



OPINION 6 TACKLING NEW WAVE OF TERROR IN JAMMU

WORLD 9 MY AIM IS TO DEFEAT TRUMP: KAMALA

MONEY 10 SENSEX, NIFTY SETTLE LOWER AHEAD OF BUDGET

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY JULY 23, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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INDIA WOMEN TEAM EYES SEMIS BERTH IN ASIA CUP 11 SPORTS

## India's GDP to surge 6.5-7% in 2024-25: Economic Survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's GDP is likely to grow at 6.5 to 7 per cent in the current fiscal year amid global challenges which may impact exports, said Economic Survey 2023-24 tabled in Parliament on Monday.

Global agencies like IMF and ADB see India to grow at 7 per cent. "The Survey conservatively projects a real GDP growth of 6.5-7 per cent, with risks evenly balanced, cognizant of the fact that the market expectations are on the higher side," said the document tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament.

performance. Improved balance sheets will help the private sector cater to strong investment demand. The Survey also added a note of caution saying "private capital formation after good growth in the last three years may turn slightly more cautious because of fears of cheaper imports from countries that have excess capacity".



Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran addresses a Press conference after tabling of the Economic Survey 2023-24 in Parliament by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in New Delhi, on Monday

also likely to witness a further uptick. A normal rainfall forecast by the India Meteorological Department and the satisfactory spread of the southwest monsoon thus far are likely to improve the agriculture sector's performance and support the revival of rural demand, it said. However, the monsoon season still has some way to go, the Survey said.

areas for further growth and progress as "we move towards building a Viksit Bharat". Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Monday said a 7 per cent GDP growth rate, the upper end of the projection made in the Survey, is doable depending on monsoon and global financial risks.

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Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla being greeted by TMC MP Shatrughan Sinha after the latter took oath as a member of the House during the first day of the Parliament Session, in New Delhi, on Monday

### Modi slams Opp for silencing him for 2.5 hours, stifling his voice

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day before his Government is to present its first Budget in the third term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi outlined the agenda for this Session with an appeal to the Opposition to be constructive and a combative message saying some parties have practised "negative politics" and "misused" Parliament to hide their political failures.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the media on the first day of the Parliament Session, in New Delhi, on Monday

### SC stays nameplate order to eateries on Kanwar Yatra route

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an interim order, the Supreme Court on Monday stayed the directives issued by the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand directing eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route to display names of owners, the staff and other details "to ensure... no confusion among kanwariyas" but said they will be required to display the kind of food they are selling to the Kanwariyas.



Supreme Court

directives, as the Opposition has alleged that the orders were "communal and divisive" and intended to target Muslims and Scheduled Castes by forcing them to reveal their identity, but the Bench maintained that the step has been taken keeping in mind law and order issues and the religious sentiments of pilgrims.

Continued on Page 8

## Tempers run high over NEET in LS

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The first day of the Monsoon cum Budget Session on Monday witnessed the ruling party and Opposition members face off over the NEET and NTA row with Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi demanding immediate resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan who in turn said he is on the post "at the mercy of his leader (Prime Minister Narendra Modi)" and that the Government is "collectively answerable".

understands the fundamentals of what is going on here," the Congress leader said. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said this Government will create new records in paper leaks. "Students across the country are protesting. Investigation is leading to revelations, arrests are being made. I have only one request, students will not get justice if this Minister continues," he said.

called rubbish. There cannot be a more unfortunate statement by the Leader of the Opposition. I condemn this," said Pradhan in the thick of storm ever since irregularities in the NEET followed by UGC-NET have been reported. A cornered Pradhan then took a "remote control" job — a swipe the BJP routinely uses to target the Manmohan Singh Government.

Continued on Page 8

### Bihar's demand for Special Status suffers setback

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The NDA partner JD(U)'s "pressure" on Centre over demand of Special Status to Bihar came down crashing after the Government on Monday cited an inter-Ministerial group report prepared in 2012 to assert that a case for granting special category status to Bihar is not made out. The BJP's allies from Bihar demanded the status for the backward State.



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar

consideration of all the factors listed above and the peculiar situation of a State, the Minister said. "Earlier, the request of Bihar for Special Category Status was considered by an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) which submitted its Report on March 30, 2012. The IMG came to the finding that based on existing NDC criteria, the case for Special Category Status for Bihar is not made out," the Minister said.

## Hot chase to neutralise Pak terrorists

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Close on the heels of the high-level security review meeting, chaired by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi to chalk out a strategy to flush out Pakistani terrorists occupying Jammu Heights, a heavily armed group of terrorists launched two more frontal attacks on an Army post and the house of the Shaurya Chakra awardee in the Gunda village of Khawas tehsil in the frontier Rajouri district in the wee hours of Monday.



Army personnel during an encounter with terrorists in Gundha area of Rajouri district, on Monday

President of India on July 5 in New Delhi. According to the citation, "Last year in August 2023, Kumar, armed with an outmoded, inferior rifle had taken on two highly trained guerrilla warfare terrorists of the PAFF-Jaish, who were equipped with sophisticated assault rifles and grenades. Unmindful of his safety, he tailed the two terrorists and (displaying)

raw courage and excellent field craft, he closed in on the terrorists and engaged them from a close distance. He maintained contact with the other till (security) forces closed in. His brave act led to the neutralisation of one foreign terrorist."

track down the footprints of terrorists. Special forces were also inducted in the ongoing operations spread across the thickly forested area. In a post on X, White Knight Corps said, "Terrorists attacked the house of a VDC at Gunda, Rajouri at 3.10 am. A nearby Army column reacted and a firefight ensued. In another update the White Knight Corps posted on X, "Indian Army acted on intelligence, anticipating the threat to a Village Defence Guard in a remote area in Rajouri - Reasi. Tactical teams swiftly intervened, ensuring no harm to the VDC member and his family. Operations are continuing and a firefight is in progress".



Students and others are seen within the precinct of the Supreme Court during a hearing on a batch of petitions related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam NEET-UG 2024, in New Delhi on Monday

### NEET: Experts told to examine issue of correct answer

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Director, IIT-Delhi to set up a team of three experts that would go into a particular question of Physics asked in the NEET-UG 2024 examination and submit a report on the correct answer by Tuesday noon.

Continued on Page 8



## Hathras probe panel gets office

Lucknow (PNS): In compliance with the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, rooms have been allotted for the office use of the three-member judicial inquiry commission constituted to investigate the incident that took place in the satsang programme of Shri Sakar Narayan Vishwa Hari alias Bhole Baba in village Fullera Mughalgarhi under Sikandramau police station of Hathras district.

In the first floor of Vikas Bhawan in Lucknow, room numbers 114 to 117 have been allotted to Brijesh Kumar Srivastava (II), Justice (Retired) of Allahabad High Court, who is chairman of the commission, and his staff, room numbers 107 and 104 have been allotted to Hemant Rao (Retd. IAS), who is member of the panel, and his staff and room numbers 108 and 105 have been allotted to Bhavesh Kumar Singh (Retd. IPS), who is member of the panel, and his staff.

**the pioneer**

# CLASSIFIEDS

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from NAWAB AHMAD to SHARIQ NAWAB S/O AZIZ AHMAD NAWAB for future purpose. Add- 42/27 MAKHANIYA BAZAR MESTON ROAD KANPUR NAGAR

**NOTICE**

I, No -14687027Y Name ASHOK SINGH, Rank NK Unit 625 EME Bn, R/O Vill. Harbanhpur P.O. Bijahara Tehsil Derapur, distt. Kanpur dehant Pin 209301, A/P 835 Fd WKSP Coy EME. Declare that my mother Name and DOB wrongly registered as Anno devi, and DOB 04.05.1953 in his service record. instead of correct Name Anar Devi and DOB 05.07.1954. now applying for correction for the same valid affidavit no. 78AE 971123 dated 11.07.2024.

**NOTICE**

It is Notified that my Husband name Late Mohan Lal has been recorded my name is Asha Devi in service record but my husband of Aadhar ID is Asha has been written. Therefore, Asha & Asha Devi is the one of same person. Now I will be known the name of Asha for all purpose. Asha W/o Late Mohan Lal R/o 352 Kacchi Basti, Govind Nagar, Kanpur Nagar- 208006.

**NOTICE**

I Shiv Darshan Pandey (No. 15793788L) village- premdhar Patti, Dist - pratapgarh in our army record my daughter Name- Dibayansi and DOB - 01-01-2013 is mention which is correct but in (Adhar card her name- Aarushi Pandey and DOB 01-01- 2014 is mention which is incorrect) (from now my daughter correct name- Dibayansi and DOB - 01-01-2013)

**NOTICE**

I, Shweta Krishna, wife of Shri Nipun Srivastava, want to inform that I am the present owner of Plot - 465, Vineet Khand, Gomtinagar, Lucknow which was adjusted from C-2193 Vibhav Khand. The original copy of the allotment letter of the above plot dated 25.04.1985 (Registration Number-0163007977) in the name of Mrs. Madhuri Saran is actually lost. Whose FIR No.- 20240000602891, Whose misuse in future is unconstitutional. If any person receives the said allotment letter, then inform Axis Bank Loan Centre, Sector 4 Gomti Nagar Extension within 15 days. Telephone No. 0522-4077776

**NOTICE**

Ashwan Kumar Pandey, Abhinav Kumar Pandey and Atul Kumar Pandey (Borrower) have agreed to create mortgage in respect of the Part of Plot situated at Part of Arazi No. 35 situated at Naramau Banger Kanpur Nagar, measuring 100 sq. Yds. With SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. and they acquired the same as their ancestral property after the death of their mother late Smt. Vijay Maya Pandey, there is no other legal heirs exists except the above mentioned legal heirs. If any person having any claim against the said Property can contact to me, within 07 days. Bharat Bhatnagar Advocate Office :- Room No. 14 Second Floor Madgal Adhivakti Bhawan Civil Court Kanpur Kanpur Mob. 09839034426

**NOTICE**

I Vivek Agarwal alias Vivek Saraf age 46 years s/o Mr. Shambhu Dayal Aggarwal resident of 477 B Vijay Lakhmi Nagar an the same person my wife's name is Neetu Saraf alias Neetu Saraf age 44 years we are known and known by both the above names. If my name is written as Vivek Saraf and my wife's name as Neetu Saraf by mistake in any record, then it should be considered and understood as Vivek Agarwal and Neetu Agarwal. Vivek Agarwal S/o Shri Shambhu Dayal 477 B Vijay Laxmi Nagar, Sitapur Mob 9415566666

**NOTICE**

Public Notice: I, Himanshu Singh S/o Suresh Singh R/o 6104 Bank Colony Mainpuri Uttar Pradesh- 205001 changed my name to Himanshu Prabhahu.

**NOTICE**

Public Notice: I, Ritika alias Ritika Srivastava D/o Rakesh Kumar Srivastava R/o No-1803 Gadia Nawabganj Barabanki U.P.-225003 Changed My Name To Ritika Srivastava.

**NOTICE**

Public Notice: I, Ravi Bhatia S/o Ghanshyam Bhatia R/o C-10 Krishna Green Chhatikara Road Vrindaban Bangar Mathura U.P.-281121 Changed My-Minor Son's name Hem Krishna Bhatia to Harsh Bhatia aged-14-Years.

**NOTICE**

Public Notice: I, Satyajit Srivastava S/o Kishor Kumar Srivastava R/o Gaya Prasad Nagar Bilhaur Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh-209202 Changed My name to Ssatyajit Srivastav.

**NOTICE**

Public Notice: I, Ritika alias Ritika Srivastava D/o Rakesh Kumar Srivastava R/o No-1803 Gadia Nawabganj Barabanki U.P.-225003 Changed My Name To Ritika Srivastava.

**NOTICE**

Public Notice: I, Satyajit Srivastava S/o Kishor Kumar Srivastava R/o Gaya Prasad Nagar Bilhaur Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh-209202 Changed My name to Ssatyajit Srivastav.

**NOTICE**

Public Notice: I, Ritika alias Ritika Srivastava D/o Rakesh Kumar Srivastava R/o No-1803 Gadia Nawabganj Barabanki U.P.-225003 Changed My Name To Ritika Srivastava.

# Youth beaten to death over power supply issue

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A youth was beaten to death in Banthra allegedly by a rival group on Monday. The conflict began on Sunday night over demands to restore electricity supply to his area first. The accused entered the house and beat up the youth's father and brother, who tried to save him. Both the injured father and brother were hospitalised. The altercation reportedly stemmed from a dispute over the electricity supply. A police complaint was lodged in this regard. The victim's family also created a scene at Lok Bandhu Hospital, raising anti-police slogans and accusing the police of neglecting their initial complaint.

According to the police, the dispute over electricity supply in Banthra village escalated on Sunday night. Later, one party raided the house of the other and attacked the entire family. The victim's side alleged that Shani Singh, a resident of the same village, attacked them with his associates. The deceased was identified as Hrithik Pandey (22) of Banthra. Upon hearing of the incident, locals protested and shouted slogans against the police. The victim's side accused Banthra police of negligence. Reports said that the electricity supply to the victim's village had been disrupted for the last three days. Hrithik's father, Indradev Pandey, a property dealer, confirmed this, stating that the supply had been restored around 10 pm on Sunday night, but not in their area. He sent Hrithik to inquire about the issue.

At the sub-powered station, Hrithik encountered Rishu Singh and his friends. A dispute arose as both parties argued for electricity supply to their respective areas. Hrithik then returned home, but shortly afterwards, Shani and his friends arrived at Hrithik's house and began thrashing him with sticks and rods. When Indradev and his other son Abhishek heard Hrithik's screams and tried to intervene, they were also attacked. Both Indradev and Abhishek sustained grievous injuries and were admitted to the Lok Bandhu Hospital. The victim's family claimed that while the electricity department had filed a complaint against Hrithik, the police raided their house but failed to take action on their complaint from Sunday night. An FIR was registered in this regard and the accused names in it were identified as Himanshu Singh, Avnish Singh, Priyanshu Singh and Pratyush Singh besides 10-12

February 18, 2023, according to Hindu customs, with her parents providing a dowry of approximately Rs 30 lakh. Nidhi stated that her husband, who works in the Education department and is an alcoholic, has been physically and verbally abusive. He has repeatedly demanded additional dowry from her parents under threat of death. Her mother-in-law Poonam and her sister-in-laws also began harassing her after she disclosed the abuse. Nidhi alleged that on July 15, her husband, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and two unidentified individuals attacked her,

A woman lost her foetus after her husband and in-laws over dowry in Krishna Nagar. The woman is currently hospitalised and a dowry harassment case has been filed against her husband and in-laws. She is in severe mental distress due to the loss of her unborn child. The victim, identified as Nidhi Sharma from Jaynarayan Lane in Hussainganj, is married to Virendra Sharma from LDA Colony (Sector D) in Krishna Nagar. Nidhi reported that she married Virendra Sharma on

## Woman thrashed by husband, in-laws suffers loss of foetus

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

choking her in an attempt to kill her. She managed to escape and sought help at Ashiyana police station, which directed her to Krishna Nagar police station. The police had her medically examined at Lokbandhu Government Hospital. Afterward, her parents and brother took her home. Once she recovered somewhat, she filed a complaint against her in-laws. Nidhi alleged that due to the abuse, she suffered a miscarriage. A case has been registered against her husband and other accused under relevant sections of the BNSS.

## Girl kidnapped, search on after distress call

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A female college student was kidnapped in Nigoha after being sedated allegedly by a group, including three girls. Her family, initially thinking she had disappeared on her own, was frantically searching for her. The mystery of her sudden disappearance ended on Saturday when her brother-in-law received a distress call from her. The family reported that the student had been kidnapped three days ago from Nigohan. "On the phone, she told her brother-in-law that she had been kidnapped and held captive. She pleaded to be saved or else she would be killed," the family told the police. During the phone conversation, the victim revealed that the gang consisted of three girls and four boys. She had been sedated by the kidnappers and could not identify the place where she was being held captive. The family immediately informed the Nigohan police station, and the police formed a team to search for the accused. The victim is a student at a college in Bindauwa in the Mohanlalganj area. According to her family, she went to college as usual on Thursday but did not return home till after late in the evening. The anxious family members called and inquired from their acquaintances and relatives but to no avail. Later on Thursday evening, the girl's family filed a missing report at the Nigohan police station. Despite hectic efforts, the police could not locate her on Friday. On Saturday, the girl managed to secretly call her brother-in-law using one of the kidnappers' phone. She remembered his number after much effort. During the call, she pleaded with him to save her, explaining that three girls and four boys had kidnapped her. "I am talking to you by stealing their phone, do not call this number because if they find out, they will kill me," she told her brother-in-law. She said she had been given some medicine, had a severe headache, and had no idea where she was or where she was being taken. The brother-in-law immediately informed his parents-in-law, and they rushed to the Nigohan police station to report the details. The police deployed several teams to search for the girl, including obtaining the call detail records (CDR). The girl's close acquaintances are also being questioned. Nigohan police station incharge Anuj Tiwari confirmed that the family had already filed the missing report. Two surveillance and police teams had been deployed to search for the girl and apprehend the suspects.

## LMC executive addresses water supply, approves key issues

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A meeting of the executive committee of Lucknow Municipal Corporation, held on Monday, focused on the water supply system and sewer lines in the city, with calls for time-bound solutions. Directions were given to fix the water supply system, and all executive engineers were instructed to collaborate with the Jal Nigam to prepare a report within 15 days to present to Mayor Sushma Kharakwal. Additional Municipal Commissioner Lalit Kumar and chief engineer Mahesh Verma were directed to prepare and present a report on the work done by the Jal Kal department in zone 6 over the last two months, including the expenditure. The committee approved providing land for the construction of new shelter homes in Lucknow district under the shelter scheme for the urban homeless. Another proposal was passed to allocate a different piece of land for the construction of Bijinor police station due to the presence of a high-tension line on the previously allotted land. It was unanimously decided to pass the proposal for selecting the executing agency for the construction of the new LMC headquarters building on the land located at central workshop in Gomti Nagar and send the project to the government. The committee also approved engaging junior engineers for a contract period of one year through the Regional Centre for City and Environment Studies (RCUES) for the timely and quality implementation of construction works of LMC. It was unanimously decided to present the proposal of naming various locations in the upcoming meeting of the executive committee. These include naming Kathauta lake in Chinnah ward after Late Aadya Prasad Singh, Virat Khand main road after Late Bharat Bhushan Bhatia, Vibhav Khand road after Late Shastri Prasad Tripathi, and a road in Aliganj ward as Gopal Krishna

## Woman duped of ₹99,000 in online fraud

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman was defrauded of approximately Rs 99,000 in an online fraud in Gomti Nagar on Monday. The victim, Mrudul Goel, reported that she had advertised a portion of her house for rent. She received a call from one Ashish Kumar, who requested a video of the property. After viewing the video, Ashish confirmed the rental deal and claimed to be an army employee who required an advance payment equivalent to two months' rent. Although Mrudul had asked for one month's rent in advance along with a security deposit of one month's rent, Ashish insisted on the two-month advance. The following day, Rajendra Singh Shekhawat contacted Mrudul, stating that he needed to pay Rs 36,000 as rent on behalf of Ashish. Rajendra asked her to share her Paytm details and tricked her into transferring Rs 36,000 to his account instead. When Mrudul informed Rajendra of the mistake, he instructed her to repeat the process, leading to another loss of Rs 36,000. Rajendra then deceived her again, causing her to lose an additional Rs 27,000. Realising she had been scammed, Mrudul contacted Ashish, who claimed he had not authorised anyone to make payments on his behalf. Mrudul then reached out to her bank, which blocked the phone numbers of Ashish and Rajendra. Subsequently, she received a call from someone claiming to be Malhotra, who said he had received an email from the police regarding a refund. Mrudul chose not to engage with this caller. A case has been registered in connection with the fraud.

## Builder arrested on charges of rape, forcible conversion

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A builder was arrested on Monday in the Ghazipur police station area on charges of raping a woman, forcing her to convert, extorting Rs 3 lakh, and demanding more money to keep mum. The accused, Mohammed Azim Idrisi, is a builder involved in buying and selling houses. It is alleged that Azim and his accomplice Nihal aka Syed Abdul Alim Jafri of Madaion, enticed the woman through a housing-related matter. In her complaint, the woman alleged that Azim offered her ice cream laced with sedatives during an outing, then took her to a location where he raped her while Nihal filmed the assault on a mobile phone. She claimed that Azim has been blackmailing her since the incident, threatening to post the obscene video on social media unless she paid him Rs 3 lakh. Azim reportedly demanded more money to prevent the video's release. Additionally, the woman alleged that Azim pressured her to convert from Hinduism to Islam to avoid societal disgrace.

## CPI (ML) hails stay on govt order to eateries

Lucknow (PNS): The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) on Monday described the Supreme Court's interim stay on the order of the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh to install nameplates on the food shops falling on the route of Kanwar Yatra, as a victory of public protest. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said in a statement issued on Monday that the apex court's stay on similar orders given by the Bharatiya Janata Party governments of first Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand as a step taken to protect the Constitution. "These orders divided social brotherhood, promoted untouchability, were hateful and against the Constitution. There was a nationwide protest against them. The court showed the mirror to the government," he said. The CPI-ML leader also criticised the order of the Central government lifting ban on participation of government employees in the activities of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

## Lal Bihari Yadav to be leader of oppn in UP Council

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party MLC Lal Bihari Yadav will be the leader of opposition in UP Legislative Council, the upper House of the state legislature. Jamir Ansari will be the deputy leader of the party in the Legislative Council. Another SP MLC, Kiranpal Kashyap, has been appointed as the chief whip of the SP party in the council. After the retirement of its members, SP had lost the required number to claim the post of leader of opposition in the UP Legislative Council. Ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the elections for 13 vacant seats of UP Legislative Council were held. All candidates were elected unopposed

## LDA to privatise community centres

Lucknow (PNS): In a bid to increase its revenue, the Lucknow Development Authority decided on Monday to privatise its community centres, resulting in a doubling of rental charges. The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by LDA Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar. The proposal will be a key agenda item at the upcoming board meeting.

