffering from "blindness and mental illness", an illness that gave her the benefits under the Persons with Benchmark

Persons with Benchmark Disabilities category.
Puja had earlier submitted two certificates, provided by the Ahmednagar District Civil Hospital in 2018 and 2021, to the UPSC under the Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PuyBD) category. It has now (PwBD) category. It has now emerged that she had applied for a disability certificate from the Aundh government hospital in Pune in August 2022, but after medical tests, her application was rejected. Puja, who was initially posted as an assistant collector, hit headlines for wrong reasons following her alleged demand for a separate office and official car and unauthorised use of a beacon in her private life. So much so that Pune District Collector Suhas Diwase also sent a report to the state government about her and her

"objectionable

Flights, banks, media...

The large-scale outage in Microsoft Services impacted IT systems globally leading to disruptions in various

the RBI said the outage in Microsoft Services impacted 10 banks and NBFCs with minor disruptions which have either been resolved or are being resolved. "Critical systems of most banks are not in cloud and further, only a few banks are using the CrowdStrike tool. Our assessment shows that only 10 banks and NBFCs had minor disruptions which have either been resolved or are being resolved," RBI said in a statement. Overall, it said the Indian financial sector in the Reserve Bank's domain remains insulated

domain remains insulated from the global outage. Auto major Maruti Suzuki India said it was partly affected by the global outage of Microsoft systems and production and despatch operations halted briefly. The company, however, said it has been able to resume operations. The Austin, Texas-based company's Nasdaq-traded shares were down nearly 15 per cent in premarket trading early

Friday. New Zealand's acting prime minister, David Seymour, said on that officials in the said on that officials in the country were "moving at pace to understand the potential impacts," adding that he had no information indicating it was a cybersecurity threat.

cybersecurity threat.

In the US, the FAA said the airlines United, American, Delta and Allegiant had all been grounded. Airlines and railways in the UK were also affected, with longer than usual waiting times.

In Germany, Berlin-Brandenburg Airport halted flights for several hours due to difficulties in checking in passengers, while landings at Zurich airport were suspended and flights in Hungary, Italy and Turkey disrupted. The Dutch carrier KLM said it had been "forced to suspend most" of its operations. its operations.

Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport warned that the outage was having a "major impact on flights" to and from the busy European

chaotic morning coincided with one of the busiest days of the year for Schiphol.

Indian aviation sector...

From Page 1
According to officials, the country's key airports, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai, are crippled due to the massive tech outage. Delhi airport said some of its services have been impacted and it is working to minimise the inconvenience to fliers. Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport reported an average delay of 51 minutes, Delhi's IGI Airport saw its services being delayed by nearly 40 minutes. At Bengaluru, 90 per cent of flights operating out of Terminal 1 have been impacted and airlines are using manual and airlines are using manual methods to check passengers in. As many as 160 flights were affected in Hyderabad airport. As check-in is being done manually, passengers were asked to report to airports well in advance — about three hours (even for domestic flights), to factor in the slow processes. While so far there was no flight cancellation here and flights were delayed as check-in was being done manually. DGCA has asked airlines to inform passengers about delays as much as possible given the technical challenges being faced.

Most airlines took to social

media platforms to share the update with fliers. Air India said its "digital systems have been impacted temporarily due to the current Microsoft outage, resulting in delays". IndiGo warned that check-ins "may be slower and queues longer".

occurrence of such cases.

The low-cost carrier also said the option to rebook a flight or claim a refund is temporarily unavailable. SpiceJet said it is working closely with authorities to minimise disruptions. Akasa Air said its online services have been affected. Vistara, too, said it is facing technical challenges and is working to fix it at the earliest. Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport saw as many as 23 flights -- 12 departures and 11 arrivals -including Indigo's flights to Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru being cancelled. "We are closely working with all

our stakeholders to minimise the inconvenience to our flyers. You may please get in touch with the airline concerned for updates on your flight information. We thank you for your support and understanding," the airport, run by GMR, said in a post on social media platform.

cleared the "confusion"

arising out of the Muzaffarnagar Police order

asking eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route to display

their owners' names and said

it has now given a guideline for the sanctity of the

Mansukh oversees talent assessment camp at stadium

PNS NEW DELHI

Or Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister Youth Affairs and Sports and Labour Welfare, Government of India, on Friday oversaw the ongoing assessment camp at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium aimed at identifying sports talents among students of Municipal Corporation of Delhi schools

Government of India. Mandaviya addressed the participants, emphasising the importance of nurturing young sports talents as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose message emphasises the integration of sports alongside academic pursuits.

He highlighted the programmes

Corporation of Delhi schools under the KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification) program initiated by the uncover and support the hockey player Ashok Dhyanchand (son of Major Dhyanchand), and Asian Games gold medalist shooter Jitu Rai.

the country. Also present at the occasion

were North East Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari, West Delhi MP Kamaljit Sehrawat, MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar, Director General of Sports Authority of India Sandeep Pradhan, former hockey hockey player Ashok Dhyanchand (son of Major

Unease in

From Page 1 Union Minister Chirag Paswan unequivocally opposed the advisory saying he will "absolutely never support or encourage" any divide in the name of caste or religion. "We need to bridge the gap between these two classes of people. It is every government's responsibility to work for the poor, which includes all sections of society such as Dalits, backwards, upper castes and no law Muslims as well. All are arises.

there. We need to work for them," Paswan said. He added, "Whenever there

is such divide in the name of caste or religion, I absolutely do not either support it or encourage it. I do not think any educated young person of my age, irrespective of the caste or religion they come from, is affected by such things."

Another BJP ally, Janata Dal (United), too criticised the advisory which, police have insisted, is meant to ensure that there should be no confusion among 'kanwarias' (pilgrims on route to offer holy water to Lord Shiva) and no law-and-order situation

Congress and Samajwadi Party slammed the directive and termed it "an assault on India's culture", alleging that it intended to normalise the economic boycott of Muslims. "Our Constitution

guarantees every citizen that he will not be discriminated against on the basis of caste, religion, language or any other basis. The divisive order to put up name boards of the owners of carts, kiosks and shops in Uttar Pradesh is an attack on our Constitution, our democracy and our shared heritage," said

Priyanka Gandhi. On Yogi's latest missive, Naqvi claimed the Yogi Adityanath government has

pilgrimage.
"This order is for the sanctity, reverence and safety of the Kanwar Yatra, there is no

scope for creating any kind of communal confusion on this, the safety and harmony of the society is the collective responsibility of all of us, any kind of communal conflict is not in interest of country or any community," the former minority affairs minister

UK airports, trains, London Stock Exchange impacted

 $T^{\text{he UK's airports and trains}}_{\text{experienced delays, with the London Stock Exchange}}$ and the National Health Service among the other organisations in the country dealing with the fallout of a global IT outage on Friday that has grounded planes and caused chaos around the world. The outage, related to an issue at US-headquartered prolific cybersecurity firm Crowdstrike and Microsoft, affected Windows PCs globally and also forced 'Sky News' off the air. Crowdstrike, a cybersecurity service designed to stop internet breaches or hacks for the world's biggest companies, has since apologised for the problems caused by a software bug even as it ruled out the possibility of this being a substantial Microsoft has also cyberattack. Microsoft has also identified an update to the CrowdStrike Falcon Sensor software as the factor behind the global tech issues. "We're deeply sorry. The update had a software bug in it and caused an issue with the Microsoft operating system," George Kurtz, CEO of Crowdstrike,

GLOBAL IT OUTAGE

told news channels. "We identified this very quickly and remediated the issue," he said. He had earlier taken to X to state that "this is not a security incident or cyberattack".

The issue has been identified, isolated and a fix has been deployed. We refer customers to the support portal for the latest updates and will continue to provide complete and continuous updates on our website," he said.

UK Cabinet Minister Pat McFadden said ministerial teams were coordinating their response to the major outage through COBRA, the government's emergency response committee. "Ministers are working with their sectors and respective industries on the issue," he said. London's biggest airport, Heathrow, said in a statement that its "flights are operational though we are experiencing delays". While the airport said it is implementing contingency plans to minimise impact, Gatwick Airport

said passengers "may experience some delays" when checking in and passing through security. Luton and Edinburgh Airport, meanwhile, switched to manual systems to support operations.

The London Stock Exchange Group said trading continues to operate as normal while it is working on resolving an issue with its RNS Service, which provides the Regulatory News Service announcements. The IT outage, which is not believed to be linked with a malicious attack or hack, also hit several National Health Service (NHS) general practitioner (GP) surgeries around the UK as they were unable to access patient records or book online appointments.

