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MONEY 10 STOCK MARKETS FALL FOR 4TH DAY

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INDIA Bloc protests over Budget 'bias' No State ignored in Budget, Opposition trying to mislead, claims Sitharaman

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI

Opposition parties resorted to vehement protest in and out of Parliament on Wednesday over the alleged discrimination against Opposition-ruled States in the Union Budget. MPs belonging to the INDIA Bloc staged protest in Parliament premises during the day and also walked out from the Rajya Sabha while heated exchange of words between the ruling benches were noticed when issues like Article 356, Emergency cropped up. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman termed the allegations by Opposition benches "outrageous" and said all the States never found a mention in any of the previous Budgets, including those presented by the Congress. Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said the Budget is an "assault on the sanctity of India's federal structure". Ruling BJP dismissed the Congress charge of the Union Budget being "discriminatory" towards Opposition-ruled States and asserted that every State and section has been



INDIA Bloc MPs stage a protest in Parliament premises over alleged discrimination in the Union Budget 2024, during the Monsoon Session, in New Delhi, on Wednesday PTI

taken care of by the Modi Government. No State ignored in Budget, Opposition trying to mislead, said Sitharaman. In the protest in Parliament premises besides Rahul, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, several MPs of the Congress, TMC, Samajwadi Party, DMK and the Left joined the protest held on the steps leading up to the Makar Dwar of Parliament. Sharing a picture of the protest on his WhatsApp channel, Rahul said, "Today, along with INDIA janbandhan MPs, protested against NDA's 'Kursi Bachao Budget' in Parliament House premises." Further, to continue with protest, Congress Chief Ministers and other non-BJP led CM of States like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Delhi, Punjab will be boycotting the NITI Aayog meeting scheduled for July 27. Led by Congress, Opposition staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha.

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Jail or jahannum for terrorists, says Nityanand in Parliament



Security personnel stand guard during an encounter with terrorists in Trimukha area of Sopore in North Kashmir, on Wednesday PTI

MOHIT KANDHARI JAMMU/NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday sent a stern message that terrorists active in Jammu and Kashmir region will either land in jail or be sent to 'jahannum' (hell). Days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and the entire Defence core team held series of review meeting for constant Jammu terror attacks in recent times, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai asserted in Parliament that the Modi Government has zero tolerance for terrorism. A terrorist was neutralised while one more Indian Army jawan sacrificed his life in the ongoing encounter with terrorists in the North Kashmir district of Kupwara

on Wednesday. The braveheart has been identified as Naik (GNR) Dilwar Khan. This is the third incident of terrorist violence in the last three days in Jammu and Kashmir. The house of a Shaurya Chakra awardee was targeted by terrorists in the Khawas tehsil of Rajouri on Monday while an Army jawan sacrificed his life in the line of duty thwarting a major infiltration bid along the line of control in the Krishna Ghati sector of Poonch on Tuesday. "The Modi Government has zero tolerance for terrorism. We will end terrorism. They (terrorists) will be either in jail or jahannum... I want to assure the House. Terrorist activities witnessed recently will soon end. They

(terrorists) will not succeed in their design," Rai said in Parliament. In the latest Rajouri incident, in the ensuing firefight, one terrorist was eliminated and a soldier received injuries who later succumbed to his injuries. A spokesman of the Chinar Corps said based on specific information the operation was launched by the Indian Army and Jammu and Kashmir police in the general area of Kowut, Kupwara on July 23. On July 24, suspicious movement was observed and challenged by vigilant troops, in response to which terrorists opened indiscriminate fire. The Government informed the Lok Sabha that in the past few days, 28 terrorists have been killed in Jammu and Kashmir and unfortunately some security personnel have also lost their lives. According to the Minister, security forces have killed about 900 terrorists in the region after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. Between 2004-2014 when the UP was ruling at the Centre, there were 7,217 incidents of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The number came down to 2,259 from 2014, when the BJP was voted to power, and July 21 this year, Rai said. In 2019, the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.



Jail, ₹10 lakh fine for paper leak in Bihar's new Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PATNA

The Bihar Assembly on Wednesday passed a Bill aimed at curbing the scourge of question paper leaks and other malpractices in recruitment tests conducted by the State. The Bihar Public Examinations (PE) (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, was moved by state Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and passed through voice vote amidst a walkout staged by the Opposition. The new legislation targets curbing malpractices in competitive examinations, including the leak of question papers, in the State which, incidentally, has also been at the centre of the NEET 2024 paper leak controversy. The Bill stipulates severe punishment for those involved in such malpractices, including a prison term of three to five years and a fine of ₹10 lakh.