According to the VC, all community centres across the city, except those in Gomti Nagar, will be privatised. There are five centres in Gomti Nagar. Tenders for these centres will be issued offline in the last week of July, while the others will be leased to private entrepreneurs. Online tenders for the remaining centres will be available on July 24. The meeting also resolved to

The 10-year-old child remains in shock. The severity of the situation was revealed after police reviewed the CCTV footage. The father alleged that after the beating, the teacher instructed the child to sit on a bench, and no school staff came to assist him. The school administration has suspended the teacher, but the father believes this action does little to remedy the situation, as his child is now reluctant to attend school and feels that all teachers treat students poorly. The father also claimed that the teacher had previously beaten other students. The child's mother expressed shock after viewing the CCTV footage, questioning how such brutality could be inflicted on an innocent child. She mentioned that the child is currently receiving painkillers and antibiotics and is being examined regularly by doctors. The school administration commented that the child, who joined the school only last year and is somewhat weak academically, had parents who were less involved, as evidenced by their lack of attendance at parent-teacher meetings.



Devotees offering 'jalabishek' at Buddheshwar temple on the first day of Shravan, which also happened to be the first Monday of the month

**NOTICE**

Property Number - 1, House Number - 93, LIG Area - 105 square meters, Scheme Visayakpur, Bangar, Kanpur Nagar, recorded in Jild Number-1, Volume Number 11061, Pages 281 to 310, Serial Number 4709 on date 07.06.2021, registered in Sub-Registrar Zone 2, Kanpur Nagar. Property Owner - (First Party) Mrs. Shubha Srivastava, wife of Dharmendra Srivastava, (Second Party) Raghavendra Pratap Singh, S/o Mr. Havalidar Singh. Property Number - 2, House Number - 92, LIG Area - 105 square meters, Scheme- Visayak Nagar, Bangar, Kanpur Nagar, recorded in Jild Number-1, Volume Number 15500, Pages 79 to 106, Serial Number 6426 on date 03.06.2024, registered in Sub-Registrar Zone 4, Kanpur Nagar. Property Owner - (First Party) Mrs. Manjit Kaur, wife of Late Sardar Devendra Singh, (Second Party) Raghavendra Pratap Singh, S/o Mr. Havalidar Singh. Property Number - 3, House Number - 95, LIG Area - 105 square meters, Scheme- Visayak Nagar, Bangar, Kanpur Nagar, recorded in Jild Number-1, Volume Number 915 on date 27.01.2021, registered in Sub-Registrar Zone 2, Kanpur Nagar. Property Owner - (First Party) Harbhajan Singh, S/o Late Ishwar Singh, (Second Party) Mrs. Ila Yadav, W/o of Mr. Raghavendra Pratap Singh. The original allotment letters of all the mentioned properties have been lost and are intended to be mortgaged in the Indian Bank, Lakhanpur Branch for loan purposes. If anyone has any objections, they may register their objection in writing with the Branch Manager within 7 days of the publication. Authorized Officer, Indian Bank, Lakhanpur Branch, Kanpur

**Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar**

Tender Notice Reference No.GNDU/Gen/54/2024

The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following:

Sr. No.	Item	Quantity
1	Supply of Toner / Drum for various printer and photo copier machine	92 Items

Closing date & Time : 01/08/2024 at 5:00 PM  
For details log onto: www.eproc.punjab.gov.in  
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.

Assistant Registrar (General),  
Guru Nanak Dev University,  
Amritsar



# CM asks officers to review projects every 15 days

PNS ■ AZAMGARH



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Azamgarh on Monday where he reviewed the development projects underway in the division and gathered updates from officials on the law and order situation in Azamgarh, Ballia and Mau.

During his visit, the chief minister gathered information on revenue, law and order, electricity system and cow shelters, and issued essential guidelines as needed. The chief minister also inspected the ongoing construction of the Harihar Sangeet Mahavidyalaya. He also held a meeting with the public representatives of the division. Yogi spent about four hours in the district. This was Yogi's first visit to the district since the Lok Sabha elections. He arrived at the Police Lines heliped by helicopter from Gorakhpur and then went to the Collectorate building by car. There, he met with public representatives from the division. In the afternoon, Yogi held a divisional review meeting at the Collectorate auditorium, focusing on development works and law and order. The meeting was attended by officers from Azamgarh district and local public representatives, while officials from other districts joined through virtual means. The chief minister emphasised the need for timely and high-quality implementation of public interest and welfare schemes. He directed the officials to monitor development projects consistently. "Appoint a dedicated nodal officer for each project. The nodal officer must provide a progress report every week. Senior officers should review the projects every 15 days," he said. The chief minister insisted that all projects be completed on schedule with a focus on quality. "No project should face delays," he asserted. The chief minister also stressed

the importance of managing traffic flow, and ensuring that vehicles are not parked on roads and the street vendors are properly organised to prevent congestion. He reviewed the water levels of the Ghaghra river in the Deora area of Sagdi tehsil and issued instructions to stay vigilant regarding potential floods. He also enquired about the current preparations for flood management. During the review meeting on law and order, the chief minister emphasised the need for stringent action against criminals, stressing that no negligence would be tolerated. He asked the officials to take strict measures against all forms of

# Addressing people's problems priority of UP government: Yogi

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Monday, reiterated his government's commitment to prioritising resolution of people's issues, urging them not to worry about anything as long as he was in-charge of the state. Speaking at the Janata Darshan, which was held at Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan in Gorakhnath temple and attended by over 300 people, Yogi said: "Addressing and resolving people's problems at any cost is the priority of our government."

medical treatment will receive complete medical care. Lack of funds will not obstruct their treatment", The chief minister said. At the Janta Darshan, Chief Minister Yogi first enquired about the Ayushman card from those seeking financial assistance. If they did not have one, he assured them that the government would provide full support for their treatment. Forwarding their applications to the officials concerned, the

chief minister instructed them to expedite completion of the cost estimation process for the treatment and make it available to the government. Chief Minister Yogi asked the officials to ensure that revenue and police related matters were handled with complete transparency and fairness. He emphasised that anyone forcibly occupying another person's land should be punished according to the law. "Officers should prioritise pub-

lic welfare initiatives and ensure the swift resolution of every victim's issue," he said. The chief minister also gifted chocolates to the children accompanying women and showered his affection and blessings on them on the occasion. He encouraged them to study. Prior to attending the Janata Darshan, Chief Minister and Gorakshpeethadhishwar Yogi Adityanath offered prayers to Guru Gorakhnath and visited the statue of his guru, Mahant Avidyanath.

While touring the temple complex, he also visited the cowshed, where he served the cows and fed them jaggery. Yogi enquired about the health and nutrition of all the cattle from the gaushala workers and gave the necessary instructions. Monday marked the first day of the sacred month of Sawan. On this auspicious occasion, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performed rituals at the Shrivling installed at the Gorakhnath temple and worshipped for the well-being of all.

# UP enhancing road connectivity with network of link expressways

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In its ongoing pursuit to improve road connectivity across Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath government is not only developing an extensive network of expressways, but also building several link expressways to connect two or more long distance expressways in order to reduce distance as well as travel time between smaller districts. At present, apart from Ballia Link Expressway (131 km), Chitrakoot Link Expressway (15.20 km), Agra Lucknow Expressway to Purvanchal Expressway Link Expressway (61.60 km), Ganga Expressway to Agra Expressway via Farrukhabad Link Expressway (93 km), Yamuna Expressway to Ganga Expressway via Bulandshahr Link Expressway (84 km) are either under construction, or are proposed. Alongside these link expressways, solar parks, electric vehicle charging stations and public convenience centres will also be developed. The Ballia Link Expressway will connect Ghazipur to Ballia, with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) allocating Rs 1,600 crore for its construction. The Chitrakoot Link Expressway, linking the Bundelkhand Expressway to Aghmedganj, will start as a 4-lane road, with plans to expand it to eight lanes later. The estimated cost for this 93-km link expressway is Rs 6,500 crore. Furthermore, the Bundelkhand Link Expressway, connecting the under-construction Ganga Expressway to Jewar airport, will also span 84 km, with a construction cost of Rs 6,000 crore.

# 4 die in mishap

Lucknow (PNS): Four passengers were killed and over three dozen injured in a head-on collision between a Roadways bus and a private bus in the Milak area of Rampur district early Monday morning, police said. The accident took place on the Delhi-Bareilly national highway on the Kanwar Yatra route, they added. The private bus was going from Haridwar to Shrawasti district, while the UPSRTC bus was going from Bareilly to Delhi, when both of them collided head-on, the police said. On being informed about the accident, District Magistrate Joginder Singh and Superintendent of Police of Rampur, Vidyasagar Mishra, reached the spot. The DM said the UP Roadways bus and private bus collided on NH-24 around 4 am.

# Shiksha Saptah brings new hope for school kids

PNS ■ LUCKNOW



The Yogi Adityanath government has launched a unique initiative to foster a learning culture among children through games. Through Shiksha Saptah, efforts are being made to enhance children's future in council schools statewide. On the first day of Shiksha Saptah, which runs from July 22 to 28, children learned to create a different version of ludo and made toys from local materials. They also learned to make puppets from cloth and waste materials. This programme aims to improve children's future in primary, upper primary, and Kasturba Gandhi residential schools. The primary goal of Shiksha Saptah is to develop

children's logical abilities by incorporating activities focused on a specific subject each day. Every effort has been made to ensure the programme's success, with specific instructions to execute the programme for the children's overall development. The Basic Education department has shared the weekly programme schedule and links with the district basic education officers.

# PED LAGAO, PED BACHAO JAN ABHIYAN-2024

# UP govt gearing up to turn river banks green

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is gearing up to turn river banks across the state green with the plantation of 3,72,66,000 (37.27 million) saplings on 25,061.84 hectares under the Ped Lagao, Ped Bachao Jan Abhiyan-2024. The government has set plantation targets for Ganga, Yamuna and Hindon riverbanks as part of the campaign, which will run until September 30. Specifically, 7.75 million saplings will be planted on 5,096.42 hectares along the banks of the Ganga. Additionally, 534 sites along the Yamuna have also been identified for plantations. To ensure the conservation of these plantations, the government has appointed nodal officers for monitoring and management. The plantations will be carried out along the banks of rivers as part of the holy stream initiative. Specifically, 676 sites have been identified along the Ganga river, where 7.75 million saplings will be planted across 5,096.42 hectares. In the forest divisions along the Ganga, including Prayagraj, Pratapgarh, Kaushambi, Fatehpur, Varanasi, Ghazipur, Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Kashi Wildlife and Ballia, an incentive scheme funded by the National Mission for Clean Ganga is also being implemented. This scheme aims to promote the cultivation of medicinal plants in farmers' fields. It proposes cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants on 2,500 hectares of private land, supported by establishing 17 departmental and 50 farmer nurseries. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed the

Forest department, as the nodal agency of the campaign, to develop greenery along the banks of the Yamuna, Hindon and other rivers. For this purpose, the Forest department has identified 534 sites along the Yamuna, where 9.85 million saplings will be planted over 6,581.32 hectares. Additionally, 54 sites have been identified along the Hindon river for the plantation of 4,14,000 saplings across 270.13 hectares. To further enhance the greenery of Uttar Pradesh, 19.25 million saplings will be planted over 13,113.97 hectares at 1,392 sites along other rivers under the Holy Stream plantation initiative. Two thousand six hundred fifty-six sites have been identified, and over 37.27 million saplings will be planted across 25,061.84 hectares along the riverbanks this year. The plan was developed by the Forest department and the Jal Shakti-Sichai Vibhag. Together, they have created a framework for reviving rivers across the state. Various trees, including Neem, Drumstick, Tamarind, Arjun, Jamun, Bel, Mango, Mahua, Teak, Sheesham, Guteel, Bamboo, Peepal, Pakkad and Banyan, will be planted along the riverbanks. According to Additional Chief Forest Conservator PP Singh, chief forest conservator of southern region, Prayagraj, will be the nodal officer for Ganga; chief forest conservator of Kanpur division will be the nodal officer for Yamuna; chief forest conservator of western region, Meerut, will be the nodal officer for Hindon; and chief forest conservator of eastern region, Gorakhpur, will be the nodal officer for other major rivers.

# Mayawati flays decision to allow govt officials to attend RSS shakhas

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party Chief Mayawati on Monday said the Centre's decision to lift the 58-year-old ban on government employees attending Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh shakhas was against national interest. Citing a purported official order issued last week, the Congress on Sunday claimed that the "ban" on government employees participating in RSS activities had been lifted.

of good conduct. Even after this, the RSS never hoisted the tricolor in Nagpur." He said in the post, "In 1966, a ban was imposed on government employees participating in the activities of the RSS and it was also the right decision. This is the official order issued in 1966 to impose the ban."

Former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati, on Monday questioned the Central government on this issue and said in a post on social media platform X, "The Centre's decision to lift the 58-year-old ban on government employees going to RSS shakhas is a decision beyond the national interest and politically motivated to appease the Sangh so that the bitterness that intensified between the two after the Lok Sabha elections regarding government policies and their (BJP government's) arrogant attitude etc. can be removed."

The BSP chief said in a series of posts, "It is necessary for government employees to work in public interest and public welfare with impartiality while staying within the ambit of the Constitution and law, whereas the activities of the RSS, which has been banned many times, have not only been political but also electoral for a particular party."

Mayawati termed this decision as unfair and demanded its immediate withdrawal. Earlier on Sunday, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh shared an office memorandum issued by the Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions on July 9, which relates to the participation of government employees in RSS activities. The said order stated, "The above instructions have been reviewed and it has been decided to remove the mention of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh from the relevant office memorandum dated 30 November 1966, 25 July 1970 and 28 October 1980."

# बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक Regional Office : 2A Gautam Nagar (2nd Floor) Fatehpur 212601

**Baroda U.P. Bank** Mob.: 9554969117, 9554969118, E-Mail: fatehpur@barodauprb.co.in

**Possession Notice [Rule 8(1)] (For Immovable/Movable Property)**

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Baroda U.P. Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of Receipt of the said notice. The Borrower's/Guarantor's having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower's/Guarantor's and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on below mentioned date.

The Borrower's/Guarantor's/Mortgagor's in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charges of the Baroda U.P. Bank. The Borrower's/Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower's/Legal Heirs Demand Notice Date/Branch	Detail of Property / Name of the owner/ Type of Possession	Outstanding Amount (Rs.)
1.	Borrower: M/S Mishra Cable Networks Prop. Pankaj Kumar Mishra and Pankaj Kumar Mishra S/O Mr. Kamlesh Kumar Mishra Demand Notice Date: 08.05.2024 Possession date: 19.07.2024 Branch: Main Branch, Fatehpur	Equitable Mortgage of House in the name of Mrs. Usha Devi W/o Mr. Kamlesh Kumar Mishra situated at House No. 55 Dakshini Gautam Nagar, Tehsil & Distt Fatehpur, Area-70.00 sq.mt. Bounded: East: Plot of Tiwarji, West: Road, North: Road, South: House of Sujan Singh Type of Possession: Symbolic	Rs. 5,00,000.00 as on 30/11/2023 and interest, expenses thereon

Date: 23.07.2024, Place: Fatehpur, Authorised Officer, Baroda UP Bank

# इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

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

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/ Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said Rules.

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charges of the Indian Bank. The Borrower's / Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. This Possession Notice is being served to the Borrower (s), Guarantor (s) & Mortgagor (s) to deposit the said dues. Details as under:

S. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower (s)/ Guarantor (s)/ Proprietor / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Property	Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Outstanding Amount
<b>Branch: Airport Authority of India, Lucknow</b>			
1.	<b>Shri Satya Prakash S/o Shri Chandrabhusan (Borrower &amp; Mortgagor)</b> , House built on part of Khasra No.- 2237, Situated at Village- Amaisui, Ward- Sarojini Nagar, Pargana- Bijnaur, Tehsil- Sarojini Nagar, District- Lucknow, Bounded: By: North: Araji seller, South: Plot of Kamla Devi w/o Ram Prakash, East: 20 ft wide road, West: House of Ram Khelawan	All that part and parcel of the property consisting House built on part of Khasra No.- 2237, Situated at Village- Amaisui, Ward- Sarojini Nagar, Pargana- Bijnaur, Tehsil- Sarojini Nagar, District- Lucknow, Bounded: By: North: Araji seller, South: Plot of Kamla Devi w/o Ram Prakash, East: 20 ft wide road, West: House of Ram Khelawan	04.05.2024 18.07.2024 Rs. 6,05,136.00 and interest thereon.
2.	<b>1. Shri Saurabh Shukla (Borrower &amp; mortgagor)</b> , H. No. KN-089 (PN-24), built on Plot No.- 24, Khasra No.- 89, Mohalla- Gauri, Ward- Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow <b>2. Smt. Deepika Shukla (Borrower &amp; mortgagor)</b> , H. No. KN-089 (PN-24), built on Plot No.- 24, Khasra No.- 89, Mohalla- Gauri, Ward- Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of H. No. KN-089 (PN-24) Built on Plot No.-24, Khasra No.-89, Mohalla- Gauri, Ward- Sarojini Nagar, Pargana- Bijnaur, Tehsil- Sarojini Nagar, District- Lucknow, Bounded: By:- North: House No 1207, South: Smt. Deepika Shukla, Bounded: By:- North: House of Sandeep Chaudhary, South: Plot of Kusum Lata, East: House of other, West: 20 ft wide road	26.04.2024 18.07.2024 Rs. 13,02,685.00 and interest thereon.
<b>Branch: CMS Vivek Khand Branch</b>			
3.	<b>1. M/s R K Sanitary Hardware and paint Store Firm, Nawab Purva Vivek Khand 1 Near Railway Station Gomti Nagar And District Lucknow</b> <b>2. Shri Ram Khelawan Rawat Proprietor (Deceased/Borrower)</b> , 1/205 & 206 Vivek Khand 1 Gomti Nagar Lucknow <b>3. Geeta Rawat W/o Ram Khelawan Rawat (Legal Heir)</b> , 1/205 & 206 Vivek Khand 1 Gomti Nagar Lucknow <b>4. Abhimanyu Rawat S/o Ram Khelawan Rawat (Legal Heir)</b> , 1/205 & 206 Vivek Khand 1 Gomti Nagar Lucknow <b>5. Anand Rawat S/o Ram Khelawan Rawat (Legal Heir)</b> , 1/205 & 206 Vivek Khand 1 Gomti Nagar Lucknow <b>6. Om Prakash Sharma S/o Ram Pal Sharma (Guarantor)</b> , E-3/275 Viram Khand 3 Gomti Nagar Lucknow	1. All that part and parcel of the property H.No. 1/205 Sector-1 Vivek Khand Gomti Nagar Lucknow PIN 226010 The Registration sub-district Lucknow And District Lucknow. Area-36.75 sqmtr 2. Sale deed No-5699 Bahi No-01, Zild No-3215 Page no- 141 to 158 Registered with sub Registrar Lucknow on 13.08.2002 Bounded By:- North: House No 1/206, South: House No 1/204, East: House No 1/242, West: 6 meter road 2. All that part and parcel of the property H. No. 1/206 Sector-1 Vivek Khand Gomti Nagar Lucknow PIN 226010 The Registration sub-district Lucknow And District Lucknow. Area-36.75 sqmtr Sale deed No-4508 Bhi no-01 Zild No-2907 Page no. 57 to 62 Registered with sub Registrar Lucknow on 07.08.2001 Bounded By:- North: House No 1/207, South: House No 1/205, East: House No 1/241, West: 6 meter road	25.04.2024 20.07.2024 Rs. 15,81,079.00 and interest thereon.
<b>Branch: 1/1619 Vinay Khand Gomti Nagar Lucknow 226010</b>			
4.	<b>1. Shri Shri Narayan Trivedi S/o Late Bal Krishna Trivedi (Borrower/ Mortgagor)</b> , E 1/619 Vinay Khand Gomti Nagar Lucknow 226010 <b>2. Smt Mamta Trivedi W/o Shiv Narayan Trivedi (Borrower/ Mortgagor)</b> , E 1/619 Vinay Khand Gomti Nagar Lucknow 226010	All that part and parcel of the property H.No E 1/619 Vinay Khand Gomti Nagar Lucknow 226010 And District Lucknow Area-36.75 sqmtr Sale deed No-11797 Bahi No-01 Zild No-20113 Page No-41 to 74 Registered with sub registrar Lucknow on 03.10.2017 Bounded By:- North: House No 1/620, South: House/Plot No. 1/618, East: House No 1/586, West: 6 meter road	25.04.2024 20.07.2024 Rs. 18,50,047.00 and interest thereon.

Date : 23.07.2024 Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer Indian Bank



# Lakhs throng KVT on first Shraavan Monday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A huge crowd of devotees thronged the Dwadasa Jyotirlinga Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) here on the first Monday as the auspicious month of Shraavan began. Even in the scorching heat in morning hours nor during the rain which lashed the city in the afternoon hours there was no decrease in the crowd of devotees neither. Long queues of people were seen heading towards the temple throughout the day not only from Godowlia and Maidagin areas but also from the river side. As expected the rush of devotees was in lakhs as even during the midnight hours, there were more than a kilometre long queues from Dashedwamedh ghat via Godowlia side and Maidagin. There were long queues of devotees from Lalita Ghat. According to the Temple administration, over 2.43 lakh devotees had offered prayers by 6 pm. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust Vishwa Bhushan Mishra and others were seen showering rose petals on the devotees. Besides, hundreds of saffron-clad Kanwariyas also thronged there and the echoes of traditional slogan 'Har Har Mahadev' along with 'Bol Bom' reverberated in the air through-



Crowd of devotees at Kashi Vishwanath Corridor on first Monday of Shraavan in Varanasi.

out the day. It was the third Shraavan since the inauguration of the sprawling Kashi Vishwanath Corridor (KVC) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 13, 2021, when the KV temple was directly linked with Ganga river at Lalita Ghat. In view of the heavy rush, elaborate security arrangements were made and no vehicles were allowed to move between Godowlia and Maidagin throughout the day. To maintain law and order, the devotees were checked at many places with metal detectors. Senior administrative and police officers were present there to keep

a watch on the stock of situation in KVC premises. All the activities were also watched through various CCTV cameras. To avoid congregation the devotees were asked to move towards Gyanvapi only through barricading and Rapid Action Force (RAF), para-military and PAC jawans were deployed both inside and outside of the premises. Right from the wee hours after Mangla Aarti, the devotees started thronging the temple and continuous queues of devotees were seen on both sides of the temple, including Maidagin and Godowlia as well as Lalita Ghat. A large

# Kashi witnesses religious fervour

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Religious fervour gripped this city of Lord Shiva on the first Monday in the auspicious month of Shraavan when not only at one of the dwadasa jyotirlingas, Kashi Vishwanath temple, but also several other famous temples located in the city as well as its outskirts witnessed heavy rush of people. The maximum rush was seen at Markandey Mahadev on Varanasi- Ghazipur highway located near the confluence of rivers Ganga and Gomti at Kaithi. Besides, there was a heavy rush of devotees at all famous temples, including Mahamritunjya Mahadev (Daranagar), Gauri Kedareswar (Kedar Ghat), Jogeshwar Mahadev (Ishwargangi), Omkleshwar Mahadev (Chittanpura), Teel Bhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli), Sarangnath Mahadev (Sarnath) and many others in the city areas. In the outskirts, a heavy rush of devotees was also seen at all the Shiva temples located on Panchkoshi



Marg, including Karmdeshwar Mahadev, Bhim Chandi, Rameshwar Mahadev, Paach Pandev and Kapildhara. Apart from these famous temples, heavy rush of devotees was

number of Kanwariyas came from Prayagraj and other places. For the conveniences of the devotees, at six places big

LED screens were installed to display the activities of 'garbhagriha' (sanctum sanctorum) as the devotees were not allowed

also seen at Vishwanath Temple in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) premises and Shool Tankeshwar Mahadev and scores of all others as the city is famous for having the replicas of all the dwadasa jyotirlingas. Meanwhile, various social organisations served the devotees and Kanwariyas by providing them drinking water, refreshment and other facilities on the occasion. The wardens and volunteers of Civil Defence were deployed in Shiva temples on the first Monday for security arrangements and assistance to the visitors. The activists of Namami Gange, along with the devotees present at Ganga Dwar of Shri Kashi Vishwanath pledged to keep the river clean. They also performed aarti and served cold water and tea to the devotees. Regional coordinator Rajesh Shukla said Shraavan is dear to Shiva and Shiva is dear to all of us. City in charge Pushpalatha Verma and others were also present.

to touch the Shiving and they offered 'jalabhishek' through big metal structure from outside the 'garbhagriha'.