NHS England said the IT outage is "causing disruption in the majority of GP practices" in England but there is currently no known impact on its 999 or emergency services. Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust declared a "critical incident" citits delivery of radiotherapy treatment. "We are unable to access driver diagrams at certain locations, leading to potential short-notice cancellations, particularly on the Thameslink and Great Northern networks," said Govia Thameslink Railway, one of the train companies impacted.

"Additionally, other key systems, including our real-time customer information platforms, are also affected," it

National Rail, in charge of the

country's railway network, said its IT teams are "actively investigating to determine the root cause of the problem". All major UK supermarkets including Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Lidl, Morrisons and Waitrose also reported issues with online services. The first reports of the outage emanated from the United States late on Thursday after a breakdown of Microsoft services such as Azure and 365. In a post on X, Microsoft 365 Status stated that "multiple services are continuing to see improvements in availability as our mitigation actions

Bangladesh security forces fire bullets as protests escalate

PTI DHAKA

Police and security officials in Bangladesh fired bullets and tear gas at protesters and banned all gatherings in the capital on Friday, as internet and mobile services were cut off after days of deadly clashes over the allocation of government jobs. The protests, which began weeks ago but escalated sharply on Monday, represent the biggest challenge to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since she won a fourth consecutive term in office after elections in January. Main opposition groups boycotted those polls. Somoy TR, a local television channel, reported that four more people died in the latest clash-

This comes a day after the bloodiest day of demonstrations to date when 22 people were killed, according to local media, as protesting students attempted to impose a "complete shutdown" on the country.

Authorities could not be reached imme-

diately to confirm figures for the deaths. The chaos has highlighted cracks in Bangladesh's governance and economy and the frustration of young graduates who face a lack of good jobs.

The government has deployed police and

paramilitary forces across the capital to lock down campuses and break up protests. On Wednesday, universities including the country's largest suspended classes and closed dormitories, and on Friday Dhaka police said they were banning all gatherings and demonstrations in An Associated Press reporter saw border

guard officials fire at a crowd of more than ,000 protesters who had gathered outside the head office of state-run Bangladesh Television, which was attacked and set on fire by protesters the previous day.

The border guards shot at the right crowd with rifles and sound grenades, while police officers fired tear gas and rub-ber bullets. Bullets littered the streets, which were also marked by smears of

A news producer and reporter at Bangladesh Television on Thursday told the AP that protesters had broken through the main gate and set fire to vehicles and the reception area. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. "I escaped by leaping over the wall but some of my colleagues got stuck inside. The attackers entered the building and set fur-niture on fire," the producer said by phone. Internet services and mobile data were widely disrupted on Thursday night and remained down on Friday in the capital, Dhaka. Social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp were also not loading. It coincided with a widespread internet outage on Friday that disrupted flights, banks, media outlets and companies around the world, but the disruptions in Bangladesh were substantially greater than seen elsewhere. A statement from the country's Telecommunication Regulatory Commission said they were unable to ensure service after their data centre was attacked on Thursday by demonstrators,

who set fire to some equipment. The Associated Press has not been able to independently verify this.

Student protesters said they will extend their calls to impose a shutdown on Friday as well, and urged mosques across the country to hold funeral prayers for those who have been killed. Major universities have said they will close their doors until tensions ease.

The protesters are demanding an end to a quota system that reserves up to 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971 against Pakistan. They argue the system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, and they want it replaced with a meritbased system. But Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions to the war regardless of their political affiliation. The Bangladeshi leader is credited for bringing stable growth to Bangladesh, but rising inflation — thanks in part to the global upheaval sparked by the war in Ukraine — has triggered labour unrest and dissatisfaction with the government. Even though job opportunities have grown in some parts of the private sector, many people prefer government jobs because they are seen as more stable and lucrative. But there aren't enough to go around — each year, some 400,000 graduates compete for around 3,000 jobs in the civil service exam.

Houthi rebels claim drone strike that leaves 1 dead, at least 10 injured in Tel Aviv

PTI ■ TEL AVIV

Yemen's Houthi rebels on Friday claimed responsibility for an early morning drone strike that hit a part of central Tel Aviv near the United States Embassy, leaving at least 10 injured and one dead. The aerial strike rumbled through the streets causing shards of shrapnel to rain down and spreading shards of glass over a large radius. The Houthis have repeatedly launched drones and missiles toward Israel throughout the ninemonth-long war, in solidarity with the Palestinian people and against Israel. But until Friday, all were intercepted by either Israel or Western allies

Yahya Sare'e, the Houthis' spokesperson, said in a statement published on the social media platform X that the strike was made in retaliation to the war underway in Gaza between Israel and Hamas and had hit one of many of the group's targets. The Houthis claimed that their newest drones can bypass Israel's aerial defence systems. However, a spokesperson for Israel's military said on Friday that the explosive-laden drone had been identified on Thursday and attributed the hit to "human error." The military's assessment of aerial threats has not changed because, the military said, Israel's adver-saries have attempted such strikes for months.

"It was a terror attack that was targeted to kill civilians in Israel," the Israeli spokesperson said. The Houthi strike hit hours after Israel's military confirmed one of its airstrikes

had killed a Hezbollah commander and other militants in southern Lebanon. Israel has so far not made attacks on the Houthis, allowing its allies instead to take the lead as it focuses its efforts on the war in Gaza and ongoing fighting with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group.

It comes as international mediators continue to hold out hope for a cease-fire agreement, pushing Israel and Hamas toward a phased deal that would halt fighting and free about 120 hostages held by the militant group in Gaza.

The prospects a deal could improve as Israeli leaders signal their operation underway in Rafah is close to finished. with forces stationed in the However, fears of potential escalation resurfaced on Thursday after Israel's far-right national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, visited Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site on Thursday to pray for the return of Israeli hostages, he said, "without a reckless deal, without surrendering." Local police in Tel Aviv said that the Friday blast sounded at around 3:10 am, reverberating to nearby cities and physically injuring at least 10 people. Tel Aviv District Commander Peretz Amar said officers could not locate the point of contact, suggesting the explosion occurred in the air.

The force of the explosion caused damage that is not great but is spread over a large area. At the moment we don't know what the object was," Amar said. Israel possesses a multilayered aerial defense system, capable of intercepting threats ranging from long-range ballistic missiles to drones and shortrange missiles.

Russia convicts US reporter of espionage

PTI YEKATERINBURG

Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was convicted Friday of espionage and sentenced to 16 years in a maximum-security prison on charges that his employer and the US government have rejected as fabricated. The conclusion of his swift and

secretive trial in the country's highly politicized legal system could potentially clear the way for a prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington. Gershkovich, his head shaved,

looked calm as he stood in a glass defendants' cage in the Sverdlovsk Regional Court and listened impassively to the verdict. When the judge asked him if he understood it, the journalist replied yes.

After the judge finished reading the verdict, someone in the courtroom shouted, "Evan, we love you!" Closing arguments

took place behind closed doors at the trial, where Gershkovich did not admit any guilt, according to the court's press service. Prosecutors requested an 18-year sentence, but the judge opted for a shorter term. "This disgraceful, sham conviction comes after Evan has spent 478 days in prison, wrongfully detained, away from his family and friends, prevented from reporting, all for doing his job as a journalist," Dow Jones CEO and Wall Street Journal Publisher Almar Latour and Editor in Chief Emma Tucker

"We will continue to do everything possible to press for Evan's release and to support his family. Journalism is not a crime, and we will not rest until he's released. This must end now," the statement added.

said in a statement.

Gershkovich, 32, was arrested March 29, 2023, while on a reporting trip to the Ural

Mountains city of Yekaterinburg. Authorities claimed, without offering any evidence, that he was gathering secret information for the US.

He has been behind bars since his arrest, which will be counted as part of his sentence. Much of that was spent in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison — a czarist-era lockup used during Josef Stalin's purges, when executions were carried out in its basement. He was transferred to Yekaterinburg for the trial. Gershkovich was the first US journalist taken into custody on

espionage charges since Nicholas Daniloff in 1986, at the height of the Cold War. Foreign journalists in Russia were shocked by Gershkovich's arrest, even though the country has enacted increasingly repressive laws on freedom of speech after sending troops into Ukraine.