# Devotees flock to Shiva temples



Devotees offer prayers at a Lord Shiva temple on the first Monday of the holy month of Shraavan, in Prayagraj. PTI

On the first Monday of Shraavan, a huge crowd of devotees gathered in various Shiva temples, including Mankameshwar Mahadev temple. Long queues of devotees were seen outside the temples to worship Lord Shiva from dawn itself. Tight security was also put in place outside the temple. Queues of devotees were seen in Shiva temples, including Hanuman Niketan's Shiva temple, Koteswar Mahadev, Padita Mahadev and Sameshwar Mahadev. The first Monday of Shraavan came as a symbol of auspiciousness and prosperity for the devotees of Lord Shiva by combining five Mahayogs. The first Monday fell in Preetiyog Yoga with Shraavan Nakshatra. Apart from this, Ayushman Yoga, Raj Yoga, Shash Yoga and Sarvarth Siddhi Yogas also met together on this day, said city based noted astrologer Anant Mishra. According to astrological calculations, all the troubles of the devotees are removed by the 'jalabhishek' of Lord Shiva in Shraavan Nakshatra and Preeti Yoga. Preparations for the first 'jalabhishek' of Lord Shiva's favourite month Shraavan were completed on Sunday. Separate barricading has been done for male and female devotees to have darshan at

Mankameshwar Mahadev temple situated on the banks of Yamuna. The doors of Mankameshwar were opened for common devotees with Mangala Aarti at 4 am on Monday. The bhog aarti took place at 11:45 am. During this, the 'darshan' in the sanctum sanctorum was stopped for only 15 minutes. There was a long queue of devotees at the temple throughout the day. The aarti was held at 10 pm. Mahant Shridharanand Brahmachari said on the first Monday, Mankameshwar Mahadev was decorated with silver masks, snakes, and Shiva's tableau was decorated with mogra, rose, rajnigandha and bella flowers. Similarly, barricading has been done for the convenience of devotees at Sameshwar Mahadev temple located at Aarail. 'Jalabhishek' and 'pujan' was also being done on Shraavan Monday at Bhardwajeshwar Mahadev temple located at Balsan Crossing. The 'jalabhishek' started from 6 am. In view of Shraavan Monday, a long queue for Jalabhishek and darshan-pujan was witnessed at Takshak Teerth and Nagvasuki located at Daraganj. The 'jalabhishek' of Bholenath was done with the proclamation of Har Har Mahadev. A mela was held outside the temples where along with food items, toys were also purchased.

# Yadav Bandhus keep nine-decade-old tradition intact

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Maintaining their nine decade old tradition, the Yadav Bandhus offered 'jalabhishek' at nine leading Shiv temples, including Kashi Vishwanath Temple on the occasion of first Monday in the auspicious month of Shraavan. A crowd of people was seen in the procession where the participants were also seen dancing on the beat of traditional instruments. Even during the Corona pandemic period, they had maintained the tradition and only a few people with permission had participated in the procession carrying flags of Chandravanshi Gop Seva Samiti. Hundreds of partici-



Shalini Yadav and others welcoming Yadav Bandhus' procession at Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi on the first Monday of Shraavan month.

pants were seen in the procession carrying Gangajal (sacred water of holy river Ganga).

After carrying sacred water of Ganga river at Kedar Ghat, the Yadav Bandhus first visited

Gauri Kedareswar. After that they reached Teel Bhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli) and Sheelta Mata (Dashedwamedh Ghat) and offered prayers there. Then after visiting Aadleshar Mahadev, they reached Kashi Vishwanath Temple and offered prayers. For their traditional procession, special security and other arrangements were made. Continuing their procession ahead, the Yadav Bandhus reached Maha Mrityunjaya Mahadev and then they offered prayers at Trilochan Mahadev and Omkleshwar Mahadev. They ended their pilgrimage journey at Laat Bhairav. However, many of them also reached

Sarangnath Mahadev (Sarnath) where they concluded their journey. Senior leaders like Shalini Yadav, who contested mayoral and Lok Sabha elections as Samajwadi Party candidate and now in Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and others were present at Kashi Vishwanath Corridor to welcome the Yadav Bandhus. The Yadav Bandhus started their traditional procession in 1932 with five friends of the samaj when the country faced an acute drought but after offering prayers at different temples, the areas had experienced three days of good rains and since then they are maintaining this tradition.

# Fire in godown

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A chemical godown caught fire due to a short circuit in Wazidpur Pyondi under Jajmau police station area late on Sunday night. Immediately, four fire tenders from Jajmau and Meerpur fire stations rushed to the spot and brought fire under control after around two hours. Mohd Yasir of Civil Lines owns his godown in Wazidpur Pyondi Double Pulia, Jajmau. On Sunday night when workers were busy doing their work, the fire broke out due to a short circuit. CFO Deepak Sharma said electric short circuit is stated to be the cause of the incident. Exact cause will be ascertained after investigation, he said.

# Varanasi third in Sambhav campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Varanasi has secured third place in the state in the 'Sambhav' campaign conducted in June and September 2023 last year under the Child Development Services and Nutrition Department. In this direction Uttar Pradesh Minister for Women's Welfare and Child Development and Nutrition Beni Rani Maurya honoured the District Programme Officer (DPO) of ICDS Department of Varanasi by giving a citation. In this campaign, Varanasi has made about 46 per cent of the children healthy as compared to the target of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) children. The remaining children will be made healthy in the coming months. In the letter of honour issued by ICDS Uttar Pradesh Director Sarneet Kaur Broca, it was said that Varanasi district has got third place at the state level for excellent work in Sambhav Abhiyan 2023. While praising this commendable work of the DPO, Broca extended her best wishes for his continuous efforts for the bright future of all the children and mothers. DPO Dinesh Kumar Singh said that a list of moderate



UP Minister Baby Rani Maurya honouring DPO Varanasi DK Singh in Lucknow on Monday.

acute malnutrition (MAM) and SAM children being identified by Anganwadi workers is being prepared and their treatment is being done. As per the requirement, these children are being sent to Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) and Mini NRCs. Currently, under the Sambhav campaign, various activities related to nutrition and health are being organised at 3,914 Anganwadi centres of the district in all eight development blocks and urban development projects. The main theme of this campaign is identification, referral, treatment, management and follow-up of malnourished children. He informed that in the year

2021, Sambhav campaign was started as an innovation, in which special emphasis was laid on identification, treatment and management of SAM and MAM children at the community level along with behaviour change for the prevention of malnutrition. Under the campaign, Anganwadi workers are measuring the weight and height of pregnant women in the first trimester along with children. Malnourished children and pregnant women are being identified and arrangements are being made for their medical management. The DPO said that under Sambhav Abhiyan-2023, 5,579 children were identified on

the nutrition tracker on the basis of their weight and height. With the cooperation of the Health Department, a list of 5579 children identified on VHSND and e-Kavach was prepared. Apart from this, follow-up of 7,694 children was done. Out of this, 3,242 children were placed in the SAM category. All these children were treated at Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) and Health Sub Centres, out of which 1,488 (46 per cent) children became healthy and the remaining children will be made healthy in the coming days. According to him, during this campaign, a new activity is to be organised in the form of Poshan 500, in which special attention is being given to the nutrition and health of the child from pregnancy to the first six months (500 days) of birth. If a pregnant or lactating woman is suffering from malnutrition, then there is a possibility of malnutrition in the child as well. Early identification is necessary to keep the child free from malnutrition. At present, only 779 children are left in the SAM category in Varanasi district, efforts are being made to bring them to the normal category in three months.

# Maha Kumbh 2025: Minister reviews development work

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna visited Prayagraj on Monday. He held a meeting with officials at the Circuit House and reviewed the development work being done here in view of the Maha Kumbh-2025. After knowing the report of the progress of the works, he gave many important instructions. Suresh Khanna said in 2019 the government had organised the Kumbh Mela in which

people from all over the world had arrived. The Kumbh Mela to be held in 2025 will also be grand and divine like 2019. On the Union Budget, he said that it will be an all-inclusive budget in the direction of developed India in which efforts will be made to provide employment opportunities. The 2025 budget will work in the direction of public welfare, he added. TWO ARRESTED: With the arrest of two smugglers, the police claimed to have recovered illicit liquor worth Rs 40

lakh which was being taken from Karnal in Haryana to Ranchi in Jharkhand by loading it on a truck. Police has sent both the accused to jail. During vehicle checking on Monday, police stopped a truck near the overbridge in Mauaima on Pratapgarh-Prayagraj highway and on searching it and recovered a large quantity of English liquor. Police arrested Rajdeep Singh of and Pankaj Kumar of Ludhiana. Meanwhile unidentified miscreants killed a 50 year-old

woman in Bhavapur locality under Kareli police station and looted cash and jewellery worth lakhs late on Sunday night. At the time of the incident the woman was alone in the house. The incident came to light after the son returned home late in the night. The police is investigating the matter. COUNSELLING: The Counselling for admission in undergraduate courses started on Monday in Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Science (SHUATS) here.

# Installation ceremony of Rotary Club organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The 16th installation ceremony of Rotary Club New Kanpur was organised here on Sunday night. Sangeeta Gupta was sworn in as president while Shikha Gupta and Shweta Gupta were nominated the secretary and treasurer respectively. Prashant Gupta read out the report of last year's activi-

ties. In her address, new president Sangeeta Gupta informed about the programmes to be organised in the interest of general masses in future. The members took a vow to work for implementing all the projects based on education, environment, youth development, skill training, women literacy, empowerment, modern computer-based education, water

conservation, polio eradication and increase in membership. Divisional president Neerav Nimesh Agarwal praised the activities of the club and appealed to launch a campaign to protect young women from dreaded diseases like cervical cancer. On the occasion four girl students of underprivileged category were awarded the scholarship. Vinod

Rishi, Dr Naveen Mohini Nigam, Rajiv Mehta, Kirti Omar, Kamna Omar, Shwet Gupta and Preeti Gupta were present. MISHAP: A passenger died while two others were injured when a Roadways bus of Mahoba Depot going to Kanpur from Lucknow ramed into a stationary truck on the highway in Unnao.

# MLA for quick disposal of complaints

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Pindra MLA Dr Awadhesh Singh, while presiding over the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas organised in Pindra Tehsil here on Monday, directed the Revenue and other related departmental officers to resolve the complaints received in a quality manner within the stipulated time frame. The MLA appealed to the people that the government is committed to the prompt resolution of their common problems. District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam directed the revenue officers on the complaints of land dispute / encroachment in the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas event that quality timely disposal should be done on priority by sending revenue inspectors, lekhpals and police personnel to the spot and conducting on-site inspection. He

directed the officials to ensure resolution of public complaints with fairness, timeliness, transparency and quality in every situation. ADMISSION: The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has started registration for admission to undergraduate programmes for the academic session 2024-25 from Saturday. Applicants who have appeared in the CUET UG 2024 conducted by NTA and hold the required eligibility for a particular programme, may register themselves and fill their details through the admission portal. For this they are required to visit the website https://www.bhu.ac.in/Site/AdmissionCounselling or https://bhucuet.samarth.edu.in/index.php and click on the 'Apply Now' option given just below 'UG REGISTRATION CUM COUNSELLING-2024'.

Before proceeding, applicants are advised to carefully read the BHU Information Bulletin 2024, available on the web portal. The Central Admission Committee has informed that subject preferences can be filled by the applicant after the NTA CUET-UG results are declared, followed by payment of the registration fees. The registration process will remain open till 11:59 pm on August 5. The university offers a total of 7712 seats of undergraduate programmes at various faculties in main campus, its constituent college Mahila Mahavidyalaya and affiliated colleges. Applicants may write to admission.help@bhu.ac.in for any admission related queries.

# Essay competition

Kanpur (PNS): Under the directive of the state government, an essay competition was organised on Monday by the Environment Committee of Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar, on the occasion of Groundwater Week from July 16 to 22. The topic of the essay was "Decreasing level of underground water: Causes and solutions". Along with this, the college students also participated in online quiz under the National Students Competition. College Principal Professor Anju Chaudhary spoke also on the occasion. Convener of Environment Committee Dr Rashmi Singh said to conserve underground water, we should focus on the revival of traditional water sources like wells, ponds etc. All the teachers, including Dr Namrata Pandey, Dr Poonam and Dr Arunima Khare, were present in the programme.

# Bank of Baroda celebrates foundation day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Bank of Baroda (BOB) celebrated its 117th foundation day in the presence of all the present and retired staff members with fanfare. On the occasion, a massive tree plantation drive was organised at different places. Bank's zonal office, Kanpur Metro, inaugurated the drive by planting saplings at the ISKCON temple. Thereafter, different branches of the city planted 1,100 trees. As part of its corporate social responsibility, the bank donated almirah, fans and food items for the students of Kanpur Andh Vidyalaya Junior High School, Nehru Nagar. The students welcomed the chief guest Shailesh Kumar Parakh, Deputy General Manager, Bank of Baroda, by presenting a musical programme. Parakh extended



DGM, Bank of Baroda, Shailesh Kumar Parakh cutting cake with students of Andh Vidyalaya to mark the Foundation Day celebrations.

greetings to students on the 117th foundation day and apprised them of different schemes of the bank. He cut a cake with the children and wished them a bright future. School Principal Inderjit Singh extended gratitude to Bank of Baroda. School secretary Ram

Prakash Singh proposed the vote of thanks and declared the programme closed. TRIALS: The Kanpur Nagar Nigam (KNN) in association with the Khelo India and Fit India organised trials for EWS children at The Sports Hub (TSH), Arya Nagar, on Sunday. The training to the selected children by qualified and experienced coaches will start from August 1. Sports Director RP Singh said of the total 604 applicants, 365 were selected for the trials. Of these, only 306 turned up to take part in the trials which were organised in presence of the officials of Nagar Nigam, Kanpur Smart City, State Sports Organisations and the selection committee. Director (Operations) PK Srivastava said selected children had to pass through four-level selection process which included the physical parameter, apti-

tude, sports skill tests. SPORTS MEET: The Kendriya Vidyalaya IIT Kanpur is hosting the 53rd Regional Sports Meet 2024 for girls from July 21 to 23 in its premises. The event inaugurated by Dr Indrasekhar Sen, Chairman, SPEC, IIT-Kanpur along with Dr Rajat Aditya Dixit, a renowned International player and lawyer of High Court. Ravish Chandra Pandey, Principal, Kendriya Vidyalaya, IIT Kanpur, welcomed the chief guest and the guest of honour. Shailesh Kumar, PB Rawat, Rekha and Vandana Singh (Rathore), observer from KVS (LR) witnessed the gala event. Dr Indra Shekhar Sen spoke about the essence of sports and games and Dr Rajat Aditya Dixit while greeting on Guru Purnima motivated the students to be a true player by playing with true sportsmanship.



# Opp, BJP spar over Centre move on Govt staff RSS links

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP, RSS and the Congress on Monday locked horns over the Centre's move to lift the ban on Government employees from participating in activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS) with the BJP and RSS saying the decision would strengthen the country's democratic system, the grand old party which had actually banned the organisation saying the order passed by the Narendra Modi Government has withdrawn an order which was in place even during Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's regime. Several Opposition leaders also criticised the move. BJP accused the earlier regimes of furthering their own political interests by imposing the ban in the past. Union Minister Piyush Goyal said the Congress Government's decision in 1966 to ban Government employees from attending RSS activities was driven by political reasons. "Congress has always had a negative mindset for nationalist organisations, and such a thinking has no place in the country," Goyal told the media.



Opposition parties, which have criticised the Modi Government's decision to lift the ban, were only interested in appeasement politics and have displayed a negative attitude to Hindus, he claimed. Goyal described the RSS as a nationalist organisation whose members are full of patriotism. RSS spokesperson Sunil Ambekar said in a statement, "The present decision of the Government is appropriate and strengthens the democratic system of India." RSS has been continuously involved in the reconstruction of the nation and service to the society for

the last 99 years, he added. "Due to the contribution of the Sangh in national security, unity-integrity and taking the society along during times of natural disaster, various types of leadership of the country have also praised the role of the Sangh from time to time. Due to its political interests, the then Government had baselessly banned the Government employees from participating in the activities of a constructive organisation like the Sangh," the statement said. There have been multiple instances of the Government barring its employees in the

past from associating with the RSS. BSP chief Mayawati termed the Centre's order removing the ban on the participation of Government employees in RSS activities a politically motivated move to "appease" the organisation and demanded its immediate withdrawal. "The Centre's decision to lift the 58-year-old ban on Government employees from attending RSS shakhas is a politically motivated move to appease the RSS rather than serving the national interest. This is to ease the tensions that intensified between the two after the Lok Sabha elections over Government policies and their arrogant attitudes," Mayawati said in a social media post. Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh slammed the central Government over the order as he first shared it issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension dated July 9 pertaining to the participation of the Government servants in the activities of the RSS. "Sardar Patel had banned the RSS in February 1948 following Gandhiji's assassination. Subsequently, the ban was withdrawn on assurances of

good behaviour. Even after this the RSS never flew the Tiranga in Nagpur. In 1966, a ban was imposed - and rightly so - on Government employees taking part in RSS activities," Ramesh said. AIMIM chief and MP Asaduddin Owaisi hit back at the BJP for withdrawing the ban, saying that no civil servant can continue to be loyal towards the nation if they are a part of RSS, and the order goes against India's unity. Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said that with the order, Government officers in the Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax Department, Central Bureau of Investigation, Election Commission and other departments can "officially prove their Sangh credentials." "Such a shame, instead of aligning only to Bharat Mata's interests, the BJP is leading them towards keeping ideological interests first," Chaturvedi said. Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien said, "Are we surprised that the Union Government has now revoked a 60-year ban on Government employees taking part in RSS activities?"

# NTA postponed at least 16 exams since 2018, Ministry informs LS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Education Ministry on Monday informed the Lok Sabha that the National Testing Agency (NTA) postponed at least 16 exams due to different reasons since its inception in 2018. The reasons for postponement included COVID-19 pandemic, administrative reasons, logistical reasons, and technical issues. The information was shared by Minister of State for Education Sukanta Majumdar in response to a written question in Lok Sabha asked by DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi. "Since its inception in 2018, NTA has successfully conducted over 240 examinations involving over 5.4 crore students." Since most of the examinations conducted by NTA are held in multiple-subjects, multiple-shifts and span over a number of days, there have been instances due to unforeseen circumstances like COVID-19 pandemic, logistical and technical issues, administrative issues, legal orders etc, when examination



dates initially notified in respect of specific subjects or shifts could not be adhered to," the Minister said. According to the data shared by the minister, four exams -- JEE-Main (2020), NEET-UG (2020), JEE-Main (2021) and NEET-UG (2021) were postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic. CSIR UGC-NET (2020), UGC-NET (December, 2020), UGC-NET (May, 2021) and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) AIEEA (2020) were postponed due to "COVID-19 pandemic and logistical challenges." Delhi University Entrance Test (DUET) 2020 for admission to UG, PG-MPhil and PhD courses was postponed as the registration process was put on hold by DU due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Common Management

Admission Test (CMAT)-2021 was postponed due to the revision of the examination pattern by the AICTE. All India Ayush Post Graduate Entrance Test (AIAPGET), 2021, and Joint Integrated Programme in Management Admission Test (JIPMAT), 2021, were postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic. IGNOU PhD Entrance was postponed in 2022 due to administrative reasons. Graduate Aptitude Test Biotechnology (GAT-B), 2023 was postponed as per consultation with regional centres for biotechnology. In 2024, National Common Entrance Test (NCET), 2024 was postponed due to technical issues and CSIR-NET, 2024 due to logistic issues. "NTA has started declaration of examination calendar of major examinations, much in advance for the facilitation of candidates. The examination calendar is planned taking into consideration, buffer days to accommodate for reschedules and postponements for reasons beyond the control of NTA," the minister said.



# BJP slams Kerala Govt for Foreign Secy appointment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A BJP Lok Sabha member on Monday said the appointment of an IAS officer as "Foreign Secretary" by the Kerala Government was "unconstitutional" and an "encroachment" on the responsibilities of the Centre. Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha, BJP member P P Chaudhary said the Kerala Government order of July 15, appointing IAS officer K Vasuki as "foreign secretary" was a "blatant outreach." "Is the Kerala Government treating itself as a separate nation," Chaudhary said in the Lok Sabha. The Kerala Government had on July 15 issued an order giving Vasuki, Secretary in the Labour and Skills Department, the additional charge of "the matters connected with External Cooperation". Chaudhary said external cooperation meant dealing with various nations, Indian embassies and missions abroad, functions that formed part of the Union List as per the allocation of business rules. "As per the allocation of business rules, these functions can only be performed by the Government of India through the Ministry of External Affairs," the BJP member from Pali in Rajasthan said. "So, the action on the part of Kerala Government by issuing such an order and appointing an IAS officer as foreign secretary is unconstitutional, and it is an encroachment on the union list," Chaudhary said.

# Eco Survey pitches for FDI from China to boost manufacturing, export

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Among strained ties with China, the pre-budget Economic Survey on Monday made a strong case for seeking foreign direct investments (FDI) from Beijing to boost local manufacturing and tap the export market. As the US and Europe are shifting their immediate sourcing away from China, it is more effective to have Chinese companies invest in India and then export the products to these markets rather than importing from the neighbouring country, the Survey said. India faces two choices to benefit from 'China plus one strategy' it can integrate into China's supply chain or promote FDI from China. "Among these choices, focusing on FDI from China seems more promising for boosting India's exports to the US, similar to how East Asian

economies did in the past. "Moreover, choosing FDI as a strategy to benefit from the China plus one approach appears more advantageous than relying on trade. This is because China is India's top import partner, and the trade deficit with China has been growing," it added. It also said that increased foreign direct investment inflows from China can help increase India's global supply chain participation and push exports. The Survey explained how increased FDI inflows from China can help in increasing India's global supply chain participation along with a push to exports. These economies have typically pursued two main strategies - reducing trade costs and facilitating foreign investment. At present, the bulk of the FDI coming into India falls under the automatic approval route, however, FDI from countries sharing land borders with India

needs mandatory Government approval in any sector. China stands at 22nd position with only 0.37 per cent share (USD 2.5 billion) in total FDI equity inflow reported in India from April 2000 to March 2024. Countries which share land borders with India are China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Afghanistan. The Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in a stand-off since May 2020 and a full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points. The ties between the two countries nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot



be normal unless there is peace in the border areas. Following these tensions, India has banned over 200 Chinese mobile apps such as Tiktok, Wechat, and Alibaba's UC browser. The country has also rejected a major investment proposal from EV maker BYD. However, earlier this year the Competition Commission of India (CCI) cleared JSW Group's proposed acquisition

of a 38 per cent stake in MG Motor India Pvt Ltd. MG Motor India is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Shanghai-headquartered SAIC Motor. The government is also looking at further streamlining processes for timely approval of visas for Chinese professionals and technicians whose expertise is required by the Indian industry to set up manufacturing capacity.



Certain Indian industry players have approached the government stating that they are facing problems in getting visas for Chinese professionals whose expertise is required for things like setting up machines in factories. Though India has received minimal FDI from China, the bilateral trade between the two nations has grown multi-fold. China has emerged as the

largest trading partner of India with USD 118.4 billion two-way commerce in 2023-24, edging past the US. India's exports to China rose by 8.7 per cent to USD 16.67 billion in the last fiscal. The main sectors which recorded healthy growth in exports to that country include iron ore, cotton yarn/fabrics/madeups, handloom, spices, fruits and vegetables, plastic and linoleum. Imports from the neighbouring country increased by 3.24 per cent to USD 101.7 billion. The trade deficit has widened to USD 85 billion in the last fiscal from USD 83.2 billion in 2022-23. According to the Commerce Ministry data, China was India's top trading partner from 2013-14 till 2017-18 and also in 2020-21. Before China, the UAE was the country's largest trading partner. The US was the largest partner in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

# Modi muzzled Indians' voice for 10 yrs: Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday over his remarks criticising the Opposition, alleging that it was he who "suppressed the voice" of the country for 10 years and for which people "punished" him in the Lok Sabha polls. Hitting back at Modi over his remarks, Congress's media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said the person who "throttled the country and suppressed its voice" for 10 years, today looked "very weak and was seen weeping" when the opposition raised its voice. The prime minister started the Monsoon session by making a comment on the opposition that was not befitting of his post, Khera said. "He said the opposition throttled the voice of the prime minister for two-and-a-half hours. It is important to remind Prime Minister Modi



that during his unjust rule of the last 10 years, the entire country was suffocated, for which the public has punished him," he said in a post in Hindi on X. "Prime Minister Modi has forgotten that he is not the former Minister of a majority government, but the 'one-third' prime Minister of an NDA government run with the support of two parties," he added. He should also avoid using the term Modi government and

prove himself to be democratic, the Congress leader said. "It would be appropriate to remind Prime Minister Narendra Modi that when he was giving this speech, the Supreme Court was hearing a case against suppressing the voice of 32 lakh students of the country and the injustice done to them by his government," Khera said, referring to the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) issue. "When you were giving your

speech full of arrogance and lies, it is important to tell you that more than 15 Agniveers of the country have been forced to commit suicide with the dream of sacrificing their lives for the country in their hearts," the Congress leader said. "It is our parliamentary duty to repeatedly interrupt and stop you so as to raise the voice of the country. You too must understand that it is important to leave everything aside and listen to the questions related to the immediate needs and problems of the country," the Congress leader said. Talking to reporters ahead of the start of a Parliament session, Modi said in the first session of this Lok Sabha, "an undemocratic attempt was made to scuttle the voice of the government that had been ordered by 140 crore Indians to serve." "For two-and-a-half hours, attempts were made to scuttle the voice of the prime minister and such a thing has no place in democratic traditions. They

(opposition) has no remorse over it," PM Modi said. Congress's deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi hit out at the prime Minister, saying the NEET issue was listed as the second topic in Monday's Question Hour, but Modi stood up and walked away before that. "Why did he go? Was it not his responsibility to give an answer on the issue? When we demanded the Education Minister's resignation, he (Dharmendra Pradhan) arrogantly said why would he resign when he has been appointed as the education Minister by Prime Minister Modi," Gogoi told reporters outside Parliament. Hitting out at Modi for his remarks, the Congress's whip in the Lok Sabha, Manickam Tagore, said the Prime Minister should practise what he preaches by doing positive things. "He says something else outside and does something else inside the House," Tagore alleged.



# Extreme weather, low reservoir levels hit farm output, food prices

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Survey 2023-24 tabled in Lok Sabha on Monday highlighted that extreme weather, lower reservoir levels and crop damage have affected farm output and led to higher food prices over the past two years. Unfavourable weather conditions particularly impacted the production prospects of vegetables and pulses, it said. "In FY23 and FY24, the agriculture sector was affected by extreme weather events, lower reservoir levels, and damaged crops that adversely affected farm output and food prices. So, food inflation based on the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) increased from 3.8 per cent in FY22 to 6.6 per cent in FY23 and further to 7.5 per cent in FY24," read the consolidated report on the state of the economy in the previous year. Food inflation has been a global phenomenon in the last two years. Research, the government said, indicates the rising vulnerability of food prices to climate change - heat waves, uneven monsoon distribution, unseasonal rainfall, hailstorms, torrential rainfall, and historic dry conditions. According to the Economic Survey, tomato prices surged in July 2023 due to seasonal changes, region-specific crop

diseases such as white fly infestation, the early arrival of monsoonal rain in the northern part of the country, and logistics disruptions in isolated areas due to heavy rainfall. The spike in onion prices was attributed to several factors, including rainfall during the last harvesting season affecting the quality of rabi onions, delays in sowing during the kharif season, prolonged dry spells impacting kharif production, and trade-related measures taken by other countries. "The prices of pulses, particularly of tur, increased due to low production over the past two years, caused by adverse weather conditions. Urad production was affected by slow sowing progress in the rabi season coupled with climatic disturbances in the southern states," the government said. The area and output of gram was also lower compared to the previous rabi season, it said. The government also said the Indian economy has consolidated its post-Covid recovery and is on a strong wicket and stable footing, demonstrating resilience in the face of geopolitical challenges. For the recovery to be sustained, it stressed, there has to be heavy lifting on the domestic front because the environment has become extraordinarily difficult for reaching agreements on key global issues such as trade, investment and climate.

# Obesity, mental health key challenges: Eco Survey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Emphasising on the importance of the healthcare sector for a resilient economy, the Economic Survey 2024 tabled in Parliament on Monday flags two critical health challenges facing India: obesity and mental health. It notes that obesity has emerged as a significant public health issue, constituting 54 per cent of India's disease burden due to diets high in processed foods. The survey highlights a tripling of adult obesity rates and steep increases among children, particularly in urban areas and among women. Urgent preventive measures are urged to promote healthier lifestyles and mitigate associated health risks. Concurrently, the survey

underscores the importance of addressing mental health, emphasizing its profound impact on individual well-being and national productivity. It calls for destigmatizing mental disorders through increased awareness and support systems, citing gaps in mental health infrastructure and the need for more psychiatrists. The economic implications are noted, including productivity losses and increased healthcare costs due to untreated mental health issues. Both issues demand comprehensive strategies—from dietary reforms and promoting physical activity to enhancing mental health education and support services—to foster a healthier and more resilient society in India. With obesity rates soaring,

particularly in urban areas and among women, urgent preventive measures are advocated to foster healthier lifestyles and mitigate escalating health risks, said the survey. "Combined with an ageing population in some states, obesity presents a concerning situation. Preventive measures must be taken to enable citizens to have a healthier lifestyle," the survey said. On mental health issues, the survey has called for integrating mental health education into school curricula besides bolstering mental health infrastructure and breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness. Highlighting the profound impact of mental well-being on both individual development and national productivity, the survey has called for breaking



the stigma around mental health by stopping being in denial about its existence. "There is a need to bring about a massive shift in the way we talk about mental health in the community and advocate an increase in the number of psychiatrists and mental health interventions in schools," the survey has said. Citing a study, the report pointed

out that there remain certain gaps in the existing programmes which need to be addressed to maximise their effectiveness, it said. For instance, doubling the efforts to increase the number of psychiatrists, from 0.75 psychiatrists per lakh population in 2021 to the WHO norm of 3 per lakh population. The report stressed developing

comprehensive guidelines for the excellence centres' services alongside mental healthcare professionals and called for nurturing peer support networks, self-help groups, and community-based rehabilitation programmes to destigmatise mental disorders and develop a sense of belongingness in their victims. "Arguably, mental health issues drag down productivity more widely in the ecosystem than individuals' physical health issues," the report said, emphasising that paying attention to mental health issues in society is both a health and an economic imperative. The increase in mental health issues in children and adolescents is often linked to the overuse of the internet and specifically, social media, said the report.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Biden bows out

Joe Biden opts out of the race to US presidential elections, endorses Kamala Harris to take on Trump

Amid speculations about his health, Joe Biden has finally decided to withdraw his candidature from the US Presidential elections. In his place Kamala Harris, the US Vice President is likely to be the Democrat Candidate. It would be now Kamala vs Trump who is seeking re-election after he lost to Joe Biden in the previous election. President Biden, who will be 82 years old by the time of the election, cited personal reflection and a desire to pave the way for new leadership as the primary reasons for his decision. In his address from the White House he expressed confidence in Vice President Kamala's ability to continue the administration's agenda and lead the nation forward. President Biden stated that, after much thought and consideration, he and his wife believed it was time to pass the torch to a new generation of leadership. He mentioned that Vice President Harris had been by his side through the most challenging times of his presidency and that he had seen firsthand her dedication, intelligence, and unwavering commitment to the American people. Kamala's candidacy is historic in many ways. If elected, she would become the first female president, as well as the first Black and South Asian American to hold the office. Harris, who has served as Vice President, has been a prominent figure in the administration, particularly in areas such as criminal justice reform, immigration, and climate change. However, Harris will face significant challenges as she navigates the primary race and potential general election campaign. She will need to address concerns from both progressive and moderate factions within the Democratic Party and present a compelling vision for the future to win over undecided voters. Her campaign is expected to highlight the achievements of the current administration, including economic recovery efforts, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and initiatives aimed at promoting social justice and equality. Joe Biden's decision is unprecedented as no presidential candidate have ever opted out so late. Two significant events might have influenced his decision. First, his lacklustre performance in the presidential debate led opponents to question his credentials to lead the country. Second, the assassination attempt on Trump has put him in the limelight and drawn widespread sympathy. These two incidents, though unrelated, may have compelled Democrats to consider other options. On the Republican side, the announcement has prompted a reassessment of strategies. With Biden out of the race, potential Republican candidates will now focus their efforts on countering Kamala's policies. Donald Trump, and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis are among those expected to vie for the Republican nomination. The coming months will reveal how Kamala positions her campaign, addresses the pressing issues facing the country, and seeks to build a broad coalition of support. Her candidacy opens a new chapter in American politics, one that could redefine the future of the Democratic Party and the nation.



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### PICTALK



Artists decorate a wall for the 46th Session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, in New Delhi

# Tackling new wave of terror in Jammu

As administrative setups suffer, urgent and coordinated action is imperative to counteract these well-orchestrated threats and restore stability



UMANG KOHLI

There has been a spate of terror attacks in the Jammu Region in the last few months. These terror attacks clearly show that the enemy has changed its tactics to strike into regions that had otherwise become peaceful. After the revocation of Article 370, China and Pakistan felt rattled about the new dynamics. China then tried to capture territory in Leh and Galwan took place. We all know Galwan was a well-planned operation by the PLA. This led to the movement of Indian Army Troops from the hinterland particularly from the Jammu region.

The void of boots on the ground in near peace regions of Jammu has led to a vacuum as far as the intelligence network is concerned. Normalcy has to be maintained for some time, also with fewer boots in the Jammu Region the human intelligence that gets developed over some time gets depleted.

Most of the army posts in Jammu and Kashmir have an administrative setup based on locals. These locals provide fresh food, logistic support and other admiring material. Even in winter cut-off posts locals provide wood, and admiring backup in both Jammu and Kashmir. Now when troops are depleted all of a sudden, the intelligence gathering in the area dries up. It also leads to a shortage of earning opportunities for the locals making them more vulnerable to the lure of money to facilitate enemy design. This vacuum of this intelligence is being exploited by the enemy and make no mistake China is fully involved in helping Pakistan in this. The attacks are well-planned and deliberate. Pakistan has started refuelling its Over Ground Workers in the Jammu region specifically.

There have been a lot of FIRs registered by the army against these OGWs over the years but little or no action has been taken on them. It's about time we took action against these FIRs. Special courts must be set up to fast-track cases filed by the army against underground workers. Many of the men move to Himachal in search of work from Doda during summers. Some of them also



make hideous for terrorists during winter for them to come there and stay during summer. Once the men move out, there are a lot of women in the Doda area who help terrorists.

These women give food and information to the terrorists. The terrorists generally hide in Guwardi (resting place Gujars make) and hideouts made during winters in higher reaches of Doda and these women provide them food there. They also provide them with information about force movement and then help them go to the other side of the ridge.

Many women work for money yet others get physically involved with these terrorists. The army is not allowed to interrogate these women or to search them. Even after the AFSPA the rules to interact with women are very strict. If the soldiers try to check the movement details of these women, false FIRs are sometimes lodged against them. It would be prudent to provide Special Women Officers in army posts who could search these women and also interro-



THE ENCOUNTERS IN JAMMU REGION IS AN EFFORT BY THE ENEMY TO SHOWCASE THAT THERE IS NO REGION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR THAT IS PEACEFUL. THEY WANT TO ALSO SHOW THAT THE REVOCATION OF ARTICLE 370 HAS MADE NO DIFFERENCE

gate them. Also, a lot of dog squads could come in handy to chase away these women after smelling them.

Till 2003 special women police officers used to stay at far-off army posts in Doda, however as comparative normalcy returned the practice was let go. Special women units in city centres like Doda, Jammu, Udhampur etc could also help. Doda has also had a history of women moving as guides of terrorists. They provide them with local SIM cards which terrorists keep disposing of. The movement of forces from one place to another is also communicated by these OGWs. However, rape of these women by terrorists is not uncommon. One odd local terrorist generally accompanies these Pakistani terrorists to act as a physical guide. Security forces in Jammu and Kashmir work together and police and army share information and intelligence, however when two different organisations share intelligence chances of overlap and double cross increase. It will be prudent to share intel-

ligence but not mix standard operating procedures which may be different for the two organisations.

Lungars of jawans of both forces must remain different at all times. Also, each piece of information and intelligence shared must be carefully corroborated by other sources independent of each other. It is also advised not to rush into situations based on half-corked information.

The encounters in Jammu region is an effort by the enemy to showcase that there is no region in Jammu and Kashmir that is peaceful. They want to also show that the revocation of Article 370 has made no difference to their effort to bleed India.

The entire effort of the enemy is hinged on Foreign Terrorists who are helped by local Over Ground Workers. Hoping fast action is taken against OGWs while the army eliminates these terrorists sent by Pakistan on the instructions of China.

(The author has firsthand experience of encounters in Doda Forests for three long years; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### STUDENT UNREST IN BANGLADESH

Madam — The unrest in Bangladesh due to student protests is a matter of concern for India. Students from Dhaka University are outraged about the government's quota system in education. The dissatisfaction among locals from the Awami League is evident, with reports of killings in the Chittagong district. Quotas and reservations were initially tools to promote equity in society, but their continued existence raises questions about government accountability.

This issue is not unique to Bangladesh; India also has a complex reservation and quota system that makes it difficult for average students to access good education and job opportunities. Brilliant students succeed on their own merits, while others rely on quotas, leaving average students frustrated. The governments of India and Bangladesh, along with other countries that adhere to quotas and reservations, need to address this critical issue to prevent future unrest among students.

A number of Indian students are still to be evacuated. Their families are anxiously waiting any news about them as most communication channels are blocked. This situation not only highlights the immediate need for safety and support for the students by the Indian government

The international community, including neighboring countries like India, is closely monitoring the situation, recognizing the potential for wider regional implications. It is imperative that the Bangladeshi government takes swift and decisive action to address the students' concerns and restore normalcy to ensure the well-being and future of its young population.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

### POLITICAL AGENDAS: A REFLECTIONS

Madam — The All-Party meeting called by the ruling dispensation seems intended to push through its agenda for this

### Mumbai's monsoon mayhem



Initial rains inundate low-lying areas and block vehicular traffic, creating chaos on the roads. The widespread presence of potholes on Mumbai roads and highways exacerbates the problem, keeping road users on edge. Subways suffer from poor lighting and potholes, adding to the fears of road users. Waterlogging, traffic snarls, train delays, and fallen trees worsen the situation. The lethargy of BMC workers is evident, and public miseries go unaddressed. It is so unfortunate that the authorities take people for granted and despite enormous resources at their disposal do not act in time. It is now up to the people to take precautions during the rains and help others to avoid mishaps. Helping each other during floods is a practical solution to the pressing problems faced by the people of Mumbai.

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

session of Parliament without opposition hurdles. Every party, state, and individual leader has a wish list. The former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, who previously demanded Special Category Status for the state before assuming office, was expected to achieve this goal with an absolute majority. However, to everyone's surprise, he never addressed this issue and focused instead on implementing Union government programs. Now, having lost power, he has again raised the issue of Special Category Status for Andhra Pradesh. People have come to understand the leaders and their parties; it is now up to the leaders to understand the people and their demands.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

### CELEBRATING INDIAN TENNIS LEGENDS

Madam — It was a significant day at Newport, Rhode Island, as Indian tennis legends Leander Adrian Paes and Vijay Amritraj were inducted into the prestigious International Hall of Fame. Leander Paes, a Padma Bhushan and

Padma Shri awardee, is renowned as one of the all-time great doubles players, holding the record for the most doubles wins in Davis Cup. His illustrious career includes eight men's doubles and ten mixed doubles Grand Slam titles. In 1999, he, along with Mahesh Bhupathi, became the first pair in the Open era to reach the finals of all four Grand Slams in men's doubles in the same calendar year.

Vijay Amritraj, a Padma Shri awardee, was inducted in the contributor category, recognizing his visionary leadership and transcendent impact on the sport. In 2022, Amritraj was honored in London by the International Tennis Hall of Fame and the International Tennis Federation for his lifetime contributions to tennis. Their achievements continue to inspire and shape the future of tennis. Kudos to both Paes and Amritraj for making India proud.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

# A silent revolution in mica mines of Jharkhand

The mica mines in Jharkhand's Koderma district are now free from child labour. This is a significant milestone in the region where child exploitation is rampant



BHUVAN RIBHU

On the 5th of July, the Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Priyank Kanoongo, declared that the mica mines in Jharkhand's Koderma district were free from child labour. NCPCR's announcement holds immense significance given that child labour in Koderma's mica mines has been an open secret for decades.

Despite the International Labour Organization considering mining and quarrying as hazardous work and one of the worst forms of child labour child labour continues to persist throughout the world, especially in the marginalised sector.

Children's small size makes them ideal for navigating the narrow caves and tunnels of mica extraction. In the wake of stringent environmental regulations including the 1980 Forest Conservation Act, legal mica mining paved the way for illegal trade thriving in Koderma and the rest of the mica belt looping through the dense forests of northern Jharkhand and southern Bihar. I've witnessed this journey up close. I've seen



Koderma transform from a district where every family's children were engaged in mica mining and collection to a district with all children from these mines enrolled in, and going to schools. Back in 2005, while searching for the children involved in mica mining and collection, I was in for a rude shock. The place resembled a parallel universe—schools shut down for months, CRPF battalions camping in schools, curfew-like atmosphere post 5 pm, no roads, mobile towers, electricity or tap water. I realised that the mica, which gave shimmer to our cars, cosmetics and electronic appliances, was coming from a place, which was oblivious to development and rights. Over the last 20 years, over 32,000 children identified as working in mica mining and

collection, withdrawn from work, enrolled and retained in schools through the efforts of NGOs under the Child Labour Free Mica banner. And over 22,000 in the last two years alone. This monumental change was achieved by applying a multipronged strategy at a scale in the targeted geography:

Research: Data was gathered to assess the problem and plan their solutions. In 2019, over 20,000 children, a majority of them school dropouts, were found working in mica mines.

Participation: Children's councils were formed to allow the participation of children in decision-making on issues they were facing. This model broke the systemic barriers of oppression in access to rights and justice. Hundreds of awareness programs were organised in mica mining villages to prevent child labour.

Protection: Based on information received from credible sources, children were rescued from mines from time to time. Additionally, in 2019, the findings of a study conducted on out-of-school children were submitted to

NCPCR. As a result, the stakeholders were able to monitor the school attendance of children to ensure that rescued children were retained in schools and no child was leaving school to work in mica mines. Partnerships: MoU with the Jharkhand state government, partnership with the NITI Aayog, local NGOs and NCPCR enabled the Child Labour Free Mica program to reach the farthest corners of the mica mining areas in Koderma.

Enhancing social security: People in mica mining-dependent villages were connected to social security schemes. Labour cards were made for daily wage labourers; and people were linked with the public distribution system and pension schemes. The above interventions, had following impact: 20,584 children withdrawn from labour and 30,364 children were enrolled in schools- Change is possible, the child labour-free mica program has proved this.