Unlike the trial's opening on June 26 in Yekaterinburg and

previous hearings in Moscow in which reporters were allowed to see Gershkovich briefly before sessions began, there was no access to the courtroom on Thursday when the trial resumed, but media was allowed in court on Friday for the verdict. Espionage and treason cases are typically shrouded in secrecy.Russian courts convict more than 99 per cent of defendants, and prosecutors can appeal sentences that they regard as too lenient. They even can

appeal acquittals. The US State Department has declared Gershkovich "wrongfully detained," committing the government to assertively seek his release. Asked Friday about a possible prisoner swap involving Gershkovich, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to comment.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Wednesday at the United Nations that Moscow

Japan, Taiwan coast guards and Washington's "special services" are discussing an exchange involving Gershkovich. Russia has previously signaled the possibility of a swap, but said a verdict would hold joint search Tokyo (AP): Japanese and Taiwanese coast guards conducted what is believed to be have to come first. Even after a verdict, any such deal could take

months or years. State Department deputy spokesman Vedant Patel on Thursday

declined to discuss negotiations about a possible exchange, but

said: "We have been clear from the get-go that Evan did noth-

ing wrong and should not have

been detained. To date, Russia

has provided no evidence of a

crime and has failed to justify

Russian President Vladimir

Putin hinted earlier this year that

he would be open to swapping

Gershkovich for Vadim

Krasikov, a Russian serving a life

sentence for the 2019 killing in

Berlin of a Georgian citizen of

Chechen descent.

Evan's continued detention."

their first joint drill off Japan's eastern coast, officials said Friday, a move seen as an effort to expand maritime cooperation amid concern about China's increasingly assertive activity in regional seas. The drill was held amid escalating tension between China and Taiwan. Beijing claims Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out using force to take it.

China routinely sends coast guard vessels into waters surrounding Japanese-controlled disputed islands in the East China Sea, confronting Japanese patrol ships. However, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi Friday denied the drill targeted any specific country, including China.

Republicans thrilled with ex-US President, predicting blowout victory after convention

The last time Republicans gathered for a full convention, they were plagued by internal division and fear. Morale was near rock bottom. And the party's presidential nominee showed little desire, or capacity, to add new voters to his political coalition.

The Republican officials, strategists and activists who packed Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention this week expressed a collective confidence at levels not seen in decades. Boos and infighting marred Donald Trump's first convention in 2016, but this one was defined by overwhelming displays of unity as GOP leaders Trump skeptics among them

reveled in what most view as an all but certain victory come November. Trump's survival after

nearly being assassinated at a Pennsylvania rally over the week-end, they said, was the last piece end, they said, was the last piece to bring everyone together in spite of the former president's extraordinary personal and political baggage. "It feels like 1980," said a smiling New York GOP Chair Ed Cox on the convention's red-carpeted floor this week, referring to Ronald Reagan's landslide presidential victory. Cox pointed to a sense victory. Cox pointed to a sense of inevitability building around Trump and the GOP. "We finally came completely together."

For Democrats, it is the worst of times. Back in Washington, the party intensified a public and private lobbying effort to force President Joe Biden to drop out of the race after his disastrous debate against Trump last month. Donors, elected officials and leaders within Biden's own campaign believe he cannot win. And an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll indicated that the vast majority of Democratic voters have lost confidence in Biden's ability to govern and want him to step aside before it is too

late to stop Trump.
Only about a third of Democrats believe Biden is more capable than Trump of winning in November, according to the poll, which also found that nearly two-thirds of Democrats say Biden should withdraw from the presidential race and let his party nominate a different can-

By contrast, about 7 in 10 Republicans say Trump is more capable of winning the election. Almost no Republicans think Biden is more capable of winning. The doubters include Black Democrats, who make up the backbone of Biden's political

coalition. Only about half of Black Democrats think Biden is better able to win, according to the poll. Many Democrats now privately expect — or perhaps hope — that someone other than Biden will be on stage to accept the party's nomination when the Democratic National Convention begins in Chicago in

a month. Hours before Trump's triumphant convention speech on Thursday, a top Biden campaign official repeatedly pushed back against a flurry of new questions about whether the presi-dent is going to step aside. "I do not want to be rude, but I don't know how many more times I can answer that," Quentin Fulks, principal deputy manager of Biden's reelection campaign, told a news conference in Milwaukee when asked whether the president's commitment to his reelection may be softening.

Trump calls for unity post assassination attempt



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump kisses the helmet of Corey Comperatore during the Republican National Convention Thursday in

Israeli police investigate the scene of an explosive drone attack in Tel Aviv, Israel, Friday. Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed responsibility for a drone believed to have exploded above Tel Aviv early Friday morning, leaving one dead and at least 10 injured.

'Israel's settlement policy in occupied territories violates international law'

The Hague (AP): The top United Nations court has ruled that Israel's settlement policy and use of natural resources in the occupied Palestinian terri-tories violate international law. The panel of 15 judges from around the world at the International Court of Justice said "the transfer by Israel of settlers to the West Bank and Jerusalem as well as Israel's maintenance of their presence, is contrary to article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention". It also said the use of natural resources was "inconsistent" with its obligations under international law as an occupying

The court's president, Nawaf Salam, was reading out the court's full opinion in a Friday session, which is expected to take about an hour.

has opened a hearing to deliver a non-binding advisory

The top United Nations court

opinion on the legality of Israel's 57-year occupation of lands sought for a Palestinian state, a ruling that could have more effect on international opinion than it will on Israeli

International Court of Justice President Nawaf Salam is expected to take about an hour to read out the opinion of the panel that is made up of 15 judges from around the world. Friday's hearing comes against the backdrop of Israel's devastating 10-month military assault on Gaza, which was triggered by the Hamas-led attacks in southern Israel. In a separate case, the International Court of Justice is considering a South African claim that Israel's campaign in Gaza amounts to genocide, a claim that Israel vehemently denies. Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The

considers the West Bank to be disputed territory, whose future should be decided in negotiations, while it has moved population there in settlements to solidify its hold. It has annexed east Jerusalem in a move that is not internationally recognised, while it withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but maintained a blockade of the territory after Hamas took power in 2007. The international community generally considers all three areas to be occupied territory. At hearings in February, then-Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki accused Israel of apartheid and urged the United Nations' top court to declare that Israel's occupation of lands sought by the Palestinians is illegal and must end immediately and unconditionally for any hope for a two-state future

Palestinians seek all three areas for an independent state. Israel

Milwaukee (PTI): In his first major public address since sur-viving an assassination attempt, Donald Trump gave a clarion call for unity as he accepted his Republican party's presidential nomination with a pledged to deliver a government that will begin four greatest years in American history if he is elected in November.

The 78-year-old former US president took to the stage at the Republican National Convention Thursday night to accept his party's nomination for a third consecutive presidential bid. Trump also gave details about the attempt on his life last week and thanked

Americans for their "outpouring of love and support."
"So tonight, with faith and devotion, I proudly accept your nomination for president of the United States," Trump said to applause. In his speech, Trump urged Americans to help him win the race for the White

House on November 5. "Tonight, I ask for your partner-ship, for your support, and I am humbly asking for your vote. Every day, I will strive to honour the trust you have placed in me, and I will never let vou down," Trump said. "To all of the forgotten men and women who have been neglected, abandoned, and left behind, you will be forgotten no longer. We will press forward, and together, we will win, win, win," he said. In his first speech after the assassination bid on him on

Saturday in Pennsylvania, Trump said he stands before Americans with a message of confidence, strength, and hope. "Four months from now, we will have an incredible victory, and we will begin the four greatest years in the history of our country," Trump said.

"In an age when our politics too often divide us, now is the time to remember that we are all fellow citizens.

We are one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," he said.

The former president basked in the adoring cheers of thousands as he called for unity behind his effort to return to the White House after the attack.

Sensex, Nifty tumble after four days of record rally

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled on Friday as investors preferred to book profits after four days of record-breaking rally and weak trends from

global markets.
Fall in blue-chip Reliance
Industries also dragged the benchmarks lower.

The 30-share BSE Sensex hit its new all-time high of 81,587.76 in the initial trade but failed to carry forward the winning momentum and tanked 738.81 points or 0.91 per cent to settle below the 81,000-mark at 80,604.65. During the day, it plunged 844.36 points or 1.03 per cent to 80,499.10.

The BSE benchmark had hit the 81,000-mark for the first time on Thursday.

The NSE Nifty tumbled 269.95 points or 1.09 per cent and ended at 24,530.90 after hitting its fresh record peak of Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, outlook for the current 24,854.80 during the opening Power Grid, Mahindra & financial year, signalling an



bell. During the day, it declined 292.7 points or 1.18 per cent to 24,508.15. Among the Sensex pack, Tata Steel tumbled over 5 per cent

while JSW Steel tanked nearly 5 per cent. Motors, NTPC, UltraTech Cement, Tech

Mahindra, and Reliance Industries were the other major laggards.

Infosys climbed nearly 2 per cent after the IT major reported a 7 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 6,368 crore in the April-June quarter and raised its growth

segment.
ITC, Asian Paints and HCL Technologies were the other gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower while Shanghai ended in the green. European markets were

trading lower. The US markets ended in territory negative Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.07 per cent to USD 85.05 a barrel. Institutional Foreign

(FIIs) bought Investors equities worth Rs 5,483.63 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 626.91 points or 0.78

per cent to settle at a fresh closing high of 81,343.46 on Thursday. The broader Nifty climbed

187.85 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,800.85.