(The author is a child rights activist and founder of Just Rights for Children; views are personal)





## FIRST COLUMN

## THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

It can liberate the mind from perpetual conflict and lead to inner peace



RAVI VALLURI

Recall the iconic lines, of Amitabh Bachchan in the movie Deewar — looks intently at the idol of Lord Shiva and says, “Bahut khush hoge tum!” Bachchan, in the movie, essayed the role of an atheist smuggler. However, eventually, in the final stages of his life, he surrenders to the Supreme Power and seeks forgiveness. True enlightenment is the art of living compassionately. The human mind and heart reach a point of inflexion where an act of pardon remains an inescapable reality.

A prosaic individual might not be able to separate the chaff from the grain. His mind is full of antipathetic thoughts that he cannot transcend the barrier and is unable to exonerate anyone who has inflicted pain or hardship on him. The mind, full of gloom-ridden and obstructive thoughts cannot perceive the divinity in others. It remains perpetually in a state of conflict. Such an emotionally distraught person would castigate even angelic and divine figures out of callowness. Several organised and structured religions lay prominence on the art of forgiveness. If an individual does not rise to the sublime spheres of compassion and forgiveness, then he gets trapped in the whirlpool of cause and effect. The unabated Karmic cycle continues without any resolution.

The pivot is to fortify and protect the human mind to make it robust and compassionate. It attempts to extricate the self from the cause and effect of actions and even non-actions. Action and non-actions of humans indeed leave an indelible impression on the human mind. It would be perspicacious to pose as to how non-actions are also a kind of Karmic activity and in what manner it impacts the human mind and consciousness. Non-action in a way represents not taking up the gauntlet. Sage Ashtavakra, who authored the treatise, Ashtavakra Gita, posits a theory that an individual should break the bondage of guilt and anger to invoke the grace of remission. There is a poignant Zen story that explains the exemplary tenets of compassion and forgiveness. Aeon ago a Zen Master summoned his tutees in a Temple of Knowledge and asked them if they harboured the antipathetic emotion of hatred in their minds. “Yes!” exclaimed the disciples. The Master directed his disciples to place a potato each



in their bag and always travel with it as a reminder that despite the practice of meditation and breathing exercises their prana level was not high enough to expatriate hatred and inculcate compassion. The number of potatoes was to increase depending on the quantum of anger and would be directly proportional to the antipathy in their minds. Some young monks ended up carrying a bagful of potatoes, which over a period became malodorous. In sheer exasperation, the harried disciples sought refuge in the grace of the master to dispense away with the bag. The Zen Master guffawed and chided his students to abandon the negative trait of abhorrence from their minds, lest the malodour of these traits become a burden all through their lives. To lead a warm and healthy life, individuals should embark upon the path of forgiveness and compassion.

This suffuses the mind with immense strength and courage of conviction. It would be insightful for any individual to make positive affirmations, reinforcing love for every animate and inanimate object to build a divine society. Such affirmations would train the mind to remain unruffled and spread the quintessential gospel of forgiveness. Thereby humans would truly embrace fellow beings. If we construe the human mind to be the hardware, compassionate thoughts and forgiveness are part of non-negotiable software.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views expressed are personal)

## A blueprint for boosting rural economic growth



MONICA B SOOD

India's rural sector stands at a pivotal juncture, poised for transformation through small-scale and green enterprises. It has potential to become India's growth engine



India's rural sector must be transformed for inclusive growth and sustainable development. This change relies on small-scale and green enterprises to boost the rural economy, empower women, and employ unskilled workers. By channelling resources such as the extra Rs 1 lakh crore RBI dividends into capital projects and innovative schemes, India can foster self-sustainability in rural areas, mitigate youth distress, and rejuvenate the demand side of the economy.

This comprehensive approach not only addresses immediate employment needs but also lays the foundation for long-term capital formation and environmental preservation.

#### Incorporation of small-scale and green industries as the engine of growth

Micro enterprises have always been the backbone of the Indian agriculture-based economy. These labour-intensive enterprises perfectly capture the unskilled and semi-skilled manpower from the farming communities, therefore, creating employment and improving existence standards without much training. The development of these industries generates a massive multiplier effect on the creation of other business lines that support them and the general economy. Green industries are therefore leading this change. Encompassing renewable energy, organic farming, and sustainable manufacturing, these sectors offer dual benefits: employment opportunities for production and environmental management.

The establishment of green industries in the rural region targets to solve social problems like climate change and environmental degradation and at the same time create a sustainable means of living. This was done by allowing biogas and biofuel plants, solar energy farms, Ayurvedic and Unani medicine industries, and cooperative organic farming. These measures create employment, lessen the dependency on fossil energy and foster the preservation of the environment.

**Women empowerment** Out of the total rural population of India, the female population is about 30% which is a great unexplored talent pool. It is shown the pro-



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GREEN INDUSTRIES IN THE RURAL REGION TARGETS TO SOLVE SOCIAL PROBLEMS LIKE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND AT THE SAME TIME CREATE A SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF LIVING

motion of employment and entrepreneurship in these women brings substantial socio-economic returns. Micro and sustainable industries remain essential in empowering women since they create employment, skills development, and business opportunities for women. Self-help groups, women-based cooperatives and micro enterprises are the best way to ensure women's productive participation in the rural economy. These initiatives exist in areas where women dominate including handcrafting, production in textiles, manufacturing of alternative/Ayurvedic products, processing of raw materials, farming organically, milk production, and food processing. Credit, training, and market linkages also enable women to set up and expand their businesses besides improving on household incomes and community development.

#### Public private partnerships

A Channel for Facilitating PPP for Rural Development PPP is a powerful platform for pooling resources and skills to promote rural development. Thus, PPP models can initiate the development of small and green industries in rural areas with the support of the government and private investors. The government can provide policy support and an environment for development and financial backing while the private players bring in funds, technical expertise, and managerial skills. As per this model, to encourage rural development, a part of ₹1 lakh crore RBI dividends can be spent to co-finance with private entities. It can be used to fund the development of industrial clusters, renewable energy projects, and training institutions with efficient implementation and compliance with social and environmental responsibility.

#### Capital formation and rural employment

These are two basic objectives of

the growth process that need to be understood and analysed. To sum up, the provision of ₹1 lakh crore RBI dividends for capital investments in the form of sustainable rural development plans provides a strong base. Construction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, renewable energy facilities, and development of industrial estates can offer employment in the short run as well as in the long run spur economic development. A targeted investment can engage millions annually, thus erasing rural unemployment and distress to a large extent. In this way, employment of non-skilled and semi-skilled people from rural areas is possible, and thus future generations are protected from unemployment migration to urban areas, and rural-urban disparity. The placement of rural youth through placement in local schools, hospitals, and government offices helps in the tackling of manpower issues leading to improved service delivery and welfare of the populace.

#### Funding rural transformation

Funding the strategic rural development agenda calls for out-of-the-box funding acquisition strategies to tap several sources of funds. To the Rs 1 lakh crore RBI dividends, contributions from CSR, and own finances of panchayats and municipalities, and specific cess on fuel, income tax, and GST can be added. For example, the mandatory 25% contribution from CSR funds can be used to direct corporate money into rural development causes. While a 0.5% cess on luxury items, cars, aeroplane fares and GST can fetch a huge additional amount. However, it revealed that additional resources can be mobilized from the Skill Development Schemes (SKS) and hospital's SKS funds for support of wages in essential sectors. The introduction of a small cess on share trading can also produce a fairly good revenue for such

a scheme in turn funding the rural employment programme permanently.

#### Addressing rural unemployment

At the moment, unemployment has touched the figure of 8% in India. 1 per cent of the nation's unemployed populace is comprised of rural youth. If PM wants to bring the unemployment rate down to 6% and this is considered nearly equal to the employment rate observed in the developed countries, the scheme should ensure employment generation for at least 1 crore rural youth. The scheme should aim at offering low-wage employment to the increase in unemployment among the rural youthful population while at the same time ensuring that such employment offers incentives to make the youth stay in their given community without competing for skilled employment opportunities. This way the scheme means setting wages at ₹10,000 per month with 80:20 work distribution will sustain rural households' income and at the same time does not hinder organised labour employers markets.

#### A Roadmap to rural rejuvenation

Additional ₹1 lakh crore of RBI dividends coupled with idea capitalisms as sources of funding open the doors of a scheme that has the potential of providing a road map for rural rejuvenation. As a result, the small-scale industries, green industries, women and unskilled rural labour can make the scheme self-sustainable, reduce unemployment and bring a long-lasting impact on the environment. PPP and the focus on capital development will help the scheme to be sustainable and grow in scale, thus painting a better picture for rural India.

(The writer is Chairperson of the National Unity & Security Council; views are personal)

## Bihar again misses out on Olympic representation

Bihar's chronic issues in sports infrastructure, funding mismanagement, and administrative neglect continue to hinder its representation on the global stage

Bihar is bereft of a berth in the Olympics again.

By Gyan Bhadra The last week of this month is going to witness the glistening inaugural ceremony of the Olympic games of 17-days duration in Paris. In its wake sports pundits in India are preempting and counting on their fingers the medal tally Indian athletes will bag for the country. However, at the time of writing this piece, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs had put its imprimatur on the list of 117 athletes along with 140 supporting Staff. Now the question crops up: Is there any athlete from Bihar representing India in the Paris Olympics? The answer is a resounding “no”. As in the Tokyo Olympics; so in the



GYAN BHADRA

Paris Olympics, there is no representation of Bihar's sportsmen. The reasons behind it are threefold. One, as far as sports infrastructure in Bihar is concerned, there is a lack of an adequate number of stadiums, sports-related training centres and the ablest guidance of coaches. The reasons could be attributed to the fact that government investment in the sports sector is abysmally low. Even central financial

assistance given to the Bihar government to the tune of 50.83 crores as part of the “Khelo India” scheme was seemingly not utilised for either the development of infrastructure or the honing of skills of athletes in the state.

The patterns of allocation of funds to the sports sector are depressingly alarming. It has been observed that money meant for the overall growth of the sports sector is diverted as per the whims and fancies of politicians.

This invariably puts a toll on the sports industry which finds itself in a quandary and struggling always. Two, it goes without saying that the association of politicians with prominent sports bodies is an age-old pastime.



Every politician worth its salt desires to be a member of sports bodies. Whether it be BCCI or sports bodies at the state level, every political leader wants to usurp the cake of huge funds invested in the sports bodies then how could Bihar be left behind? Instead of being deeds heroes, espousing the

cause of sports development in Bihar, politicians, once getting a coveted position in sports bodies, exploit available resources to serve their ends.

Public memory is short. But not so painfully short that it will forget the fact that former Chief Minister Lalu Yadav, when, at the helms of Bihar Cricket Association as President, did not do enough in the realm of training budding talents of Bihar. The lack of Lalu's political will to promote cricket could be gauged by the fact that during his tenure as BCA president, no cricket player from Bihar had got a berth even in the Ranji Trophy squad; what to talk of big league matches at an international level. Now

sports pundits may arguably put a contention that during Lalu's tenure as BCA president, Bihar did not have a State Ranji Team as partition of Bihar caused losses to Bihar concerning sports facilities. Jharkhand carried takeaways of a major chunk of sports facilities with itself. However, taking refuge in this excuse by sports pundits held no water for scores of young cricket players then. This is more so because, during that period, RJD was led by Rabri Devi at the helm of state affairs; and Lalu could have done a lot about setting up a proper state Ranji Team and appointing the ablest coaches to train state's cricket players. Three, the role of the Bihar

Olympic Association (BOA) in preparing athletes for the Olympic games leaves much to be desired. Going by records, BOA officials do not take the trouble to organise events and trials for grooming athletes to the level of world-level Olympic games. So it springs no surprise that no athlete from Bihar had figured in the list of 117 athlete-member teams for the Paris Olympics. What is worse, there is a blame game between BOA and the state government over this sorry state of sports affairs. BOA puts the onus on the state government for sheer negligence about the lack of infrastructure and trained coaches. This results in BOA finding itself unable to organise

events at regular intervals. On the other hand, the state government absolves itself of essential responsibilities about BOA by saying that BOA is an independent entity and the government cannot interfere with its functioning. In this ongoing war of attrition, budding talented athletes are the losers. Eventually, it could be summed up that the scheme “Medal Lao, Naukri Pao” may seem to be alluring to a large number of youth at first glance. However, due to the lack of necessary sports wherewithals in Bihar, the scheme would not cut much ice with scores of young talents. (The author is a columnist, views are personal)



# MVA dubs Shah's remarks on Sharad, Uddhav laughable

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after Amit Shah termed NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar as "corruption ka sargana" (Godfather of corruption) and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief as "leader of Aurangzeb fan club", the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders hit back at the Union Home Minister, saying that the latter's comments were "laughable".

Rubbishing Shah's comments against the two of its top leaders, the MVA leaders said that both Pawar and Uddhav were respected leaders and such remarks by the Union Home Minister were unwarranted. Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson and Uddhav's close aide Sanjay Raut also came out in defence of the Sena (UBT) chief. "Shah has described Uddhav ji as the leader of Aurangzeb fan club...but we are not part of the Jinnah fan club." "We never went to Jinnah's grave in Pakistan and offered flowers or ate Nawaz Sharif's birthday cake in Pakistan. Basically, there is nothing wrong in taking the side of nationalist Muslims in the country. Muslims have also contributed during the struggle of this country," Raut said. Raut was referring to veteran BJP leader L. K Advani's visit to the Jinnah's grave in 2005 and Prime Minister's surprise air-



dash to Pakistan to greet his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on his birthday. It may be recalled that on June 4, 2005, Advani had visited the mausoleum of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. In a press release issued on the same day, the BJP had quoted the following message written by Advani in the Visitors' Book at the Jinnah Mausoleum. "There are many people who leave an ineradicable stamp on history. But there are very few who actually create history. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah was one such rare individual. In his early years, Sarojini Naidu, a leading luminary of India's freedom struggle, described Mr. Jinnah as an 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity'. 'His address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947 is a classic, a forceful

espousal of a Secular State in which every citizen would be free to practise his own religion but the State shall make no distinction between one citizen and another on the grounds of faith. My respectful homage to this great man," the BJP had quoted Advani as writing in the visitors' book at the Jinnah Mausoleum. The second example that Raut alluded to was Prime Minister Modi's surprise visit to Pakistan on December 25, 2015 to meet and greet Nawaz Sharif on the latter's birthday. He was received by Sharif with a warm hug at the tarmac of Lahore airport, on his arrival from Afghanistan by a special Indian Air Force Boeing 737 plane. Modi later took a chopper to proceed to Sharif's Raiwindi palatial residence in the outskirts of Lahore to celebrate the latter's birthday.

actions including sanitisation checks for assessment of residual risk of fire were carried out. "Subsequently, in the afternoon, the ship experienced severe listing to one side (port side). Despite all efforts, the ship could not be brought to the upright position. The ship continued to list further alongside her berth and is presently resting

# Fire breaks out in Naval frigate, one sailor goes missing

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A fire broke out onboard an Indian Naval Ship Brahmaputra, a multi-role frigate, while she was undergoing refit at at Naval Dockyard in south Mumbai on Sunday evening. A junior sailor has been missing since the mishap and search is on for him. The fire was brought under control by the ship's crew with assistance of firefighters from Naval Dockyard, Mumbai (ND (Mbi)) and other ships in harbour, on Monday morning. After that, follow-on

on one side," an Indian Navy spokesperson said on Monday evening. "All personnel have been accounted for except one junior sailor, for whom the search is in progress. An inquiry has been ordered by the Indian Navy to investigate the incident," the spokesperson said. Earlier in the morning, the spokesperson had said: "An indigenous frigate was involved in the fire. The fire was brought under control and no casualties have been reported in the incident." According to the Navy



spokesperson, the fire was detected by the ship's duty staff while carrying out routine maintenance work onboard the ship. "The ship's fire fighting team immediately commenced fire fighting action and was augmented by the fire brigade from Naval dockyard, Mumbai and other units in vicinity," the spokesperson added.

## IN BRIEF

**COUNSELLING FOR LLM AT GNDU ON JULY 25, 26**  
New Delhi: The Department of Laws, Guru Nanak Dev University has conducted LLM Joint Entrance Test on July, 18 and the entire staff worked under the instructions of Dean Academic, Head of the Department and Dr Meenu Verma. The Law Department, Guru Nanak Dev University is currently also conducting State Level Counselling for admissions to BALLB. As per the first counselling, 55 seats are filled (for Punjab quota - 32 General, 12 Scheduled Castes, 3 Backward Class, 1 PWD and for Outside Punjab quota - 3 General, 3 Scheduled Caste, 1 Backward Class). The second round of counselling is scheduled on 20.07.2024 as per the details given on punjablawadmissions.gndu.ac.in. Furthermore, the Department has total number of 26 dedicated faculty members.

**BHAIRABI-SAIRANG RAILWAY LINE GAME CHANGER**  
Maligaon: Indian Railways is significantly contributing towards



transformation of the north-eastern states by executing several new railway line projects. The Bhairabi-Sairang New Line Railway Project to connect the capital of the north-eastern state of Mizoram to the rest of the country is one such project which is at an advance stage of completion. This project once completed will be a game changer in terms of communication and commerce for the people of Mizoram. The economical and environment friendly railway services will have a positive impact on almost all development works in the state.

**RECORD POWER DEMAND IN PUNJAB MET**

Patiala: Punjab's Electricity and Public Works Minister, S. Harbhajan Singh ETO, today announced that Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) successfully met a record high electricity demand of 3666 lakh units in a single day on July 21, despite it being a Sunday. Maximum electricity was also supplied for agriculture. Previously, the highest demand of 3563 lakh units was met on June 26, 2024. Last year, the highest electricity demand of 3427 lakh units was met on September 9, 2023, and 3425 lakh units on June 23, 2023.

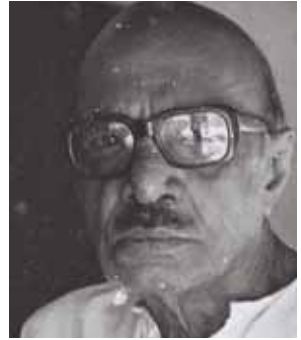


# Literary critics cry unfair as Marxists disgrace Basheer

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The literature mafia in Kerala dominated by the ruling CPI(M) has its own system to determine the standard of novels, criticism and poems. The CPI(M) has set the benchmark of literature and only writers subscribing to the views of the Marxist ideology make it to the holy grail of literature, according to C K Anandan Pillai, chief editor, Sahitya Vimarsam, Kerala's lone magazine for literary criticism. Septuagenarian Pillai is waging a battle against wheeler-dealers of Malayalam literature operating from

Sahitya Academy at Thrissur and Kerala State Language Institute at Thiruvananthapuram, two establishments functioning as branch offices of the CPI(M). Pillai has put the Kerala Government and the State's Sahitya Akademy for violating all norms associated with the selection of books and authors for the coveted Vilasini Prize, the one of its kind award in India meant for the book on the comprehensive study of a novel in Malayalam language. The award was instituted by MK Menon (1928-1993), veteran journalist-turned-novelist who is credited with writing the lengthiest novel



(The Inheritors) in India. A B Reghunathan Nair, noted critic and a lifelong friend of M K Menon who helped the novelist to draft his Will, said that the latter never wanted the Akademy to name the award after him. "Menon was

upset over the falling standards of novels in Malayalam and wanted to resuscitate the same from further deterioration. He wanted an award to be instituted exclusively for studies on the best novel that hogs the public attention and that was how it came into being," Nair told The Pioneer. The Akademi changed the name of the award from O Chandu Menon award to Vilasini Award. Chandu Menon is rated as the first novelist in Malayalam language and Vilasini wanted to perpetuate his memory through this award. He along with Reghunathan Nair has set stringent

standards for the book to be considered for the award. Both Pillai and Nais said that the Marxist dons threw to the winds the qualifying marks set by Menon and this year's award was bestowed on P K Pokker for his collection of essays "Basheer-The Creativity of Blue Light". "Basheer may be turning in his graveyard after hearing the news. We do feel that by honoring Pokker, the Sahitya Akademy has insulted and disgraced the memories of Basheer," said Reghunathan Nair. Writers who do not want their names to be quoted said that this was how the Marxists take revenge on persons who do not sing peans to the

"There is a character by name Chatthankeri Manakkal Sankaran Namboodirippadu in one of the novels authored by Basheer. This Namboodirippadu has a lot of similarities with E M S Namboodirippadu, the former Marxist chief minister of the State. The comrades were waiting for a chance and they chose Pokker for this honor," said a known critic. Menon, whose pen name was Vilasini, wanted Kerala to have serious study on lead novels and he entrusted the Sahitya Akademy with the responsibility of awarding the best study on novels with a citation and prize money of Rs 50,000/.

# India's GDP to...

The Economic Survey has been prepared by a team of economists led by Nageswaran. Some analysts have termed the growth projection in the Survey as conservative. "We want to be prudent in projecting growth rate, that is why we have projected the country's economic growth at 6.5 per cent to 7 per cent in FY24," he said. "While 7 per cent is eminently doable, there are some risk factors given the way the monsoon has shaped up and financial market risks are rising in the developed world with the spillover effects on India, and also the global geopolitics environment," he said.

# Tempers run high over NEET in LS

From Page 1  
"There is no evidence of the paper leak in the last seven years," he said, adding that the Centre's is "hiding nothing". As the opposition sought to corner the government on the issue of paper leaks, Speaker Om Birla said it is not right to raise questions about all exams and members should discuss the need of developing a better examination system. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is probing alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET and has lodged six FIRs. The NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. The Speaker stressed that there should be constructive discussions on the issue. If questions are raised about all examinations in the country, it have an impact on the Indian education system and perception about it around the world, he noted. After Birla concluded his remarks, Rahul Gandhi

wanted to speak but was disallowed and sooner the entire Opposition members, including from TMC and DMK, walked out of the House. Congress Deputy Leader in the House Gaurav Gogoi raised slogans demanding the resignation of Pradhan. Speaking to media later Rahul said the opposition will keep raising the issue to build pressure on the government. Asked if he was satisfied with the minister's response in the House, Rahul said the minister should give an answer. "He spoke about the Supreme Court, he spoke about the prime minister, but perhaps he did not understand and was not able to tell what he was doing about it (NEET)." The NEET exam issue came up for discussion during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha with several opposition leaders, including the LoP, saying there was a very serious problem in the country's examination system. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to

present the Union Budget for 2024-25 on Tuesday which will be the first Budget of the Modi government since the NDA came back to power for a third straight term. Sitharaman will be presenting her seventh consecutive Budget, surpassing the record of former Prime Minister Morarji Desai. The session is scheduled to have 16 sittings and is likely to conclude on August 12. Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju said that this session will mainly be devoted to the financial business relating to the Union Budget for 2024-25 which will be presented on July 23. Late in the evening INDIA bloc leaders led by Congress held a meeting to decide and be united to carry on with their strategy to corner the Modi government on range of issues including the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Government's order to display nameplates at eateries enroute Kanwar Yatra, rising cases of terror attacks in Jammu and compromise of various examination system including the UPSC.