Rupee falls 3 paise to close at all-time low of 83.66 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and depreciated 3 paise to close at its all-time low of 83.66 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, weighed down by strong American currency and muted trend in domestic equities.

Forex traders said weak domestic markets and elevated oil prices pressured the rupee, however, likely Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervention prevented a sharp fall in the domestic unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.64, and touched an intra-day high of 83.60 and a low of 83.66 against the dollar during the trading session.

It finally settled at an all-time level of 83.66 (provisional) against the American currency, registering a loss of 3 paise from its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee depreciated 5 paise and settled at a new low of 83.63 against the US dollar.

The same of the sa

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on weak global markets and a strength in the US Dollar. Weak Asian and European currencies may also weigh on the rupee," Anuj Choudhary -Research Analyst at

Sharekhan by BNP Paribas --

Choudhary said Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) inflows and any intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. "USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.40 to Rs 83.90," he said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.16 per cent at 104.33.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading marginally lower by 0.07 per cent at USD 85.05 per barrel.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 738.81 points to settle at 80,604.65 and Nifty dropped 269.95 points to 24,530.90.

Meanwhile, the Asian currencies were all down after a fall in European currencies as the European Central Bank (ECB) kept rates unchanged in its meeting with a possibility of a cut in September, traders said.

FIIs were net buyers in the capital markets on Thursday as they purchased shares worth Rs 5,483.63 crore, according to exchange data.

HDFC Bank CSR spend crosses ₹945 crore in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Drivate sector HDFC Bank Phas reported a corporate social responsibility (CSR) spend of Rs 945.31 crore for the financial year 2023-24, an increase of nearly Rs 125 crore from the previous year. The bank's CSR programme, Parivartan, has been active for over a decade and its initiatives, spread across 28 states and 8 Union Territories, have impacted over 10 crore lives, HDFC Bank said in a release.

The Parivartan initiatives have reached over 9,000 villages, impacting over 10 lakh households, as per the annual report. The initiatives have covered

85 out of the 112 districts identified in the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP).
"By addressing the critical areas of rural development, education, skill enhancement, healthcare, financial literacy, and the environment, we aim to support sustainable and inclusive growth in the communities in which we operate," Kaizad Bharucha,

Deputy Managing Director of HDFC Bank, said. Bharucha, who also looks after CSR and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) functions in addition to his other responsibilities, said the bank has been able to make an impact in the lives of over 10 crore Indians so far.

Through a participatory, bottom-up, and consultative approach, Parivartan focuses on creating sustainable impact within marginalised communities, especially women, it said.

initiatives facilitated the creation of over 9 lakh women entrepreneurs and the formation and revival of more than 10,000 Self-Help Groups (SHGs), it added. Additionally, the bank's skilling programmes have trained over 3 lakh youth,

providing essential vocational skills to enhance employability and create sustainable livelihoods. In its efforts towards promoting education, it has

trained over 20 lakh teachers and supported 2.86 lakh schools, benefitting more than 2 crore students through remedial classes, learning camps, scholars underprivileged children, it

Tata Play's revenue dips 4.3% in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading DTH operator Tata Play (erstwhile known as Tata Sky) has reported widening of its consolidated loss to Rs 353.9 crore, as revenue from operations declined 4.32 per cent to Rs 4,304.62 crore in the financial year ended March 31, according to financial data accessed business intelligence platform Tofler. In FY23, the company had reported a net loss of Rs 105.25 crore and its revenue from operations stood at Rs

4,499.19 crore. Total expenses of Tata Play, in which Tata Sons now owns 50 per cent share, has increased 1.47 per cent to Rs 4,760.55 crore in FY24. Earlier, it stood at Rs 4,691.25 crore for the financial year ended in

March, 2023. Tata Play's total revenue in FY24 also declined 4.47 per cent to Rs 4,327.07 crore. Earlier, the total revenue was at Rs 4,529.97 crore a year

revenue from operations also declined 6.07



on March 31, 2024. It was at Rs 4,240.04 crore in FY23. After Tata Sons, Network Digital Distribution Services FZ - LLC (NDDS) and TS Investments Ltd are the second biggest shareholders of the company owning 20 per cent share respectively in the company.

Investments Baytree (Mauritius) Pte owns 10 per cent in Tata Play.

The direct-to-home service provider is not a publiclylisted entity. It has earlier received the nod from the capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO).

However, it was delayed due to "certain observations" from on a standalone basis, Tata
to certain observations from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB).

"The company was for the financial year ended National Stock Exchange of promoters of Tata Play.

India Ltd and BSE Ltd, and the company had received approval from SEBI on the pre-filed DRHP," as per documents submitted by the company.

However, despite an inprinciple approval, the MIB in a letter to Tata Play on October 7, 2022, had asked for a change in the equity structure of the company. "In the aforesaid letter, the

MIB had mentioned certain

observations which states that

the existing share structure of the company is apparently in violation of the DTH guidelines," Tata Play said. As per the management, the company had obtained prior approval from the MIB and the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) for the existing share structure.
According to Tata Play, the

company has not violated DTH guidelines, it said.
"The company had filed a suitable reply dated November 8, 2022 in response to the aforesaid letter from the MIB, on which the reply from the MIB is awaited," it

said. Currently, Tata Sons and per cent to Rs 3,982.57 crore to get its shares listed on Investments are the two

Paytm April-June quarter loss widens

 $F_{\text{Communications, which}}^{\text{intech}} \ \, \text{firm One97} \\ \text{Communications, which}$ owns Paytm brand, on Friday said its loss has widened to Rs 840 crore in the quarter ended June 30, primarily due to continued impact of restrictions on Payments Bank Ltd.

The company had posted a loss of Rs 358.4 crore in the same period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by the company.

The consolidated revenue of

Paytm declined 33.48 per cent to Rs 1,639.1 crore during the reported quarter, from Rs 2,464.2 crore in the same period a year ago. Paytm spokesperson attributed the widening of

loss and decline in revenue primarily to the disruption in business due to restrictions imposed on associate company Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). "There were three factors which have led to this (decline in revenue and widening of loss) which are primarily disruption on like Wallet. We stopped using crore on a quarter-on-quarter The spokesperson said that basis.



Wallet and some of the products," the spokesperson

company temporarily stopped some of the products on which regulators may have concern at an industry-level.

"We temporarily stopped a lot of those products and those products are in the process of starting. The third (factor) is that because of the disruption, our merchant base and GMV (gross merchandise value) came down and that has an impact on the profitability overall,"

the spokesperson said. Paytm's GMV declined account of PPBL products per cent from Rs 4.69 lakh the second quarter onwards.

On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, however, Paytm reported GMV of Rs 4.3 lakh crore, up 5 per cent in the reported quarter.

The GMV from continued business recorded a 27 per cent jump on YoY basis to Rs 4.26 lakh crore, from Rs 3.36 lakh crore, despite a 15 per cent decline in monthly transacting users on a YoY basis to 7.8 crore.

According to spokesperson, the first quarter has absorbed the impact of PPBL disruption and the performance of will take off from companies

the company's operating matrix including GMV, device merchant, recovery in loan distribution business as well as cost optimization. "We are going to be very sharp in terms of cost

there is now improvement in

optimisation. We have communicated that the employee cost has reduced by 9 per cent quarter-on-quarter in line with what we have said in last quarter. There were certain one-time items in this quarter that will

come down sharply in the quarter. next The combination of these factors will lead to financial improvement," spokesperson said.

The employee benefit cost declined to Rs 798.4 crore, from Rs 970 crore on a yearover-year basis and from Rs 966 crore in March 2024 quarter.

Paytm reported a 5 per cent increase in average number of sales employees on YoY basis to 31,607 in the reported quarter, compared to 28,479 in June 2023 quarter. The number. declined by 13 per nowever. cent on a quarter-on-quarter

No plans to allow business houses to promote banks: RBI Das said that licensing of

> He said, while the economy needs the resources to grow, we do not necessarily require more banks to achieve the aspirations.

shown that it will be very

difficult to monitor or to

regulate and prevent related-

party transactions. The risks

involved are very high," Das

What India needs is not proliferation in the number of banks, India needs sound banks, healthy banks, well governed banks which we feel will be able to mobilize savings throughout the country through technology and meet the credit requirements," he said.

universal banks has been made on tap and added that applications are welcome.

Das said that the private credit space is growing rapidly and emerging as an attractive investment avenue for those with high risk appetite at present, and added the RBI is monitoring developments there.