# NEET: Experts told to...

From Page 1  
"How do you establish that the paper leak was all over India?" the CJJ asked. During the hearing, the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, took note of the submissions of some aspirants that a question of Physics had two correct answers and a set of examinees, who gave one particular answer out of the two correct ones, were awarded four marks. It also considered submissions that there were three sets of aspirants, and one set got minus five for the correct answer, the second secured four marks for another correct answer, and the third group comprised those who skipped it for either want of knowledge or due to the fear of getting negative marks. This would have a significant impact on the merit list of successful candidates, the bench was told. The bench reproduced the controversial question in its order and said, "As indicated..., four options

were indicated in the question as framed, of which, students had to select one option as their answer." "In order to resolve the issue as regards the correct answer to the ...Question, we are of the considered view that an expert opinion should be sought from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. "We request the Director at IIT Delhi to constitute a team of three experts of the subject concerned. The expert team constituted by the Director is requested to formulate its opinion on the correct option for the above question and to remit its opinion to the Secretary General of this Court, preferably by 12 noon on 23 July 2024," it ordered. It asked the SC's Secretary General to communicate the order to the IIT Director for "expeditious steps". The court made it clear that the order seeking the opinion of experts on a question would not mean that the pleas for cancellation of the examination have failed.

# Modi slams Opp for silencing him for...

From Page 1  
The Prime Minister urged political parties to rise above party lines and make use of the platform of Parliament for the next four to four-and-a-half years. "In January, 2029, when it will be an election year, you can go into the poll field, even make use of Parliament for it. Play the games you want to for those six months but till then, work for empowering the poor, farmers, youth and women by building a movement of people's participation to fulfil the dream of 2047," Modi said. "I say with a lot of sadness that after 2014, some MPs were elected for 5 years, some for 10 years, but many MPs did not get a chance to talk about their constituency and share their views in Parliament because of the negative politics of some parties that misused Parliament to hide their political failures," he said. Modi urged all parties to give a chance to first-time MPs to speak in Parliament. "You would have seen that in the first session of this Lok Sabha, an undemocratic

attempt was made to throttle the voice of the Government that had been ordained by 140 crore Indians to serve the country. For two-and-a-half hours, attempts were made to scuttle the voice of the Prime Minister, a practice which has no place in a democratic setup. What's more disconcerting, however, is that they have no remorse over it," Modi said. Modi hoped that all MPs will contribute to the debate. He said there was nothing wrong with opposing views but it is the negative views that are wrong. The country does not need negativity, he said. "We have to take the country forward driven by the ideology of development and progress," Modi said. He also said that the Monsoon Session is an important destination in our democracy's proud journey. "It is a matter of immense pride for me as well as for all of our colleagues that after nearly 60 years a government has come back to power for the third consecutive time and has got the privilege of presenting the first Budget of

the third term. The country is seeing this as a very proud event in the glorious journey of Indian democracy," he said. Modi said his government is moving forward towards implementing on the ground the guarantees he has given to the people. "We are moving ahead with the aim of gradually realising the guarantees that I have been giving to the people of the country. This budget is an important budget of Amrit Kaal. We have got an opportunity of five years and this budget will determine the direction of our work for those five years and also lay a strong foundation for fulfilling our dream of a 'Viksit Bharat' in 2047, when we will celebrate 100th year of Independence," he said. He highlighted that India is the fastest growing country among the major economies with about eight percent growth in the last three consecutive years. Today, opportunities are at the peak due to positive outlook, investment and performance, he said.

# SC stays nameplate order to eateries on Kanwar Yatra route

From Page 1  
The matter will be heard next on July 26. The Supreme Court was hearing a batch of pleas including those by TMC MP Mahua Moitra, academician Apoorvanand Jha and columnist Aakar Patel, and NGO Association of Protection of Civil Rights challenging the directives. A large number of devotees travel from various places with 'kanwars' carrying holy water from the Ganga to perform 'jalabhishek' of Shivalings during the Hindu calendar month of 'Shravan'. Many believers shun consuming meat during the

month they consider holy. "Until the returnable date, having regard to the ... discussion, we deem it appropriate to pass interim order prohibiting the enforcement of the above directives. In other words, the food sellers, hawkers etc may be required to display the kind of food they are serving to Kanwariyas but they must not be forced to disclose the names/identities of the owners or employees," the bench said. Hours after the Supreme Court orders, the opposition parties welcomed the top court's order saying "victory of harmony" should now be

written on a new nameplate. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said "victory of harmony" should now be written on a new nameplate. In a post on X in Hindi, the SP chief said, "On a new nameplate, it should be written: 'sauhaardmev jayate' (victory of harmony)." Reacting to the development, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Kherra said, "We welcome the order by the Supreme Court on the completely unconstitutional orders by the Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh governments

wherein they have asked all shop keepers, eateries and street vendors to put their name and identity on boards outside especially during the Kanwar Yatra. This was unconstitutional and the Congress along with the entire opposition opposed it." "We hope his CMs don't defy him. Although the prime minister's position in his party is considerably weakened, we hope he retrieves that position and asserts himself and stops his chief ministers from indulging in such unconstitutional measures," he said. At the outset, the

bench asked senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Moitra, if any formal order has been passed in the matter. Singhvi said a "camouflaged" order has been passed to display names of owners of eateries. He asserted the orders passed by the Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh governments is "exclusion by identity" and against the Constitution. Senior advocate Chander Uday Singh, appearing for Association for Protection of Civil Rights, submitted that while the state authorities were claiming the order proposed voluntary compliance, it was being

enforced by coercion. "It is not based on any statutory backing. No law gives police commissioner power to do this," he asserted. Asking Singhvi to desist from exaggeration, the bench told him, "These orders have dimensions of safety and hygiene also." Singhvi said Kanwar Yatras have been going on for decades and people of different religious faiths-Islam, Christianity and Buddhism- have been helping Kanwariyas. He said many vegetarian hotels and restaurants being run by Hindus have Muslim and Dalit employees.

# Bihar's demand for Special Status suffers...

From Page 1  
The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), also a BJP ally, and the opposition RJD echoed the same demand at the meeting. The JD(U), though, has already conveyed to the Centre that it is willing to settle for a special financial package in case the status cannot be granted to the state. BJD and the YSR Congress had made the same demand for Odisha and Andhra Pradesh respectively in the meeting. The Government has in the

past also argued that the 14th Finance Commission report has ruled out the possibility of any more states being granted the status, which includes tax relief and higher central funding for the beneficiary states. RJD leader and Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha, while addressing on the first day of the Budget session in Rajya Sabha, reiterated demand of special state status and a special package for Bihar and asserted that he will keep asking for the same in Parliament and if need be on streets even.



# World leaders thank Biden for his 'global leadership'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

World leaders on Monday thanked him for his bold steps and global leadership during challenging times. Biden on Sunday announced that he is exiting the 2024 presidential race and backed his deputy Kamala Harris to be the Democratic Party's presidential candidate in the November 5 election. In a post on X, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he respects President Biden's decision and looks forward to working together for the remainder of his term.

"I know that, as he has done throughout his remarkable career, he will have made his decision based on what he believes is best for the American people," said Starmer, who met with Biden this month in Washington. Former UK prime minister Rishi Sunak said in a post on X that he saw Biden's "love for America and dedication to service" firsthand while working with him. He also outlined some achievements between



Patricia Greene, of Washington, is photographed holding a sign thanking President Joe Biden near the White House in Washington, Sunday, July 21, 2024. Biden dropped out of the 2024 race for the White House on Sunday, ending his bid for reelection following a disastrous debate with Donald Trump that raised doubts about his fitness for office just four months before the election. AP/PTI

the US and the UK. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in a post on X thanked Biden for his "leadership and ongoing service". "The Australia-US Alliance

has never been stronger with our shared commitment to democratic values, international security, economic prosperity and climate action for this and future generations," he said.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau thanked Biden for being a "partner to Canadians - and a true friend". "I've known President Biden for years. He's a great man, and everything he does is guided by his love for his country. As President, he is a partner to Canadians - and a true friend. To President Biden and the First Lady: thank you," Trudeau posted on X along with a photograph of him with Biden.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said, "I refrain from commenting directly on this issue because it involves domestic politics in the US but I recognize that President Biden's decision is based on his desire to make the best possible political decision."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country is grateful to President

Biden for his "unwavering support" for its fight for freedom, which, along with strong bipartisan support in the United States, has been and continues to be critical.

"Many strong decisions have been made in recent years and they will be remembered as bold steps taken by President Biden in response to challenging times. And we respect today's tough but strong decision," he said on X.

Zelensky said Ukraine will always be thankful for Biden's leadership. "He supported our country during the most dramatic moment in history, assisted us in preventing Putin from occupying our country, and has continued to support us throughout this terrible war," he said. Taking to X, Israeli President Isaac Herzog described Biden as a "true ally of the Jewish people" and thanked him for his friendship and steadfast support for the Israeli people over his decades-long career.

"As the first US President to visit Israel in wartime, as a

recipient of the Israeli Presidential Medal of Honor, and as a true ally of the Jewish people, he is a symbol of the unbreakable bond between our two peoples. I send him, @FLOTUS Jill Biden, and all his family, my warmest wishes from Jerusalem," Herzog wrote.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant in a post on X said the US president's "steadfast backing, especially during the war, has been invaluable". The Biden administration has been one of the biggest supporters of Israel's war in Gaza since Hamas' October 7 attacks last year. But he has increasingly clashed with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over humanitarian aid and the mounting civilian death toll of the conflict.

Netanyahu, who is expected to visit Washington this week, has not yet given any statement on Biden's decision to withdraw from the presidential race. Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris called Biden "a proud American with an Irish soul," and thanked him for his "glob-

al leadership" and "friendship". In a post on X, Ireland Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said he heard the news "with both sadness & admiration", describing Biden as an "abiding friend of Ireland". Martin said Biden provided "invaluable support for peace & prosperity on this island" and wished him the best.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said in a post on X that "Biden has dedicated his life to public service, and that is something that deserves much respect." He thanked Biden for his "commitment to New Zealand" and said he looks "forward to working with him for the remainder of his presidency".

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk wrote on X that Biden had made difficult decisions "thanks to which Poland, America and the world are safer, and democracy stronger." "I know you were driven by the same motivations when announcing your final decision. Probably the most difficult one," Tusk said.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro at a rally on Sunday said Biden made the "correct" decision and put his family and health first. He wished him "health and a long life." South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's office said it does not wish to comment on domestic political situations in other countries, but added that the South Korean government "will continue to work closely with the US to further develop the South Korea-US global comprehensive strategic alliance". Biden's decision to nominate Harris, who is of both Indian and African origin, follows weeks of intense pressure from fellow Democrats after his disastrous presidential debate performance against his Republican rival and former US president Donald Trump last month.

"Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats - it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this," Biden said in a post on X.

# Parts of Gaza humanitarian zone to be evacuated

AP ■ DEIR A--BALAH

The Israeli military ordered the evacuation Monday of part of a crowded area in the Gaza Strip it had designated a humanitarian zone, saying it is planning an operation against Hamas militants there.

Thousands of Palestinians, many carrying backpacks and accompanied by children, walked down dusty roads under the scorching sun, navigating dilapidated cars with belongings tied on top. Many Palestinians have been uprooted multiple times in search of safety during Israeli's air and ground campaign. "We do not know where we are walking," said Kholoud Al Dadas, as she clutched her children. "This is our seventh or eighth time we have been displaced. While we were sleeping in our homes, they started shooting at us, bombing from everywhere." Moments later, she collapsed in exhaustion.

The Israeli military said it is planning to begin an operation against Hamas militants who have embedded themselves in the area and used it to launch rockets toward Israel. The area



Israeli Police and ZAKA emergency service work at the scene of an attempted stabbing attack at the entrance to Netiv HaAsara, near the Gaza border in southern Israel on Monday. AP/PTI

includes the eastern part of the Muwasi humanitarian zone in the southern Gaza Strip. Earlier this month, Israel estimated at least 1.8 million Palestinians are now in the humanitarian zone it declared, covering about 14 kilometres (8.6 miles) along the Mediterranean. That's the bulk of Gaza's 2.3 million population.

Much of the area is blanketed with tent camps that lack sanitation and medical facilities and have limited access to aid, UN and humanitarian groups say. Families live amid mountains of trash and streams contaminated by sewage. Gaza's Health Ministry said the toll from Israel's nine-

month war against Hamas in Gaza has surpassed 39,000 Palestinians killed and 89,800 wounded. The ministry's count does not distinguish between combatants and civilians. The war began with an assault by Hamas militants on southern Israel on October 7 that killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took about 250 hostages. About 120 remain held, about a third of them believed to be dead, according to Israeli authorities.

Delicate negotiations continued for a cease-fire and hostage release, with US and Israeli officials expressing hope that an agreement was closer than ever. A negotiating team will be sent to continue talks on Thursday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said. Egypt, Qatar and the United States are pushing Israel and Hamas toward a phased cease-fire deal that would stop the fighting and free the hostages.

Netanyahu left Monday on a much-anticipated trip to the United States to meet with President Joe Biden, who on Sunday said he would seek another term, and address

Congress. Netanyahu said that regardless of who becomes the next US president, "our enemies must know that Israel and the United States stand together tomorrow and always." He said he will thank Biden for more than 40 years of friendship, while pushing him for more support on certain issues.

The Israeli military said it was continuing to operate in central and southern Gaza. At least 38 people were killed in the southern city of Khan Younis, according to hospital officials and a count of the bodies by an Associated Press journalist. One person was killed and three injured in a strike outside Al-Aqsa Hospital in the central town of Deir-Al-Balah, where many people have sheltered outside the facility.

The Israeli military announced the deaths of two additional Israeli hostages, saying they believe Yagev Buchshtab, 35, and Alex Dancyg, 76, kidnapped on Oct. 7, were no longer alive, based on intelligence. Both were seen alive in Gaza by other hostages who had been released. Dancyg, a Holocaust educator, gave history lectures to hostages to pass

the time, according to the Hostage and Missing Families Forum.

Netanyahu has vowed to wipe out Hamas' military and governing capabilities and secure the return of the remaining hostages. Families of hostages and thousands of other Israelis have held weekly demonstrations to urge the prime minister to reach a cease-fire deal that would bring their loved ones home.

Also Monday, Israeli police said a Canadian citizen was killed after threatening Israeli security forces with a knife near the Gaza border. The Israeli military said the man drove to the entrance of an Israeli town close to the border, left his vehicle and approached security forces with a knife. The forces opened fire and killed the man. There were no other injuries.

The attack took place at the entrance to the Israeli town of Netiv HaAsara, 300 metres (yards) north of the border. On Oct. 7, Netiv HaAsara was attacked and 20 residents were killed after gunmen passed over the concrete border wall using paragliders, according to Israeli military officials.

# Israel's Netanyahu treads carefully in Washington post-Joe Biden exit

AP ■ JERUSALEM



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu left for Washington on Monday, leaving behind a brutal war to make a politically precarious speech before the US Congress at a time of great uncertainty following Joe Biden's withdrawal from the presidential race. With efforts ongoing to bring about a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, rising concerns about the war spreading to Lebanon and Yemen, and the US in the midst of a dizzying election campaign, Netanyahu's speech has the potential to cause disarray on both sides of the ocean.

The risks only increased with Biden's decision Sunday to drop out of the race for president, especially since the choice of a replacement Democratic nominee — and the potential next American leader — are still up in the air.

Before stepping on the plane, Netanyahu said he would emphasise the theme of Israel's bipartisanship in his speech and said Israel would remain America's key ally in the Middle East "regardless of who the American people choose as their next president."

"In this time of war and uncertainty, it's important that Israel's enemies know that America and Israel stand together," he said, adding that he will meet Biden during his trip and thank him for his support for Israel.

A person familiar with Biden's schedule confirmed Sunday that the president will host Netanyahu at the White House. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly, said the exact timing of the meeting has not been established because Biden is recovering from COVID-19.

Netanyahu is scheduled to address Congress on Wednesday. He is also expected to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris, who is seeking the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

Netanyahu will deliver his congressional address with an eye on several audiences: his ultra-nationalist governing partners, the key to his political survival; the Biden administration, which Netanyahu counts on for diplo-

matic and military support; and Donald Trump's Republican Party, which could offer Netanyahu a reset in relations if he is reelected in November.

His words risk angering any one of those constituencies, which the Israeli leader cannot afford if he hopes to hold on to his tenuous grip on power.

"There are a few land mines and pitfalls on this trip," Eytan Gilboa, an expert on US-Israel relations at Israel's Bar-Ilan University, said before Biden's withdrawal. "He is thought of as a political wizard who knows how to escape from traps. I am not sure he still knows how to do that."

It is Netanyahu's fourth speech to Congress — more than any other world leader. During his address, his far-right governing partners will want to hear his resolve to continue the war and topple Hamas.

The Biden administration will look for progress toward the latest US-backed cease-fire proposal and details on a postwar vision. Republicans hope Netanyahu besmirches Biden and bolsters the GOP's hoped-for perception as Israel's stalwart supporter.

The war, which was sparked by Hamas' Oct 7 attack on southern Israel, has tested Israel's ties with its top ally as never before. The Biden administration has stood staunchly beside Israel. But it has grown increasingly alarmed about the conduct of the Israeli military, the continued difficulties of getting humanitarian aid into Gaza, especially after the short-lived US military pier off Gaza coast, as well as Israel's lack of postwar plans and the harm to civilians in Gaza.

# US-Russian journo convicted in secret trial

Washington (AP): A Russian court has convicted Alsu Kurmasheva, a Russian-American journalist for the US government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, of spreading false information about the Russian army and sentenced her to 6½ years in prison after a secret trial, court records and officials said on Monday. The conviction in the city of Kazan came on Friday, the same day that a court in the Russian city of Yakaterinburg convicted Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich of espionage and sentenced him to 16 years in prison in a case that the US called politically motivated.

Kurmasheva, an editor for RFE/RL was convicted of "spreading false information" about the military, according to the website of the SC of Tatarstan. Court spokesperson Natalya Loseva confirmed to The Associated Press by phone that Kurmasheva was sentenced to 6½ in prison in

# Internet down in B'desh despite calm

AP ■ DHAKA



Bangladeshi military forces soldiers put up barbed wires on a main street in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Monday, July 22. AP/PTI

Bangladesh remained without internet for a fifth day and the government declared a public holiday Monday, as authorities maintained tight control despite apparent calm following a court order that scaled back a controversial system for allocating government jobs that sparked violent protests.

This comes after a curfew with a shoot-on-sight order was installed days earlier and military personnel could be seen patrolling the capital and other areas. The South Asian country witnessed clashes between the police and mainly student protesters demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. The violence has killed more than a hundred people, according to at least four local newspapers. Authorities have not so far shared official figures for deaths. There was no immediate vio-

lence reported on Monday morning after the Supreme Court ordered, the day before, the veterans' quota to be cut to 5%. Thus, 93% of civil service jobs will be merit-based while the remaining 2% reserved for members of ethnic minorities as well as transgender and disabled people.

On Sunday night, some student protesters urged the government to restore internet services. Hasnat Abdullah, a coordinator

# Assailant kills 6, wounds 6 at care home in Croatia

Zagreb (AP): An armed assailant entered a care home for older people in central Croatia Monday and opened fire, killing six people and wounding six others, police said. Croatia's police chief, Nikola Milina, said five people died immediately, while one more person died in a hospital.

The suspect fled the scene, but the police soon caught him in a cafe near the facility in the town of Daruvar, he said.

The victims were five residents of the care home and one employee, Milina said. Police said they were informed of the attack on Monday morning.

The suspect is "under police supervision," said a statement by the regional police office.

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# Top Chinese university fires professor after complaint of sexual harassment

Hong Kong (AP): A top Chinese university fired a professor on Monday, a day after a graduate student accused him of sexual harassment on social media in a rare public allegation and posted recordings as evidence, drawing widespread support.

The woman, who identified herself as Wang Di, said she is studying in a doctoral program at Renmin University of China's School of Liberal Arts. She posted a 59-minute video on Sunday on the Weibo social media platform in which she said her supervisor, an ex-vice dean and former Communist Party representative at the school in Beijing, physically and verbally abused her. She also said that for more than two years after she rejected him, he assigned her many tasks, scold-

ed her and threatened that she would not graduate. She also posted audio clips which she said were evidence of the harassment. In one, a man could be heard trying to kiss a woman, who kept saying, "No, no, teacher." "At this moment, I can no longer endure it and have nowhere to retreat, so I am speaking out," she wrote. She demanded that the professor be punished and a new supervisor be appointed for her. She wore a mask in the video, but held up an identification card. Her post drew 2.2 million likes as of Monday evening, with many users leaving comments in support of the student. Renmin University said Monday it concluded that the complaints against the professor were true following an investigation. In addition to

sacking him, it also revoked his party membership and reported the incident to authorities in accordance with the law, it said in a statement on Weibo. It said the academic had "seriously betrayed the original mission of teaching and educating" and that his acts violated party discipline and school rules. The professor did not immediately respond to a request for comment. After the university announced its decision, the woman's post on Weibo disappeared.

The Associated Press does not generally name people who say they are victims of sexual harassment unless they publicly identify themselves. In China, public accusations of sexual harassment have become rare in recent years following an uptick during a brief

#MeToo movement that was swiftly snuffed out by the government. The ruling Communist Party views powerful social movements as a potential threat to stability and its hold on power.

In June, a Chinese journalist who promoted women's rights as part of the #MeToo movement was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of incitement to subvert state authority, according to her supporters.

In one of the most high-profile cases, former Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai disappeared from public view after accusing former high-level official Zhang Gaoli of sexual assault in 2021. Her accusation was quickly scrubbed from the internet and discussion of it remains heavily censored.

# My aim is to defeat Trump: Kamala

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Kamala Harris has said she plans to "earn and win" the Democratic presidential nomination to defeat Donald Trump after President Joe Biden decided not to seek re-election, putting her on the path to become the first Black woman and first Asian American to lead a major political party's ticket. Vice President Harris, 59, said she was "honoured" to receive Biden's endorsement and voiced her appreciation for his extraordinary leadership as President of the United States and his decades of service to the country.