"While risks appear to be contained at present, it is important to bear in mind that vulnerabilities and interconnectedness in these markets can amplify negative shocks and pose financial stability concerns,"

Building Al-powered Wipro with human-centric approach: Rishad Premji

making efforts towards maximising AI's potential and placing a human-centric approach at the forefront of AI development, company's Addressing the company's 78th annual general meeting
Thursday,
artificial Premji said artificial intelligence is central to the company's growth strategy, and an "AI-powered Wipro" is on the

shift in how businesses fundamentals. An additional perceive AI, especially 30,000 employees have Generative AI. What was received advanced training once a topic of curiosity has tailored to their specific now become a cornerstone roles," Premji added. of long-term strategies for He said Wipro has creating value. AI presents a incorporated Gen-AI in its distinct opportunity to internal processes to boost reshape reimagine experiences, enhance efficiencies, and foster innovation. Our goal is to lead this transformation our employees, and has for our clients as well as our within organization," he said.

The company continued to significant investments in its ai360 strategy throughout FY24, he said.

"We are building an AIpowered Wipro, embedding responsible and secure AI into every solution, tool, and process across our organisation. We have human-centred approach broadened our strategic partnerships with leading AI gap, build trust, and players, such as Microsoft, maximise AI's potential, he Google, Amazon and

launched our own AI Tompany Wipro is platform through our continuously making innovation arm Tab45 to innovation arm, Lab45, to speed up AI adoption," Premji said.

He further said Wipro has partnered with academic institutes like IIT and IISc Chairman Rishad A Premji because developing talent is said. Addressing the a crucial and key element for the success of company's AI strategy. "These partnerships are

helping us drive research, strengthen the AI talent pipeline, and upskill our workforce. We have trained over 225,000 employees, "There's been a significant including me, in GenAI received advanced training

industries, productivity. "For example, WiNow, our AI-powered enterprise chatbot for selfservice is used by nearly all processed around 6.5 million queries. This has significantly boosted productivity in crucial tasks like approvals, onboarding, and other administrative

functions," he said. Widespread AI adoption demands strong change management and a commitment to inclusivity, he added.

Wipro has adopted a

The Cottage **India Pavilion** inaugurated



PNS NEW DELHI

The Cottage" participated in the Lifestyle Week (Tokyo) (3-5 July 2024) with 10 exhibitors from the Handloom and Handicraft

The India Pavilion set up by "the Cottage" was inaugurated by Madhusudan Ravindran Deputy High Commissioner, Embassy of India (Japan) in the presence of Manoj Lal, Managing Director, The Central Cottage Industries Corporation Ltd and Mr. Haime Suzuki, Global

showcasing the strength of India in the Textiles sector in particular Handicraft and Handloom segment. The Lifestyle Week Tokyo is the world's leading B2B international trade fair for lifestyle consumer goods, handicrafts, textiles, and fashion in Japan.

Head, Reed Exhibitions. The CCIC participation represented "India Pavilion"

It had around 1200 No. of participants/exhibitors from 20 countries catering to Lifestyle segment. The CCIC highlighted display Embroidered Home Furnishings and others.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Governor Shaktikanta
Das on Friday said the Reserve Bank does not have any plan to allow business houses to promote banks at present.

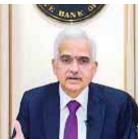
Allowing corporate houses to promote banks exposes one to conflict of interest risks and related-party transactions, Das said, speaking at an event organized by the Financial Express here. "At this point, there is no

thinking in that direction," Das said, replying to a specific query on whether there is any consideration to

allow business houses. The RBI had disqualified a long list of conglomerates from floating a lender in the last round of licensing around a decade ago.

The issue was revived again in 2020, with a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) working group supporting it, given the potential to get the capital for helping meet the growth country's aspirations.

Underlining that banks are different from other businesses. said experience worldover has shown potential conflicts of interest and issues relating related-party



transactions, if business houses are allowed.

India also had business houses engaged in banking fray, Das said, speaking about the time before bank nationalization in the late "Experience world over has

Green certified office buildings command 12-14% premium in rental values: Vestian

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Office buildings that are green certified command a 12-14 per cent premium in rental values over normal properties, as demand for environment-friendly workspace is high from multinational companies (MNCs), according to Vestian.

In its latest report 'India Office Market-Sustaining Sustainability', real estate consultant Vestian has mentioned that green-certified projects command premium in rental values.

"Green-certified buildings command 12-14 per cent premium on average over non-green buildings. This shows that developers benefit from investing more in sustainable development, as they can charge a premium for the same. These buildings are the first choice for large MNCs due to their global agenda to



become carbon neutral," the report said.

The consultant noted that these buildings provide sustainable amenities, improved air quality, ecofriendly design and materials, and lower energy consumption.

Bengaluru leads the pack with a premium of 23-25 per cent in rental values of green-certified buildings, with Chennai and Hyderabad following at 12-14 per cent and 13-15 per cent, respectively. Developers in Mumbai and

Pune charge 8-12 per cent

premium in rentals for green-certified buildings compared to non-certified areas.
In Delhi-NCR, the greencertified buildings command a 6-8 per cent premium while the number is 3-4 per cent in

Kolkata. "This suggests a strong focus on sustainability in these tech hubs, where companies are willing to pay a premium to environmental promote responsibility and enhance employee well-being," the

consultant said. Out of the total 888.5 million square feet of Grade-A office space stock across seven major cities in the country, Vestian highlighted that 577.7 million square feet or 65 per cent of Grade-A office space is greencertified.

As India's office market attracts global occupiers, developers are increasingly prioritising international certifications.

Majority of Indian employees experience burnout due to work-related stress: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Around 62 per cent of employees AIndian employees experience burnout, triple the global average of 20 per cent, due to work-related stress and poor work-life balance, as per a report by digital healthcare platform MediBuddy and CII.
The report, which was released on Friday, also highlighted that a massive number of job seekers consider employee wellness programmes crucial in their decision-making process.

The report 'Mapping India's Corporate Health and Landscape' Wellness emphasised the importance of customised wellness programmes based on employee demographics and personalised prevention

As per the report, 71 per cent of employees spend an average of 5 per cent of their annual

income on out-of-pocket healthcare expenses. This underscores the need for more comprehensive employer-provided healthcare options, the report suggested. It also found that only 24 per cent of employees feel satisfied

This indicates a significant gap between employee needs and existing corporate wellness programmes, it noted.

with their current workplace

health options.

The report emphasises the wellness programmes that extend benefits to their loved ones, including dependents, and offer convenient healthcare options like tele consultations.

VIVacity 11









THE ART OF CONTRASTS

Experience the resonance of nature in Seema Pandey's exhibition, "Between these lines in this space I root and grow" captured through the lens of black and white contrasts, says SAKSHI PRIYA

Shridharani Art Gallery, Artist Seema Pandey's solo exhibition, "Between These Lines in This Space I Root and Grow," invites viewers into a meditative exploration of black and white contrasts. This collection, a culmination of two years of dedicated artistry, threads personal and environmental landscapes into a visual journey of tranquility contemplation. Through these

lines, Seema Pandey weaves moments, memories and dreams, creating an everevolving narrative of being and becoming. The exhibition features over

100 miniature and larger artworks that reflect Pandey's keen observations and creative explorations. Each piece is a tribute to her holistic and free-spirited approach to art, drawing inspiration from diverse surroundings, memories and imaginations. The intriguing title, "Between These Lines in This Space I the essence of her journey,

exhibition is deeply rooted in motifs in her work, reflecting

environment. Over two years, she meticulously curated this project, with a two-month execution phase that saw her transforming mental images into artistic expressions. From coffee shops to her home surroundings, each locale narrative that is both personal provided a unique influence that was retrofitted into her studio work. This process resulted in a collection rich in techniques, autobiographical contrasts. This palette natural world.

Seema Pandey's art is a harmonious blend of personal Root and Grow," encapsulates experiences and natural She elements. finds universal, the immediate with around her, particularly nature. Trees, skies and The concept behind this weather changes are recurring Seema's acute observation and her deep connection to the

environment. Even indoor structures in her artworks are infused with elements of nature, highlighting her fascination with the organic world. This integration of autobiographical glimpses and natural themes creates a

One of the most striking aspects of this exhibition is Seema's use of black and white inputs and a celebration of the enhances the themes and emotions expressed in her artworks, creating a visual dialogue that is both bold and nuanced. The black and white tones bring out the subtleties merging the personal with the inspiration in everything of her subjects, allowing viewers to delve deeper into the layers of meaning within each piece. This choice of palette also underscores the

and universally relatable.

spirit, offering a stark yet serene visual experience.

Seema's creative process is as captivating as her final pieces. She began with small format drawings and eventually transitioned to larger surfaces, maintaining the same style and technique. One notable piece is a depiction of a tree with flowers, created using thread. This meditative work invites viewers to contemplate the interconnectedness of nature and the human experience. The exhibition also features artworks that move away from box-like combinations to embrace circular motifs. These pieces explore themes womanhood, pe

history, and the fluidity of time, offering a dynamic contrast to the linear compositions and enriching the visual experience with movement and continuity. In addition to trees and

circular motifs, Seema's exhibition includes of depictions rock formations, which serve as timekeepers orchestrated rhythm. These rocks, both stark and evocative, represent links to the past, present, and future. Seema's minimalist approach is evident in her use of thread exhibition's themes of and needle, which she

resilience and the human employs to decode a womanly story. These humble materials transformed are evocative resources, guiding viewers to discover deeper sensibilities through the parallel lines of falling rain, the symmetry of bare trees, and the arrangement of flower forms.

Seema Pandey's ability to correlate disparate content into a cohesive whole is a hallmark of her artistic prowess. Her exhibition fuses the vertical with the horizontal, the past with the future, creating a sanctum of art that is both contextual and unconventional. approach allows viewers to engage with the artworks on multiple levels, uncovering new angles of contrasts and connections with each

viewing. Seema Pandey's work is a power of art to reflect, discover and inspire. Through her intricate lines and thoughtful compositions, she invites us to see the world through her eyes, finding beauty and meaning in the spaces between. This exhibition is not just a display of artworks but a journey of discovery, where each piece offers a glimpse into the artist's soul and the endless possibilities of artistic

A Celebration of Nature's Elegance

Laxmi Gupta's exhibition, "The Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance," beautifully intertwines art and nature, highlighting the resilience and beauty of flowers, says SAKSHI PRIYA





Photos: Pankai Kumai

tepping into the serene Sambiance of Triveni Kala Sangam, visitors are transported into a world where art and nature intertwine seamlessly in Laxmi Gupta's latest exhibition, "The Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance." This alluring showcase of artworks is an attestation to deep-rooted Gupta's admiration for the natural world, particularly the ethereal beauty of flowers and their profound impact on our environment and well-being. The exhibition unfolds like a poetic journey through lush landscapes and vibrant gardens, each artwork a tribute to Gupta's skillful portrayal of nature's splendor. Known for her mastery of color and texture, Gupta's paintings exude a sense of tranquility and wonder, inviting viewers to explore the intricate details and

define her work. At the heart of Gupta's artistic exploration lies a profound connection to nature. Her fascination with flowers, sparked during the isolation of the COVID-19 lockdowns, blossomed into a series of paintings that reflect both personal introspection and a Gupta seeks to capture not flowers but also their symbolic significance as

layered compositions that

and natural beauty.
The inspiration behind her thematic focus on flowers, Gupta shared, "During COVID-19, confined to our homes, I found solace in daydreams of leisurely walks and the simple joy of gathering wildflowers. It was a time when everyone seemed gloomy and subdued, and the vibrancy of flowers became a beacon of positivity for me. They symbolise resilience and the ability to thrive despite adversity, which resonated deeply with

Gupta's artistic journey is characterised by blend harmonious mediums and techniques.





From the precise lines of pen and ink to the fluidity of watercolors and the depth of acrylics, each artwork reflects her meticulous attention to detail and her commitment to exploring the interplay of light, color and form. This diversity of approaches ensures that each piece in the

exhibition offers a unique

perspective on the natural

world, inviting viewers to

contemplate its beauty from various angles. Central to Gupta's artistic to evoke a sense of wonder broader environmental philosophy is her belief in the and reverence for nature message. Through her art, transformative power of art. through her art is a witness to Beyond aesth just the visual allure of her paintings convey a subtle yet powerful message about importance bearers of hope, resilience environmental conservation and the relationship between humanity and nature. By highlighting the delicate beauty of flowers and their

role in biodiversity, Gupta encourages viewers to pause and reflect on the fragility of our natural surroundings and the urgency of preserving them for future generations. The exhibition not only showcases Gupta's technical prowess but also invites viewers on an emotional journey through her creative process. Each artwork tells a story, capturing fleeting moments of beauty and themes of growth, resilience

and the interconnectedness of all living things. Through her use of vibrant colors and intricate compositions, Gupta creates a visual narrative that celebrates the beauty of nature, inspiring viewers to reconnect with the natural world and appreciate its wonders. As visitors explore "The

Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance," they are greeted by a rich tapestry of emotions and sensations. Gupta's ability her skill as a storyteller and her deep-seated passion for the environment. Each painting serves as a window into Gupta's artistic soul, symbiotic inviting viewers to experience the world through her eyes and discover the profound beauty that surrounds us all. Laxmi Gupta's exhibition is sustaining not merely a display of artistic talent but a celebration of nature's timeless elegance. Through her evocative paintings, Gupta invites us to pause, reflect and reconnect with the natural world, reminding us of the importance of preserving its beauty and diversity. "The Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance" is a tribute to the enduring power of art to inspire, uplift and enrich a deeper inviting contemplation on appreciation for the wonders of our planet.

FILM REVIEW

Bad Newz: Fresh Trio Saves a Predictable Film

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

Bad Newz, a Bollywood comedy that throws everything at the wall and sees what sticks, resulting in a wild ride of humor and chaos. Directed by Anand Tiwari, the movie stars the charming Vicky Kaushal as Akhil Chadha, National crush Tripti Dimri as Saloni Bagga and everyone's favourite Ammy Virk as Gurbir Pannu. The film is a rollercoaster of craziness and hilarity, with a surprising plot that keeps you engaged from start to finish. The story centers on Saloni, who unexpectedly becomes pregnant without knowing who the father is. The plot takes a wild turn when a

paternity test reveals that it is a

case of heteropaternal

superfecundation - a medical

marvel you'll have to look up!

film's greatest strength lies in its humor. The script is sharp and witty, relying on welltimed deliveries from the cast. Discussing the plot's details would spoil the fun, but let's just say it follows a familiar Bollywood arc of love, marriage, divorce (somewhat reconciliation. There's even a humorous nod to the famous American TV show FRIENDS , where an actor humorously quotes Rachel's (Jennifer Aniston) line, "No uterus, no opinion." Friends fans, keep an ear out for this familiar line delivered with

The movie is filled with references to old Bollywood songs and dialogues, which add nostalgic depth to the narrative. These elements are not just thrown in for the sake

comedic timing.



predictable) of it, they add a layer of depth and connect with the audience on an emotional level. Director Anand Tiwari has skillfully integrated these elements into the narrative, making them feel integral to the story rather than mere add-ons. An unexpected appearance by Neha Sharma wows the audience and Pati Patni Aur Woh actress Ananya Pandey's special entry is an ironic and delightful

> Anand Tiwari Director comedy

surprise.

relationships and familial bonds. Despite its comedic exterior, the movie subtly values these connections. Ammy Virk's performance deserves special mention. His comedic timing and onscreen presence add a lot to the film. The chemistry between Vicky Kaushal and Tripti Dimri is another highlight. They bring a natural ease to their roles that makes their on-screen relationship believable and engaging. Kaushal, in particular, looks incredibly charismatic and handles the comedic elements with

However, it's crucial to manage your expectations. Bad Newz might be lighthearted and entertaining, but it doesn't aim to be anything

moments of genuine groundbreaking. Unlike its Newwz, this film isn't a gamechanger. It's only the fresh pairing of the trio that saves Bad Newz and shines in an otherwise completely predictable film.

Despite all its positives, Bad Newz is best approached with tempered expectations. It's a fun ride but it won't leave a lasting impact. It is a delightful comedy that entertains with its sharp humor, nostalgic references and charming performances. The film delivers on its promise of comedy but doesn't aim to be anything more. It's a one-time watch, but don't expect too much or your Bad Newz movie date might end up being a bad date for you. So grab your popcorn, sit back and enjoy this fun-filled ride, just don't take it too seriously.

Rating: 3/5

A Triglot Journey Through Poetry and Emotion

Experience the profound depth of human connections in AMAN DEEP'S triglot poetry collection, 'AHBAAB', says SAKSHI PRIYA

 $A^{\it HBAAB}$ by the Poet Aman human emotions and the delicate balance between Deep Sidhu Chatha is an experiences. Titles such as personal adornment and the eloquent collection of poems that grub around into the rich concept of "Ahbaab" - a term encompassing friends, lovers unique triglot format, this Urdu, Hindi and English, following the precedent set by Deep's earlier work, Ifsha. The translations aim to capture the essence of the original verses, allowing for a nuanced and interpretative reading experience rather than a strict word-for-word approach. The publication of Ahbaab by Ferntree Publishing attests to

The book is thoughtfully divided into sections, each exploring various facets of

collection.