"I am honoured to have the President's endorsement and my intention is to earn and win this nomination," she said in a statement on Sunday.

The historic endorsement came after Biden, 81, announced Sunday that he is dropping out

of the race following weeks of disarray within the Democratic Party. Biden's disastrous first presidential debate with his Republican rival and former president Donald Trump called into question his ability to win a second term and govern for another four years.

Despite Biden's backing, it remains unclear whether Harris will become the nominee, or what process the Democratic Party would take to select an alternative.

Democratic National Committee chairman Jaime Harrison said in a statement that in the coming days, the party will "undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward as a united Democratic Party with a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November." Though



Harris' endorsement almost seals her position as the presidential nominee of her party. Harris still needs to get elected by the party's delegates during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago from August 19-22. Biden has won 3,896 delegates as against 1,976 required to win the party's presidential nomination. In a move that would give her access to the campaign funds, the Biden-Harris campaign amended filings with the Federal Election Commission to rename its principal committee and declare Harris a candidate for president. Following Biden's decision, Harris, who has been serving as the US' first female, first Black

and first South Asian vice president since 2021, immediately secured the endorsement of former president Bill Clinton, thus making it a bit easier for her to win the delegate battle during the party convention.

"On behalf of the American people, I thank Joe Biden for his extraordinary leadership as President of the United States and for his decades of service to our country," she said.

Harris said over the past year, she has travelled across the country, talking to Americans about the clear choice in this momentous election. "And that is what I will continue to do in the days and weeks ahead. I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic Party — and unite our nation — to defeat Donald Trump and his extreme Project 2025 agenda... We have 107 days until Election Day. Together, we will fight. And together, we will win," she said.



# Eco Survey slams developed nations for energy-guzzling tech

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

On the one hand, developing nations are being forcefully nudged to sign up for climate commitments that they are not ready for, on the other hand, the developed world is in a mad 'Scramble for Africa' kind of rush to usher in the latest and the most expansive energy guzzlers like Artificial Intelligence ecosystem, the Government's 'Economic Survey 2023-24 has said. "Even as the data centres are ramping up energy demand, cloud storage facilities, crypto mining, and AI are all expected to increase this exponentially." The report also took exception to the developed world's fancy to such energy demand driven technologies while planning to impose carbon taxes on carbon-intensive imports by the developing countries like India. This technological advancement, aimed at enhancing efficiency and productivity, paradoxically



contributes to higher emissions. "Despite ambitious pledges by leading technology firms to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2030, their pursuit of AI dominance has resulted in a 30 per cent rise in emissions by 2023," the report further cautioned. This means that India not only has to deal with climate change and undertake energy transition but also confront the protectionism of developed countries, said the report. The European Union is on

course to implement its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), and both the United Kingdom and the United States are in different stages of imposing their versions of it in due course. The EU argues that this mechanism creates a level playing field for domestically manufactured goods, which must adhere to stricter environmental standards, and help reduce emissions from imports. However, other nations, particularly developing countries, worry that this would harm their economies and make it too expensive to trade with the bloc. According to a report by the independent think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), CBAM will impose an additional 25 per cent tax on carbon-intensive goods, such as iron, steel, cement, fertilisers, and aluminium, exported from India to the EU. Based on data from the past three years, this tax burden would represent 0.05 per cent

of India's GDP. "It would be a comedy if it were not real and tragic. Even as developed nations prepare to impose a carbon tax at the border on imports coming into their countries laden with carbon, they are ramping up energy demand like never before, thanks to their obsession with letting AI guide, take over and dominate natural intelligence," the report said. For instance, the report cited a broad estimate by the International Energy Agency which said that a single Chat-GPT search consumes 10 times more energy than a similar query on Google. According to a research report published in April, Goldman Sachs analysts wrote that the demand for power in the United States would experience growth not seen in a generation, thanks to AI, and that "transmission, one of the major bottlenecks for clean energy transition, and the addition of data centres and AI could exacerbate this".

# Sensex, Nifty settle lower ahead of Budget

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Monday, dragged down by heavy selling pressure in Reliance Industries and Kotak Mahindra Bank ahead of the Budget. Besides, a weak trend in global equity markets also hit investors sentiment, traders said. Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 102.57 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 80,502.08. During the session, it tanked 504 points or 0.62 per cent to 80,100.65. The NSE Nifty dipped 21.65 points or 0.09 per cent to 24,509.25. During the day, it dropped 168.6 points or 0.68 per cent to 24,362.30. Among the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries declined over 3 per cent after the company reported a 5 per cent drop in its June quarter net profit. Kotak Mahindra Bank also fell more than 3 per cent after its June quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.



ITC, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies and IndusInd Bank were the other big laggards. NTPC, UltraTech Cement, HDFC Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the gainers. HDFC Bank climbed over 2 per cent after the company's consolidated net profit grew 33.17 per cent to Rs 16,474.85 crore in the June 2024 quarter. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled lower, while Hong Kong

ended in the positive territory. European markets were trading higher in the mid-session deals. US markets ended lower in overnight trade on Friday. According to the Economic Survey, 2023-24 tabled in Parliament on Monday, capital markets are becoming more prominent in India's growth story, with an expanding share in investment landscape on the back of technology,

innovation and digitisation. Further, Indian markets are resilient to global geopolitical and economic shocks, it added. "Despite heightened geopolitical risks, rising interest rates and volatile commodity prices, Indian capital markets have been one of the best performing among emerging markets in FY24," the Economic Survey said. Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.08 per cent to USD 82.53 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,506.12 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark hit its new all-time high of 81,587.76 in the initial trade on Friday 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. Nifty tumbled 269.95 points or 1.09 per cent and ended at 24,530.90 after hitting its fresh record peak of 24,854.80 during the opening bell on Friday.

# Rupee rises 3 paise to close at 83.67 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range to settle 3 paise higher at 83.67 (provisional) against the American currency on Monday, as crude oil prices and the US dollar retreated from their elevated levels. Forex traders said the Indian rupee recovered from all-time low levels and traded in a narrow range as mixed-to-weak domestic markets put downside pressure on the rupee. However, weak tone in the US dollar and a decline in crude oil prices cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.66, and touched an intraday high of 83.65 and a low of 83.68 against the dollar during the trading session. It finally settled at 83.67 (provisional) against the American currency, registering a gain of 3 paise from its previous close.



On Friday, the rupee depreciated 7 paise to settle at its all-time low of 83.70 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on the weak tone in the global markets and overall strength in the US dollar. Weak Asian currencies and a weak yuan may also support the dollar. However, weakness in crude oil prices and FII inflows may support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at

Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Any intervention by the RBI may also support the rupee. Investors may take cues from India's Union Budget. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 84.20, Choudhary added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.17 per cent at 104.22. Brent crude futures, the

global oil benchmark, were trading marginally lower by 0.29 per cent at USD 82.39 per barrel. On the macroeconomic front, India's forex reserves jumped by USD 9,699 billion to an all-time high of USD 666.854 billion for the week ended July 12, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the kitty had increased by USD 5,158 billion to USD 657.155 billion, surpassing the previous high of USD 655.817 billion for the week ended June 7. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 102.57 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 80,502.08 points and Nifty dropped 21.65 points or 0.09 per cent to 24,509.25 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Friday as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,506.12 crore, according to exchange data.

# CRR cut to help banks facing low deposit growth: SBI MD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Lowering the cash deposit ratio or the proportion of deposits which banks are mandatorily required to park with the RBI will help the lenders facing low deposit growth, SBI Managing Director Ashwini Kumar Tewari said on Monday. Conversations for such a cut are on, he told reporters here, clarifying that the country's largest lender does not need such a reduction as it is well placed on the liquidity front. There has not been any formal request for a CRR cut made either, he added. Speaking at an event organised by domestic rating agency Careedge, Tewari said, "We have to look at various avenues for helping tide over the challenge posed by lower deposit growth", and specifically mentioned a request to get bank deposits at par with capital market investments while referring

to CRR and SLR. To a question on whether the bank has sought a CRR cut, he said, "We have not sought any formal dispensation, but it is a conversation we continue to have. I don't think there is any move to do this at the moment". When asked if a CRR cut will help banks tide over the continuing wedge between the credit and deposit growth, he said, "Of course, it will help". The economy will need resources to help fund the growth, he said, adding that 90 per cent of all economic activity is funded by the banks. SBI's statutory liquidity ratio or investments in government bonds are 2-3 per cent higher and hence, it may not benefit as much. But there are banks running credit deposit ratios of up to 90 per cent for whom the CRR cut, which expands the lendable resources for a bank, will be of help.

# Gold rises ₹100 on jewellers' buying



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,650 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday due to increased buying by jewellers and a firm trend in the overseas markets. However, silver prices plunged by Rs 600 to Rs 91,000 per kg. In the previous session, it had settled at Rs 91,600 per kg, as per the All India Sarafa Association. Saturday, the precious metal rates had closed at Rs 75,250 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,300 per 10 grams. It had ended at Rs 75,200 per 10 grams in the previous session. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to fresh demand by local jewellers and a firm trend in the international markets. The white metal has declined Rs 3,400 per kg in the past four sessions since July 18 when it had fallen by Rs 400 to end at Rs 94,000 per kg. Globally, Comex gold is trading higher at USD 2,451.70 per ounce, up by USD 4.90 per ounce from the previous close. "After a sharp pullback from all-time highs last week, Comex gold edged higher on Monday as US election uncertainty weighed on US dollar and treasury yields," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP of Commodity Research at Kotak Securities, said.

President Joe Biden's decision to end his re-election campaign and endorse Vice President Kamala Harris prompted speculation on whether it would benefit or hinder chances of former President Donald Trump returning to the White House. As a result, the bulls of the US dollar remained cautious and the commodity prices gained some traction. Traders are now eagerly anticipating the release of several key economic indicators ahead of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) policy decision next week, Chainwala added. However, silver was marginally down at USD 29.25 per ounce in New York. According to commodity market experts, traders also worried about slowing Chinese economic growth, geopolitical risks from the Russia-Ukraine war and the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East will benefit the safe-haven asset. Further, traders are awaiting the upcoming release of the US Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price index data on Friday for more cues about the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy path, which will provide directions for the bullion prices in the near future, they said.

# Sebi returns draft IPO documents of recruitment solution provider Crizac

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has returned the draft documents of student recruitment solution provider Crizac Ltd, which was looking to float Rs 1,000 crore Initial Public Offering (IPO), an update with the markets regulator showed on Monday. The move might delay the Kolkata-based company's initial share-sale. The proposed IPO was entirely an Offer For Sale (OFS) by promoters, Pinky Agarwal and Manish Agarwal, with no fresh issue component.

The OFS consists of the sale of equity shares worth Rs 841 crore by Pinky Agarwal and up to Rs 159 crore by Manish Agarwal, according to the offer document. The company filed its Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in April. According to an update on Sebi's website on Monday, the markets regulator returned the company's offer document on July 15 without providing reasons for the same. Crizac offers international student recruitment



solutions to global Kingdom, Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

It has established partnerships with leading universities in the UK and is a major player in student recruitment from India to the UK, holding a significant market share of about 13 per cent based on the number of Indian students pursuing higher education in the UK in 2023, the draft papers quoted a F&S report. Over the last three years, Crizac facilitated enrolment applications from over 72 countries through its registered agents on its technology platform. It processed more

than 3.82 lakh student applications and collaborated with over 140 global universities. Crizac's pro forma consolidated revenue from operations during the fiscal year 2023 jumped 79.5 per cent to Rs 472.97 crore from Rs 263.53 crore in the previous year. Besides, profit after tax grew 65.50 per cent to Rs 112.14 crore for the financial year 2023 from Rs 67.76 crore in the preceding fiscal. Equirus Capital and Anand Rathi Advisors are the book-running lead managers to the issue.

# Cut import duty on smartphone components in Budget, Govt told

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Economic think tank GTRI on Monday urged the Government to cut import duty on smartphone components in the Budget as it could lead to an increase in superficial assembly plants that rely heavily on imported parts. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for 2024-25 tomorrow. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said the current schemes and tariff structure resulted in great success, and the current framework is also ensuring duty-free imports of components for exports. "Do not cut import duty on smartphone components in this Budget. Removing tariffs could lead to an increase in superficial assembly plants that rely heavily on imported parts, contributing little to the local economy.

"Imported components and subassemblies account for up to 90 per cent of the bill of material value for an India-made phone," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. Currently, import tariffs on the product is 20 per cent while duty on components range between 0 and 20 per cent. The Budget should maintain these tariffs for several compelling reasons, he said. "Smartphone is the most celebrated success story pushed by PLI (production linked incentive) incentives and a clever tariff arbitrage between these phones and its components," he added. India's production of this item has crossed USD 49 billion in FY24, and its exports grew from USD 10.96 billion in FY23 to USD 15.57 billion in FY24, a growth of 42 per cent. Additionally, over 98 per cent of smartphones sold in India are made locally,



demonstrating the success of policies like the PLI scheme, which offers a 4-6 per cent cash incentive on annual incremental production. No need to change a policy giving great results, it said. The GTRI added that Indian manufacturers can import necessary inputs or capital goods duty-free for manufacturing and exporting electronic items, facilitated through schemes

like Advance Authorisation, Export Promotion Capital Goods, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and 100 per cent Export Oriented Units. Firms can also use the customs bond scheme for duty-free imports without localisation requirements. "Apple, for example, through its contract manufacturers Foxconn and Wistron, benefits from SEZs to manufacture and export

smartphones. In 2023, Apple's iPhone production in India exceeded Rs 1 lakh crore (about USD 13.5 billion), with Rs 65,000 crore worth of exports," the think-tank said. Schemes like SEZs thus allow import of all inputs at zero duty, thus making Indian smartphone globally competitive, it added. In FY24, electronics imports crossed USD 83.92 billion, with components growing from USD 25.13 billion in FY23 to USD 34.36 billion in FY24, a 36.8 per cent increase. It added that the high reliance on imported parts in local manufacturing suggests that cutting import duties would eliminate incentives to establish deeper manufacturing operations in India, leading firms to assemble mobile phones from nearly complete imported kits and exit once incentives disappear.

"Maintaining current import tariffs is crucial for sustaining the growth and depth of India's smartphone manufacturing sector. Reducing these tariffs could encourage short-term assembly operations over long-term, valuable manufacturing, undermining the industry's success and future potential," it said. Srivastava said these tariffs are not just protective measures but catalysts for fostering a robust, self-reliant smartphone manufacturing ecosystem in India. This ecosystem can compete globally while driving local employment and technological advancement, he added. "Preserving these tariffs is essential for continuing the remarkable growth trajectory and nurturing the deep manufacturing capabilities of India's smartphone sector," he said.



# ATHLETES OF INDIAN HERITAGE LOOK TO SHINE AT PARIS GAMES

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India would not be limited to the Indian contingent in the upcoming Paris Olympics.

PTI takes a look at some Indian-origin athletes who will be representing their adopted countries at the Paris Games: **RAJEEV RAM (Tennis, USA):** Perhaps the most well known athlete on the list. The 40-year-old was born in Denver, USA to parents who migrated from Bangalore. Steeped in academics, Ram's father Raghav, who passed away in April 2019, due to pancreatic cancer, was a botanist while his mother Sushma worked as a scientific technician. But Ram chose to break tradition and pursue tennis.

"I am very proud to be of Indian heritage and represent the community in any way I can. In tennis, there are not many of us from the community. Any success that we can achieve as a closed group can inspire the next generation to excel," Rajeev had once said. Playing for the USA, Rajeev has achieved considerable success. The tennis doubles specialist won five Grand Slams titles including four men's doubles and one mixed doubles.



(Left to right): Rajeev Ram (Tennis, USA); Prithika Pavade (Table Tennis, France); Kanak Jha (Table Tennis, USA); Shanti Pereira (Singapore, Athletics) and Amar Dhesi (Wrestling, Canada)

He teamed up with Venus Williams to clinch the mixed doubles 2016 Rio Olympics. He will compete in the men's doubles event. **PRITHIKA PAVADE (Table Tennis, France):** Prithika's father was born and raised in Puducherry. In 2003, he migrated to Paris after getting married. A year later, Prithika was born in the French capital. A TT player himself, Prithika's father introduced

her to table tennis when she was six. At only 16 years old, she participated in her first Olympic Games in Tokyo. The 19-year-old is studying chemistry and environmental science and will compete in women's singles, where she has been seeded 12th, the women's doubles and mixed doubles events. **KANAK JHA (Table Tennis, USA):** Another Indian origin athlete competing at the Paris

Games will be USA table tennis player Kanak Jha. Jha's mother Karuna is from Mumbai while father Arun was raised in Kolkata and Prayagraj. Both are IT professionals. Jha's fascination with table tennis started at the India Community Centre in Milpitas, California. He and his elder sister Prachi, also a TT player, immediately wanted to try out the sport. In no time he started beating

players twice his size. To keep him close to his roots, Jha's mom enrolled him in a Jainshala and Hindishala, centres where he could learn Hindi and about Jainism. The 24-year-old is a four-time U.S. National Champion (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019) and two-time Olympian (2016, 2020). He was USA's youngest athlete at the 2016 Rio Olympics and also the first American to win a medal at the Youth

Olympics in Argentina in 2018. He will be competing in the men's singles event at Paris. **SHANTI PEREIRA (Singapore, Athletics):** Known as Singapore's Sprint Queen, Veronica Shanti Pereira has her roots in Kerala. Her grandparents hailed from Vettukad near Thiruvananthapuram.

But after Shanti's grandfather got a job in Singapore, the couple migrated from India. Last year, Pereira ended Singapore's 49-year-long wait for a track and field medal at the Asian Games, after she clinched a silver in women's 100m. Awarded the 'Sportswoman of the Year' at the Singapore Sports Awards, Pereira will be one of the Lion City's two flag-bearers at the Paris Olympics opening ceremony. She also has a children's book -- Go Shanti Go! -- based on her life, written by her two

elder sisters. She will compete in the women's 100m race in Paris. **AMAR DHEESI (Wrestling, Canada):** Amarveer was born in Surrey, British Columbia, a small province on the western coast of Canada to Balbir Dhesi. A former Greco Roman national champion, Amar's father belongs to village Sanghwal in district Jalandhar in Punjab. Balbir had trained at the NIS Patiala and even got a job with the Punjab Police but moved to Canada in search of greener pastures in 1979. Once there, he worked in a sawmill factory and started the Khalsa Wrestling Club for youth in Surrey in 1985. Amar would attend practice with his dad and older brother Paramveer since he was five and entered his first competition as an eight-year-old. Amar, who loves to watch London Games bronze-medallist Yogeshwar Dutt's wrestling videos, made his Olympic debut at Tokyo 2020 where he finished 13th in the men's 125kg freestyle event. He won his first senior gold medal a year later at the Pan American Championships and then captured 125kg gold at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The 28-year-old will compete in the men's 125kg freestyle event.

## The Kerala Story in athletics: Growth hits flat-line as powerhouse on wane

PTI ■ BENGALURU

It's not a dire situation yet, but the dwindling number of athletes from Kerala in India's Olympic contingents shows that the growth of athletics in the state, which was once a track-and-field powerhouse, has certainly hit a disheartening flat-line. These numbers will summarise the situation before the deep dive: India's athletics squad for Paris Olympics has 29 members (18 men and 11 women). Kerala will be represented by four members — Muhammed Anas, Muhammed Ajmal, Mijo Chacko Kurian (all men's 4x400m relay), and Abdulla Aboobacker (men's triple jump).

In the Tokyo Olympics, Kerala made its presence through Yahiya, Noah Nirmal Tom, Alex Antony, KT Irfan, MP Jabir and M Sreesankar in the track and field events. The state had better representation at the Rio Games in 2016 through Anas, Jinson Johnson, T Gopi, Jisna Mathew, Tintu Luka, OP Jaisha and M Renjith. Along with the diminishing overall numbers, a close look will reveal another anomaly — a female athlete from the state is not a part of the Indian squad for the second successive Olympics. It's a downfall for the powerhouse that produced some iconic names such as

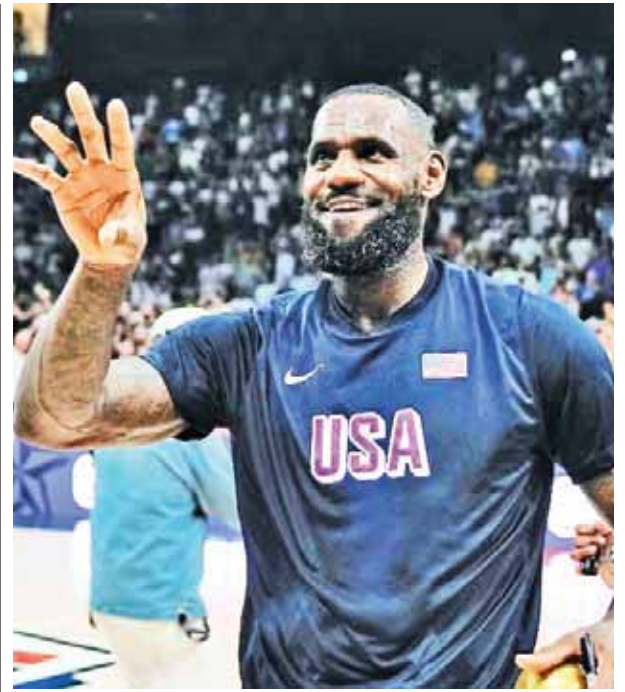
PT Usha, Shiny Wilson, Anju Bobby George, Rosa Kutty, Mercy Kuttan and Bobby Aloysius among others. "It's a matter of concern that the current Indian (Olympics-bound) contingent does not have too many names from Kerala, especially women. It reflects the way athletics, and sports in general, is being treated in the state by the officials," a veteran administrator told PTI. "Whenever an athlete from the state does well in an international competition, our politicians and other officials will make grand announcements. But there are hardly any follow-ups," said the administrator. A decorated veteran athlete echoed that sentiment. "Yeah! It is true. Action never really follows those promises. We have the example of (VK) Vismaya in front of us. She is running pillar to post to get the promised government job."