SHAAYARI AUR HUM, ISHQ, SHOKHI AUR NAZAAKAT and GUFTGU guide readers through themes and loved ones. Presented in a of love, beauty, conversation joy and liberation found in and spirituality. Each poem collection features couplets in within these sections resonates The collection also goes into with profound emotional spiritual and philosophical undertones, traditional poetic forms with BANDAGI examine the contemporary sensibilities. For instance, SHAAYARI AUR HUM reflects on the nature of poetry itself, capturing the poet's humility and the intrinsic beauty of poetic expression. ISHQ highlights the universality of love while the literary value of this acknowledging the rarity of true passion and SHOKHI human comprehension. Deep's AUR NAZAAKAT explores the complexities of friendships and relationships, emphasising employing everyday language

nurturing of meaningful **GUFTGU** connections. celebrates the beauty of conversation, underscoring the sincere dialogues.

blending realms. Sections profound relationship between the divine and the human, illustrating the poet's sense of being cherished by a higher power. Meanwhile, ROOH KI BAATE.N offers reflections on the soul's journey, emphasising its timeless nature and the mysteries that lie beyond poetic style is characterised by its simplicity and depth,



AHBAAB (Poetry) Author: Aman Deep | Publisher: Ferntree ₹ 500.00

imbued with profound insights, making her poetry both accessible and thoughtprovoking. The triglot format



enriches reader's enabling an experience, appreciation of the lyrical beauty of Urdu poetry alongside the Hindi and English translations. Deep's interpretative freedom is evident as she revisits her original thoughts, presenting them with renewed clarity and emotion.

Ahbaab is a beautiful journey of shayari that reaches deep into the reader's heart. It Each chapter establishes a

making every section a magical reflection of human emotion. Each piece of poetry in the book brings to light the significance of those who are no longer part of one's life, showcasing the stages of emotions that words often fail to describe. Aman Deep's heart and mind are palpably present in her work, revealing the challenges and beauty of writing a collection so deeply rooted in human connection. The book, originally written in Urdu, carries a profound resonance with the human mind and heart, with each line reflecting a deeper connection. The translations into English and Hindi adding another layer of depth to the work.

directly captures the essence of profound connection with the reader's experience, every line of the poem, touching the reader's heart and evoking wonder at the magic embedded in the words. This intricate interplay of emotion and language makes Ahbaab a remarkable and unforgettable literary journey.

In addition, it is a poignant and introspective compilation that beautifully captures the myriad shades of human emotions and experiences. The triglot presentation enhances its uniqueness, making it a significant contribution to contemporary poetry. With themes ranging from love and beauty to spirituality and philosophical musings, Ahbaab invites readers to embark on a reflective journey, enriching an appreciation for the simple yet profound

moments in life. Deep's authentic poetic resonates deeply, making Ahbaab a must-read for poetry enthusiasts and anyone interested in exploring the depths of human connections. Arguably, Ahbaab stands as a tribute to Aman Deep's literary prowess and her ability to weave complex human emotions into poetic forms. The collection's unique triglot format, combined with its profound thematic explorations, ensures that it will leave a lasting impression on readers, inviting them to reflect on their own connections and experiences. This is a collection not to be missed, offering a rich and resonant journey through the landscape of human emotions. Photo: Pankaj Kumar

INDIA WONEN'S TEAM WILL WIN ICC TROPHY SOON, SAYS SNEH Of sacrifices, a lot of struggle, a lot of things in between single side and so overs and so

Rohit Sharma and Co's recent triumph in the T20 World Cup has given the Indian women's team much-needed belief and confidence to continue its pursuit of winning a maiden ICC trophy, says the side's spin-bowling all-rounder Sneh Rana.

While India are once again favourites to retain the title in the Women's Asia Cup, starting in Sri Lanka on Friday, the team's true test will be in the T20 World Cup in October and next year's ODI World Cup which they host.

Rana believes India, who have tripped over near the final hurdle a few times, have worked very hard to win a global competition and glory is not far away.

"The Indian women's cricket team, if you look at the past 2-3 years, they are doing their best," Rana told PTI in an exclusive interview on Friday. "For (winning) the ICC trophy, let's take the men's (team's example), it took almost 10 years to get the trophy. They have been preparing and working hard for it for a long time.

"To achieve something big, it will not happen overnight. It will take time. It will take a lot

lot of things in between. But eventually, we will get there," Rana said.

Fielding has been an area of concern which has been acknowledged by the players and coaches, but Rana says there is no lack in intent in order to get better.

"When we play N number of matches, the chances of errors are more. But it doesn't mean that someone is bad at it. Obviously, as a player, when you are on the field, you want to always do your best for your country," she said.

"No one is there to say that it's okay, it will happen (ho jayega). (But) it could also be a matter of a bad day for someone."

"As far as ICC trophies are concerned, for big events, the more matches we play, the more experience we will get," Rana said.

Having made her debut in 2014, Rana had to wait for more than seven years for playing her first Test. Now, the right-arm off-spinner looks back proudly for having added three more to her kitty.

"I'm glad I got the opportunity. It had been a while, right? The scenario for Indian women's Test cricket is changing for good. The number of Tests we're getting to play now, it's



the best opportunity

players.
"The inclusion of multi-day format in domestic cricket,

that is also a big step from the BCCI to take this forward," Rana said.

For a team which didn't play

any 'home' Tests for nine long years since 2014, Rana credited players' fitness and endurance as the team won each of the

three Tests it has played since December 2023.

"It's a matter of mindset. Obviously, you've been playing

long formats that we used to have, the multi-days, that we played was last in 2018," she

"You have to be on the field for four days, you need endurance for that. Fitness is very important and as a senior player, it's (even) more important because you have to be there all the time," said Rana, who took a 10-for against South Africa earlier this month in the Chennai Test.

"You have to guide your youngsters as well. It's a bit challenging. But lastly, it's all about the mindset," she said. The Women's Premier League has made the Indian players busier than before but its versatile nature will help in the longer run, Rana said.

"Since WPL came, we have become a bit more busy. I think the busier, the better. Cricket has got more exposure since WPL came. The match exposure is always good for a player.

"The versatility that WPL brings on the table by sharing dressing rooms with the overseas players. (The) newfound talent of the country, (will bring) a refreshing change to women's cricket," she said. However, Rana faces the

back in the white-ball side as she was not included for the

Asia Cup campaign.
"I won't lie. It was a little heartbreaking to be dropped from the town. You want to from the team. You want to play for India, be it Test cricket or white-ball cricket," she said. "But at the same time, it has developed a hunger in me to rejoin the T20 format with my team or the 50-overs game. I'm

eagerly waiting for the opportunity," she said.
"I know I have it in me and I have penned down my said Rana, who has played 25 T20Is and 27 ODIs.

Rana also appreciated the fact that incumbent head coach Amol Muzumdar is getting a longer run than some of his predecessors.

Longevity and consistency in the side definitely helps, be it in the regards of coach or a player. With the amount of time one spends with the team, the knowledge about the player and the bonding within, that automatically increases," Rana said.

"He knows each and every player, their strengths... And how he can use that particular player in a match. At which moment, when and where he can use that player... He knows everything," Rana added.

I had skills but Gautam changed my mindset: Harshit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ompetence was not a problem but Competence was not a problem but Harshit Rana, by his own admission, struggled with the confidence part before Gautam Gambhir entered the picture and forced him to face his "fears".

The 22-year-old rookie pacer is on cloud nine right now after being picked for next month's ODI series against Sri Lanka.

To announce his joy to the world, he posted a picture on instagram in which he was seen lifting his equally jubilant father. But when it came to giving credit to those who shaped him, Rana was clear that "Gauti Bhaiyya" would always be "above everyone else".

"Delhi mein dil toot sakta hai, par humne kabhi hausla nahi haaraa (Delhi can break your heart but I never lost hope)," Rana said after learning about his maiden India call-

up.
"I believed in working hard but whenever I used to get hurt after being overlooked in age-group teams, I would sit in my room and start sobbing. My father Pradeep never ever gave up hope," he told PTI in an interview.

The bowler from Delhi's South Extension, who endured a tough time at the junior level, often overlooked.



had finally made it. And all it took for him to be in national reckoning was one stellar IPL season of 19 wickets in Kolkata Knight Riders' triumphant campaign this year.

"If I have to name three people whom in the West Indies. Rana said his I am indebted to in this beautiful senior state-mate has been a pillar of journey of mine, then it is my father for his efforts, my personal coach Amit Bhandari sir (former India and Delhi pacer) and above everyone else, Gauti bhaiyya (Gautam Gambhir),"

Rana said.