Vismaya held off the then world champion Salwa Nasser to win the 4x400m gold at the Jakarta Asian Games in 2018. She was pledged a job by the state government then, but it's yet to materialise. Vismaya could not be contacted for the latest update about her job status. However, Himma Das, MR Poovamma and Saritham Gayakwad, the other 4x400 relay team members, received jobs and other cash awards as per the



promise made by the respective state governments. "If a gold winner in the Asian Games has to wait for five years to get a promised job, then you can guess the fate of other lesser-known sports persons. "I won't blame them if they look to play for a different state. After all, a job and financial security matter to an athlete whose career is unpredictable," the athlete said. However, Kerala State Sports Council (KSSC) president U Sharaf Ali said the delay was not deliberate. "There have been a few delays, I admit. But we will keep our word at the earliest to honour the athletes who have brought laurels to the country and the state," said Ali. He said injuries to front-line state athletes like Ancy Sojan, a long jump silver medal winner in the Hangzhou Asian Games, was also a reason behind the marginal representation of state athletes in the Indian Olympic squad. "Some of the top names like Ancy are coming back after (ankle) injury and T Gopi also has a long-standing knee injury issue, and could not qualify for Paris. "Sreesankar (long-jump) underwent a surgery recently and he will also not be competing in the Olympics. It's unfortunate," said Ali. On her return, Ancy clinched top spot in the Indian Grand Prix 3 in

Bengaluru with a leap of 6.52m but that was not enough for her to book a ticket to Paris. But these are issues at the top, while the rot has percolated to the grassroots level too. The stories of mismanagement and apathy are galore in a state that often prides itself for the abundance of talent at junior level. "Talent is there. But talent alone will not bring success, as the athletes' needs must be met as they require proper financial back-up to buy equipment. "Many of them are coming from poor families and we don't get as many sponsors in athletics as in cricket or football. We are largely dependent on government funds," said a well-established state-level coach. Few months back, the state athletes had to spend money from their pocket to travel to Coimbatore for the junior national championship. "Money is one thing. Even some of the traditional track and field stadiums like the Maharajas are in a dilapidated state. The authorities are just starting the renovation work on many of them. "What they don't realise is that it deprives budding athletes valuable practice time. It's affecting the overall quality of our athletes and they will be forced to leave the state in search of better facilities," rued the coach.



## LeBron James selected as Team USA male flagbearer for Paris Olympics opening ceremony

AP ■ NEW YORK

LeBron James wasn't totally sure what the opening ceremony was all about when he was picked for his first Olympics in 2004. This time, he'll be one of the stars of the show. James has been picked by his fellow U.S. Olympians to serve as the male flagbearer for the Americans in Friday night's opening ceremony for the Paris Games. He becomes the third basketball player - and the first men's player - to carry the U.S. flag at the start of an Olympics, joining Dawn Staley for the Athens Games in 2004 and Sue Bird for the Tokyo Games that happened in 2021.

The 39-year-old James got word of the honor Monday in London, a few hours before the U.S. Men's team was scheduled to play its final pre-Olympics exhibition game against World Cup champion Germany. "There's obviously the utmost respect for who he is as a person and a player and how good he is," fellow U.S. Star and first-time Olympian Stephen Curry said earlier this month of James, someone he's faced off against four times in the NBA Finals and is now teaming up with for the first official time. The female U.S. Flagbearer will be revealed in the coming days. The International Olympic Committee decided in 2020 that national delegations would have two flagbearers - one male, one female - at the opening ceremony at an Olympics, a move to promote gender parity. The U.S. is expected to have nearly 600 athletes in the Paris Games, about 53% of them female. James - a global icon, a four-time NBA champion and the league's all-time leading scorer set to go into his

record-tying 22nd NBA season - is set to play in the Olympics for the fourth time, after he was part of U.S. Teams that won bronze in 2004, gold at Beijing in 2008 and gold again in London in 2012. He walked in the opening ceremony at each of his three previous Olympics. This time, he'll float. This will be an opening ceremony like none other in Olympic history: Thousands of athletes will be part of a flotilla sailing along the River Seine at sunset toward the Eiffel Tower. It's a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) route, with about 320,000 guests set to watch from the river bank and about 1 billion more, Olympic officials estimate, watching on televisions around the world. Not all Olympic athletes take part in the opening ceremony; many skip it for logistical reasons, such as having to compete the following day. James and the four-time defending gold medalist U.S. Men don't open Olympic play until Sunday, when they face Serbia at Lille, France. James and the U.S. Olympians will be waiting longer than almost any other nation for their trip on the Seine. By IOC custom, Greece - which will have NBA star Giannis Antetokounmpo as one of its two flagbearers - will lead the procession, followed by the Refugee Olympic Team and then about 200 more national delegations. The U.S. is scheduled to go next-to-last in the procession, because Los Angeles will play host to the next Summer Games in 2028. France, as the host, will be the final nation in the opening ceremony procession. Its men's basketball team, featuring reigning NBA rookie of the year Victor Wembanyama, opens Olympic play on Saturday and isn't expected to be present for the opening ceremony.



## I am not going to make mistakes of Tokyo in Paris: Manika Batra

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wiser after her maiden Olympics appearance in Tokyo, Indian table tennis star Manika Batra on Monday said she is focused on taking one match at a time in the upcoming Paris Games and a medal will not be in her mind in the initial rounds. Preparing for the Paris Olympics along with her teammates, Batra said she has learned from her Tokyo Games experience. "I have learned many things from the last Olympics, and I am not going to make those mistakes again. My mindset has changed since then, I am calmer and have more confidence in myself," said Batra during an interview with Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT). "I have been working on my stamina and my agility, and my ultimate aim is to challenge for a medal. "But I will go slowly. I will try to be in that zone and give my best. I will go round by round

and not think of a medal too early. I will give my best for my country," Batra, who represents PBG Bengaluru Smashers in UTT, added. Batra played an instrumental role in the women's team qualifying for the Paris Olympics, a first for Indian table tennis. She also reached the quarter-finals of the WTT Saudi Smash in May beating World No. 2 and former world champion Wang Manyu of China and World No. 14 Nina Mittelham of Germany. "India qualified for the first time (for the Olympics), this is a huge achievement. I am really happy with how we are working together (at the camp). I think we have a shot at the medal and we should give our best," Batra said. "The growth of women's table tennis in India is really inspiring. I see many of my fellow players playing really well. Everyone in the team is motivated and training very hard. Women's table tennis in India will only grow further," she said.

## Veteran Indian goalkeeper Sreejesh to retire after Paris Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Celebrated India hockey goalkeeper P R Sreejesh on Monday announced that he will bid adieu to the game after the Paris Olympics, ending a career that spanned 18 years during which he was a pivotal figure in some historic moments for the side. The 36-year-old, a veteran of 328 International caps, including three Olympic Games, and multiple Commonwealth Games and World Cups, will be playing in his fourth Olympics in Paris beginning July 26. "As I prepare for my last dance in Paris, I look back with immense pride and forward with hope," Sreejesh said in a Hockey India press release. "This journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am forever grateful for the love and support from my family, teammates, coaches, fans and Hockey India. Thank you for believing in me. "My teammates have stood beside through the tough and the ardent times. We all want to give our absolute best here in Paris and certainly, the desire is to change the colour of our medal," he added, referring to perhaps the biggest moment of his career -- a bronze in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. After making his debut at the 2006 South Asian Games, Sreejesh was a part of various memorable wins for India, including a gold in the 2014 Asian Games and a bronze medal in the 2018 Asian Cup when we lifted the title. It was the beginning of



many of our careers in International hockey and he has shaped each one of our careers in his own way. "We want to 'Win it for Sreejesh' and we are all the more encouraged to stand on the podium once again." The man from Kerala, who had also played a vital role in India's third-place finish at the Hockey Pro League 2021/22, was awarded the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in 2021. He is only the second sports person from India to win the award of World Games Athlete of the Year in 2021. Besides, he won consecutive FIH Goalkeeper of the Year awards in 2021 and 2022. Last year, Sreejesh stood tall in India's gold medal-winning campaign at the Asian Games that sealed the team's berth for Paris Olympics. Congratulating Sreejesh on his stellar career, HI President Dilip Tirkey said: "Sreejesh was

hardly 18 or 19-years-old when I first saw him in the Indian camp and if I recall right, he made his international debut when I was Captaining the Indian team. "He is a very special player and my heart fills with joy and gratitude for his exemplary contribution to Indian hockey. This outing in Paris will certainly be a special one for the team. "I believe Sreejesh's decision will only encourage the team further to stand on the podium yet again and make it truly special not just for Sreejesh but for the entire hockey fraternity. I wish him and the team the very best." HI secretary general Bhola Nath Singh also paid glowing tributes to Sreejesh. "Sreejesh is a legend, an inspiration to the entire nation and I congratulate him on a fantastic career studded with several laurels that has brought honour and pride to the nation. "Hockey India respects his decision to retire after the Paris Olympic Games, making this a truly special tournament not just for the team but also for Indian hockey fans. I wish him and the team the best in their campaign." The Indian hockey team will begin its Olympic campaign on July 27 against New Zealand, followed by Argentina (July 29), Ireland (July 30), Belgium (August 1) and Australia (August 2). The Indian hockey team has reached Paris after training in Switzerland for the Games.



# Good for TRP but my relationship with Kohli is personal, declares Gambhir

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday declared that his much talked about relationship with batting mainstay Virat Kohli "is between the two of us and not for TRPs", asserting that they are going to be "on same page" in the coming times. Gambhir and Kohli had not been the best of friends, something which was evident from the multiple confrontations between the two in the IPL. However, the duo will now be working together starting with the white-ball tour of Sri Lanka from July 27. "Good for the TRP, but my relationship is not public. What kind of a relationship I share with Virat Kohli... I

think it's between two mature individuals," Gambhir said. Gambhir was addressing a press conference along with chief selector Ajit Agarkar ahead of India's tour of Sri Lanka where they will play three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs. In the context of Kohli, Gambhir added, "On the field, everyone has got the right to fight for their own jersey and come back to a winning dressing room. "But at the moment, we're representing India, representing 140 crore Indians and I'm sure we're going to be on the same page and try and make India proud." Kohli, who recently announced retirement from the T20 International format, is part of India's ODI squad



against the island nation and ahead of that, the former India skipper has apparently communicated to the BCCI that he's ready to begin this new phase with a clean slate. Gambhir said the two share a very good relationship (with him) off the field. "...And will continue to do that. But yes, to make it more public, what kind of a relationship... I think it's between two individuals. I've had a lot of chats with him (Kohli)... We've shared messages. "Sometimes, just because we want headlines, it's not important. Right now, the most important thing is we both are going to be working extremely hard to make India proud. And that's our job." THE SUPPORT STAFF QUESTION: Former India

all-rounder Abhishek Nayar and Netherlands batter Ryan ten Doeschate, who worked with Gambhir in the IPL 2024 during his stint as mentor of the Kolkata Knight Riders, are joining the Indian team coaching staff for the Sri Lanka tour. Gambhir said the full details of his support staff will be known only after the Sri Lanka tour. "Really happy with BCCI. They've agreed with most things I've asked for. The crux of the support staff will remain as they are. "The rest of the staff will be finalised after the Sri Lanka tour. (For now) Abhishek and Ryan as assistant coach. T Dilip will continue as fielding coach. Sairaj Bahutule as interim bowling coach for the Sri Lanka tour."

# We wanted someone who was likely to be available more often: Agarkar on Suryakumar as T20 captain

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Fitness, feedback from the dressing room and consistent availability swung the pendulum in Suryakumar Yadav's favour when it was decided to appoint him captain of the Indian T20 team ahead of Hardik Pandya, chief selector Ajit Agarkar said here on Monday.



Agarkar was addressing a media conference along with newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir ahead of India's tour of Sri Lanka where the team will play three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs against the hosts starting July 27. "Why Surya was made captain? Because he is one of the deserving candidates. The one we know has been around the dressing room over the last one year, you get feedback from the dressing room a lot. He has got a good cricketing brain and he is still one of the best T20 batters in the world," Agarkar said during the joint press conference.

"You (would) want a captain that's going to be more likely to play all the games. We think he's a deserving candidate and hopefully we'll see over time how he develops into the role." The chairman of selectors said they wanted a captain with a proven fitness record and not someone who was prone to injuries as Pandya is believed to be. "But in regards to Hardik (Pandya), he's still a very important player for us and that's what we want him to be that player that he can be because those sorts of skill sets are very difficult to find what he has, Agarkar said. "Fitness, obviously, has been a challenge for him over the last few years and then it becomes a little bit more difficult for him and even as selectors," he said. "We're trying to now, we've got a bit more time till the next T20 World Cup when we can look at a few things. It's not rushed at the moment."

"We want him to be, you know, as I said, he's an important player for us and hopefully his performances are more important - that was the thought behind it. The fitness is a clear challenge and we want someone who's likely to be available more often than not," Agarkar said. As regards to former vice-captain KL Rahul being

overlooked, he retorted, "I wasn't there when KL was superseded; I wasn't the selector firstly." "We've got a little bit more time now till the... Since I've come, there's been a 50-overs World Cup, almost followed by the T20 World Cup. Fitness is a concern, not just that, we also feel that Surya has the necessary qualities to be a good captain. "Two years is a long time, so at least it gives us a bit more of a chance to try and look at some things differently. The main thing is we want guys who are available all the time. In this way, we also feel we can manage Hardik a little bit better," he said. JADEJA WAS NOT DROPPED: Agarkar admitted the selection committee should have clarified that senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who also retired from T20Is after the World Cup, was not "dropped". "It would have been really pointless to take both him and Akshar for this short series. We know what Jaddu has done. He's had a terrific World Cup (T20). So, no, not at all dropped," he said. "All options are open. But there

was (a chance that) either of them would have played all three games if we'd taken both. There's a big test season coming up where he's (Jadeja) likely to feature in a lot of the Tests. I don't think three games would have mattered. "We probably should have clarified that after the selection that he's not getting dropped. He's still within the scheme of things and very important as a player," said the former India pacer. LEADERSHIP DOOR OPEN FOR RAHUL, RISHABH, PANDYA: Agarkar said the door is not shut for the former deputies like KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant and even Pandya as far as leadership role is concerned. "We need to get him (Pant) back playing, that's the first thing. He's going to be a key to us as a player; hasn't had a lot of cricket. We'll see what he can do," he said. "We don't want to burden somebody again who's just coming back after over a year out of the game. KL has not been part of T20 now for a little while," he said. "We've got a chance to reset the button a little bit. We've got a bit more time to plan. We want

to try and see... I mean, this time (in) T20 (against Afghanistan), frankly, when Hardik did get injured was a little bit of a challenge. "At that point, Rohit wasn't playing but was still around (and) made our life a lot easier that he could come and play. We don't want that situation going forward again," he continued. CHANCE FOR GILL TO LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE: Agarkar said the selectors wanted vice-captain Shubman Gill to learn from the experience as well as from the senior players. "Shubman is a guy that we feel is a three-format player and seems to have shown a lot of quality over the last year or so that we hear from the dressing room," he said. "You try and have somebody who can also learn from a couple of the senior guys that are there. "Surya in this instance or Rohit who's still around so we don't face the same challenges (that) suddenly (you are) trying to look for a captain in case there are injuries or loss of form somewhere," he explained. "He's shown some decent leadership qualities. We want to try and get him the experience that he can put forward. There are no guarantees in life but at this point, that's the thought," he said. PACE BOWLING COMBINATION IN FUTURE: Agarkar admitted that while playing Tests in India the team may not need three seamers but going forward they will be discussing the fast bowling lineup too. "Some of the guys, some of the fast bowlers are at the NCA. We hope that for the next month or so, they'll be back up playing," he said. "I think he has (Mohammed Shami) started to bowl which is a good sign for us. (The) 19th September is the first Test. That was always the goal," he added. "We don't quite know whether that's the timeline at the moment. That I have to speak to the guys at the NCA but that's the aim. "There are so many Tests coming in India; maybe you don't play three seamers in the eleven. But, going forward, there's a lot of cricket or Test cricket that's coming. We need some conversation around it," he said.

# Gambhir-Agarkar in sync: Players won't be allowed to pick and choose series for workload management

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gautam Gambhir's plain-spoken and Ajit Agarkar's lucidity is set to make for a heady combo as the new head coach and the chairman of selectors looked completely in sync while spelling out, in no uncertain terms, that days of cherry-picking series by citing workload management could be over. They explained certain tough calls while in a few minutes, they were subtle yet said enough to allow people to read between the lines. Physically, neither Gambhir nor Agarkar have an imposing presence but ask anyone in the periphery of Indian cricket and people will swear by the fact that these are two individuals with sharp and informed takes, which don't change readily. As they put up a united front in their first joint media interaction, it was clear that they were ready to put their money where their mouths were. Technically, it might seem that Agarkar enters his second year of chairmanship but perhaps like Gambhir, this is also a fresh start in which the duo can create a road-map for the 2027 ODI World Cup. So what was the biggest takeaway from the Gambhir-Agarkar joint press briefing ahead of the tour of Sri Lanka? Workload management seems to be the biggest one. The prickly word in Indian cricket will again dominate air space but this time, it is crystal clear that rules will be different for batters and bowlers. "I've said it before, workload management for someone like (Jasprit) Bumrah is important.



If you are a batter who is in good form, might as well play all the games," Gambhir was as straight as ramrod in his reply when asked about his take on the issue. It was widely believed that both ODI and Test captain Rohit Sharma and team's premier batter Virat Kohli will skip the three games in Sri Lanka but their presence ultimately is an indicator that both the seniors will probably play as many series as possible. "Now that Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will play only two formats, I expect them to be available for most games," Gambhir addressed the issue with a lot of clarity just like chairman Agarkar was up and ready to explain what went against Hardik Pandya, who was considered to be a natural successor to Rohit, at least in the T20 format. "You (would) want a captain that's going to be more likely to play all the games," one couldn't get a more crystal clear answer to a pointed question. What was more refreshing was that unlike selection committee chairmen of the past, Agarkar just didn't go by

his gut feeling about the leadership qualities but also took the view of the change room. "Why Surya was made captain? Because he is one of the deserving candidates. The one we know has been around the dressing room over the last one year, you get feedback from the dressing room a lot. "He has got a good cricketing brain and he is still one of the best T20 batters in the world," Agarkar elaborated. In the 27-minute media conference, one thing was reiterated time and again. Stars can no longer pick and choose. While acknowledging that a player of Pandya's skill-set is a rarity, Agarkar made it clear that the selection committee cannot be taken for granted. "Fitness, obviously, has been a challenge for him over the last few years and then it becomes a little bit more difficult for him and even as selectors," he said. Agarkar handled the tricky query on KL Rahul being ignored for captaincy with similar eloquence. "I wasn't there when KL was superseded; I wasn't the selector firstly."

Then there was the issue of Duleep Trophy and Agarkar was clear that if not all, most of the Indian Test team contenders will be playing at least one match of the tournament before India's rare season of 10 Tests commences on September 19. In case of Ravindra Jadeja, Agarkar was clear that the senior all-rounder wasn't dropped from the ODI team but his explanation did indicate that one might not see two players with pretty identical skill-sets in ODI set-up. "It would have been really pointless to take both him and Akshar for this short series...So, no, not at all dropped," he said on Jadeja. And then Gambhir had to address the elephant in the room - the conjectures about his relationship with Kohli, something the straight-shooter rejected as "good for TRP". Gambhir might be perceived as a 'My Way or High Way' man but his messaging was that he wants to be the agent that keeps the dressing room happy. And what qualifies as a happy dressing room?

# Mumbai City FC sign Supratim Das for three years

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai City FC on Monday announced the signing 19-year-old midfielder Supratim Das on a three-year contract which will keep him at the club till Indian Super League (ISL) 2027. Das is known for his technical abilities, game awareness and "excels at holding the ball under pressure and delivering incisive passes as a midfielder", the club said in a statement. Das, who is from the Reliance Foundation Young Champs, played a crucial role in winning the sub-junior I-League title in the 2018-2019 season and in their runner-up finish in the MFA



Super Division League during the 2022-23 season. He also participated in the Reliance

Foundation Development League 2022-23 and 2023-24 and earned qualification for the Premier League Next Gen Cup in 2023. Das has been a part of the RFYC's exposure trips to Spain in 2017, 2018 and 2019 and to Japan earlier this year. "The club is known for developing young talents and it is a fantastic opportunity for me to develop my skills and polish my talent at the top level," Das said. MCFC's head coach Petr Kratky said, "We had our eyes on him for some time and are happy he has decided to join us. His vision, technical ability, and understanding of the game will benefit our team."

# Dominant India women face Nepal, eye semifinal berth in Asia Cup

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

Bouyant India will look to extend their winning run and seal a semifinal berth when they face Nepal in their final Group A Women's T20 Asia Cup match here on Tuesday. India registered convincing wins in their first two matches of the continental tournament, beating traditional rivals Pakistan and United Arab Emirates by seven wickets and 78 runs respectively to put one foot in the semifinals. Minnows Nepal hardly have any time to recover from the thrashing they received at the hands of Pakistan in their previous outing on Sunday, the same day when the

tournament's overwhelming favourites and defending champions India bulldozed the hapless Emirates side. While India are primed to enter the last-four, Pakistan improved their net run rate with the comfortable win over Nepal lifting them to the second spot in Group A. India will, however, not be bothered by how the other teams are doing and will look to sustain the momentum they have gained with two convincing victories heading into the semifinals. India have flexed their muscles in both batting and bowling so far in the tournament, and are likely to continue in the same vein come

Tuesday. If the swashbuckling opening duo of Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma fired with the bat in the victory over Pakistan, after the bowlers' excellent display, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh led the show in the middle-order in the hammering of the UAE. The big-hitting Ghosh, especially, was in destructive mood as she carted 64 in just 29 balls while Kaur compiled 66 in 47 deliveries. While Kaur played the anchor's role to perfection, it was Ghosh's blazing knock which helped India score their first-ever 200-plus total in T20Is. As far as the Indian bowling is



concerned, the likes of Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Deepti Sharma have been doing a wonderful job of both containing runs and taking wickets. Even Tanuja Kanwar, who was roped in as a replacement for injured off-spinner Shreyanka Patil, performed her duty with aplomb, giving away only 14 runs while taking a wicket in her full quota of four overs. The Indu Barma-led Nepal, which started the tournament with a historic six-wicket victory over the UAE, is well aware of the task. They will certainly take confidence from their first-ever win in the event but the Himalayan nation will need a lot

more than that to even come close to challenging a dominant India. TEAMS: India (from): Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Uma Chetry (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Deepti Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, D Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Tanuja Kanwar, Sajana Sajeewan. Nepal (from): Indu Barma (C), Kajol Shrestha, Rubina Chettri, Sabnam Rai, Sita Rana Magar, Rajmati Aaire, Puja Mahato, Bindu Rawal, Roma Thapa, Mamta Chaudhary, Kabita Joshi, Kabita Kunwar, Dolly Bhatta, Kritika Marasini, Samjhana Khadka.

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