Gambhir was the mentor of KKR this season before taking over as India coach from Rahul Dravid, following the country's T20 World Cup triumph support ever since he came in contact with him.

"If my outlook towards the game has changed, a lot of it has got to do with Gauti bhaiyya's presence in the KKR match and things will fall in place.

dressing room and how he changed my mindset. At the elite level, you require skills but more than skills, you require the heart to handle the

pressure. Gauti bhaiyya would always tell me 'Mere ko tere pe trust hai. Tu match jeetake aayega'. (I trust you, you can win the match)," Rana recalled one of his interactions with the firebrand former opener, who is known to speak his mind. Rana had started on a bright note in 2022, when he played seven Ranji Trophy games for Delhi and got 28 wickets but since then, injuries prevented him from playing a lot of red-ball games. However, in white-ball cricket, he has

been phenomenal for Delhi in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, with 22 wickets in 14 games and 28 in 25 T20 matches. Playing at the Eden Gardens in front of 60,000 people, he nailed those block-hole deliveries, wide yorkers and slow bouncers. So how has he managed to back his skills under pressure?

"If you ask about the pressure part, it is Gautam Gambhir's advice. He would say, 'what's the worst thing that will happen? You will get hit and we can lose the match. But if you don't face your fears, how will you overcome them?'

That's what you train for," said the lanky player, who trained under Bhandari and Narinder Singh Negi in

Delhi's Players' Academy.

BHANDARI HONED SKILLS: "If you talk about my skill-set, then Bhandari sir and Negi sir have been my personal coaches for past two years," he said.

Bhandari, a Delhi stalwart, who played a few ODIs for India between 2000 to 2004, narrated an interesting story. "I didn't know who this boy was. In fact, when he came to me, he had not played for KKR but had played Ranji Trophy. He only called me up and said, 'sir, can you train Bhandari, who is an assistant coach with Gujarat Titans, recalled. "the first day he came, I didn't give him a new ball but an old ball and told him the areas (he needed to bowl) along with an instruction. Just bowl and don't look at me or come to me. If

I feel, I will call you." Bhandari was impressed by what he saw and decided to mentor the

"What I saw was a nice run-up but once he reached the crease, after loadup, everything needed a bit of work. non-bowling hand, alignment and he was ready to work," he said. Bhandari feels that Rana has the potential to do international level.

Back from the brink: India hockey player Sukhjeet Singh eyes dream Olympic debut

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Six years ago, a back injury had left his right leg temporarily paralysed but Sukhjeet Singh overcame the "toughest" phase of his life to earn a spot in the Olympic-bound Indian men's hockey agust and in determined to squad and is determined to prove his worth in the Games beginning July 26.

The 28-year-old forward will be competing in his maiden Olympics.

"Playing in the Olympics has always been a dream for me and my family. It's the pinnacle of any athlete's career, and I am honoured to have this opportunity," Sukhjeet, who made his India debut in 2022, said in a Hockey India (HI) release.

"I believe my hard work and dedication have paid off. Now. I am determined to fulfil my role in the team with excellence and repay the trust of my coach and teammates by giving my all in Paris."
The Jalandhar-born Sukhjeet

began playing hockey at the age of six, inspired by his father Ajit Singh, a former hockey player for Punjab Police. Despite the early start, his path to the senior Indian team was not an easy one.

In 2018, Sukhjeet was included in core probables camp for the senior team, but a freak back iniury resulted in temporary paralysis of his right leg, putting his dream on hold.

That period was one of the toughest times of my life. Being bedridden for almost five months was physically and mentally draining. I couldn't walk, let alone play hockey, and even the simplest tasks like eating by myself became impossible.

"Each day felt like my dream of

playing hockey was slipping further away, and it was incredibly disheartening," he recalled.

Sukhjeet said his family, especially father's, unwavering support and belief in his potential kept him going at a time when he "felt like giving up."
"...His refusal to let me lose

hope was crucial in helping me get back on my feet. His determination to see me back on the field was infectious, and it gave me the strength to push through the pain and challenges," he said.

After recovering from the injury, Sukhjeet finally donned the coveted blue jersey against Spain during the 2021-22 FIH Pro League season, marking his debut with a goal.

Over the past two years, Sukhieet has showcased his remarkable talent and consistency, scoring 20 goals in 70 matches that he played for the country. He played a key role in the

2023 FIH Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar, striking three goals in six games. He was also a part of the gold-medal winning teams at the Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai and the Hangzhou Asian Games last year.

Recently, Sukhjeet contributed significantly in the FIH Hockey Pro League, netting five goals.

"The last two years have been incredibly rewarding for me. Every match has been a learning experience, pushing me to improve and contribute more to the team's success." he said.

"My focus is now entirely on the Paris Olympics, and I am determined to give my best performance to help our team achieve the highest honours."

Nadal comes from 4-1 down in 2nd set to beat Norrie, reaches QF of Nordea Open in Sweden

AP ■ BASTAD (SWEDEN)

Rafael Nadal recovered from tumble and a 4-1 deficit in the second set to beat fifthseeded Cameron Norrie 6-4, 6-4 in the second round of the Nordea Open.

Nadal fell over in the first game of the second set after first time since he won the title attempting to slide on the clay, and needed treatment on a couple of bleeding scrapes. He then went a break down before winning the last five games of the match to reach his first quarterfinal since January.

"Great feelings, it's been a while without playing on the tour since Roland Garros and I had a chance to compete against a great player like Cameron," Nadal said.

"It's part of the journey today. I round doubles match.

haven't been competing very often so matches like today help and holding the pressure on the opponent for the whole game is something I need to improve on because I haven't played enough.'

Nadal is playing at the tournament in Sweden for the as a 19-year-old in 2005 as he prepares for the Olympic tournament on clay at Roland Garros in Paris.

He beat Leo Borg, the son of Swedish tennis legend Bjorn Borg, in the first round on Tuesday. That was his first singles match since he lost in the first round of the French Open to Alexander Zverev. He teamed up with Casper Ruud on Monday to win a first-

ESFI announces qualifiers to select Indian team for Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Esports Federation of India (ESFI) I on Friday opened registrations for the National Esports Championship 2024 (NESC24), which will serve as the qualifiers for the esports event at the 6th Åsian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Thailand's Chonburi.

Organised by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), the 6th AIMAG will witness 36 sports plus two demonstration sports.

Having been upgraded into a full-fledged of August as an online event (quarterfinals onwards will be streamed live on its

AIMAG will be held in its entirety at Chonburi's Central Sriracha from November 23 to 28 and will feature three mobile titles - Mobile Legend Bang Bang (Female Category, Team Event), Arena of Valor (Open Category, Team Event), and eFootball (Open Category, Individual Event).

India will compete in the eFootball mobile category only as AOV and MLBB are banned in the country.

The NESC24 will be held in the first week

YouTube channel) and will present players from India with a chance to demonstrate their skills in the eFootball mobile title. The selected players will get to train at the venue ahead of the continental games. The 6th AIMAG will commence on November 21, two days before the esports event kicks off, and run until November

The eFootball mobile category will hold group stage matches on November 23 and 24, followed by the playoffs on November 26, and the final, gold medal round on

One lakh athletes to be identified within 100 days under KIRTI: Mandaviya

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday launched the second phase of the KIRTI project with an aim to identify one lakh young athletes within 100 days, for support.

He felt the nationwide talent hunt under Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) will prove to be a stepping stone to making India one of the top five nations in the Olympic Games by 2047.

"India is full of diversity and potential. There has never been a shortage of brainpower, manpower, or

said

talent in India,"



Mandaviya after launching the second phase of the programme at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here.

"Not just the cities, but even in our far-flung areas like the Coastal, North-East, Himalayan and tribal areas have a quality can sportsperson there.' In the third Phase, the KIRTI

program will include all 20

disciplines of the Khelo India scheme. The first phase of KIRTI was launched in Chandigarh on March 12 this

year.
"We need to have a steady stream of these high-performing assets and that's where KIRTI, a stepping stone to sporting excellence, comes into play. "Everyone will be given

sports skills, whether they live in a village or a city, and whether they come from a poor background or otherwise." In Delhi, Sports poor Authority of India (SAI) shall conduct assessment of over 25000 MCD students in 12 zones and cover 5 major Athletics, disciplines:

opportunities to develop their

Football, Volleyball, Kabaddi, and Kho-Kho, for almost one month. Addressing schoolgoing children, who attended the launch event, Mandaviya said, "Among you, there will certainly be an Olympic champion. I appreciate the fact that your parents have come and are backing you to play sports."

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