Continued on Page 8

SC proposes panel for talks with farmers at Shambhu border

PTI NEW DELHI

Observing that there is a trust deficit between farmers and the Central Government, the Supreme Court on Wednesday proposed the constitution of an independent committee comprising eminent persons to reach out to the protesters at Shambhu border and address their demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP. The top court directed the Punjab and Haryana Governments to suggest the names of suitable individuals for the committee and submit a proposal for removal of barricades on the National Highway while ordering a status quo on the border for a week. A three-judge bench headed by Justice Surya Kant said there is a need for a "neutral umpire" who can inspire confidence between farmers and the Government. "You have to take some steps to reach out to farmers. Why would they otherwise want to come to Delhi? You are sending Ministers from here and despite their best intentions there is



trust deficit," the bench also comprising Justices Dipankar Datta and Ujjal Bhuyan said. "Let appropriate instructions be taken within a week. Till then let parties maintain status quo at the site to prevent flaring up of the situation at the Shambhu border," the bench said while posting the matter after a week. The top court was hearing the Haryana Government's plea challenging the High Court order asking it to remove within a week the barricades at the Shambhu border near Ambala where protesting farmers have been camping since February 13. During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that earlier the roads were blocked against the three agricultural laws and now they have new demands. The top court said the Centre has to examine the demands of the farmers as a welfare state. "Some demands may be genuine, others may not be acceptable," the bench said.



Rescue operations are underway at the site of a plane crash at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Wednesday PTI

Eighteen killed in Nepal plane crash

PTI KATHMANDU

A Nepalese private plane crashed and caught fire shortly after taking off from the Tribhuvan International Airport here on Wednesday, killing 18 people aboard, including a child, and seriously injuring the pilot — the only survivor. The Bombardier CRJ-200 aircraft of Saurya Airlines, carrying 19 people, including two crew members and technical staff of the airline, was bound for Pokhara International Airport for regular maintenance service when the accident occurred at 11.11 am (local time). "Shortly after takeoff from runway 02, the aircraft veered off to the right and crashed on the east side of the runway," said a statement issued by the

Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal. It said rescue operations were initiated immediately and fire was brought under control. "One injured person (Captain Manish Ratna Shakya) was rescued and taken to the hospital, and 18 People were found dead," it added. The aviation authority identified one of the passengers as a child named Adhiraj Sharma, who was the son of Manu Raj Sharma, a technician of Saurya Airlines. Sharma's wife Priza Khatiwada and their four-year old son Adhiraj died in the crash. A statement issued by the airline said that Priza and her son were initially identified as employees of the company, but it was later revealed that they were passengers.

GNSS toll collection to make NH driving hassle-free

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

To provide seamless and barrier-free tolling experience on National Highways and Expressways, the Road and Transport Ministry has decided to initially implement global navigation satellite system (GNSS)-based toll collection system on pilot basis as an added facility along with FASTag. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said pilot study with regard to GNSS-based user fee collection system has been done on Bengaluru-Mysore section of NH-275 in Karnataka and Panipat-Hisar section of NH-709 in Haryana. Gadkari said a stakeholder consultation through international workshop was



Representative Image

organised on June 25, 2024 and global expression of interest (EOI) was invited for wider industrial consultation on June 7, 2024 with last date of submission as July 22, 2024. Replying to a separate question, he

said the master plan for National Highways to improve the logistics with provision of expressway/high speed highways has been prepared by the Road Ministry under PM Gatishakti Framework using transportation model with

analysis of data of e-way bills (GST), toll and traffic survey. Responding to another question, the Minister said among all the National Highway projects that started about 10 years ago, 697 projects have gone beyond their original completion schedule. Primary reasons for delay in NH projects are issues relating to land acquisition, statutory clearances, utility shifting, encroachment removal, law & order, financial crunch of contractor, poor performance of contractor and force majeure events like Covid-19 pandemic, heavy rainfall, floods, cyclone, landslides/avalanches etc, he added. According to Gadkari, since 2014, NHAI has availed loan and other borrowings totalling ₹3.77 lakh crore for completion of projects / scheme entrusted with them.

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India's archers aim to strike Gold in Paris

PTI PARIS

A different year and another Olympics, but for Indian archers, the target will be the same — fetching their first ever medal at the Games. More or less regular at the Olympics since debuting back in 1988, the archers will kick off the nation's Paris campaign here on Thursday with the qualification rounds at the Les Invalides gardens here.

For the first time after London 2012, India will have a full six-member squad after both the men's and women's teams qualified on the basis of rankings. This means they will compete in all the five events. Veterans Tarundeep Rai and Deepika Kumari, appearing in their fourth Olympics, will lead their young teammates, hoping to secure at least a top-10 finish in the qualification round to ensure a favourable draw.

Each archer will shoot 72 arrows and the scores in the qualification round of 128 athletes from 53 countries will decide the seeds for the main knockout competition beginning with the women's team finals on Sunday. The qualifying round will be crucial for the Indians, who have often slipped in the seedings and ended up losing to heavyweights Korea, tipped to top the qualifications.

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Yearning for social media fame costs Spiderman dearly

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

In an era where fleeting moments of fame on social media have become the obsession, many youngsters are resorting to dangerous stunts and rule-breaking to impress their followers on platforms like Instagram and Twitter. One such incident involved a 20-year-old "Spiderman" in Delhi, who was caught sitting on the bonnet of a car while making videos, showcasing the perilous lengths some will go for digital notoriety. According to officials on Wednesday, a fine of ₹26,000 was imposed for dangerous driving and other violations in the matter.



A 20-year-old man, sitting on a Scorpio car's bonnet and dressed as Spiderman landed in the police net on Wednesday

According to the police, they received a complaint on social media platform X about a Scorpio car seen on Dwarka road with a person dressed as

Spiderman on its bonnet. Police traced the car and located the occupants near Ramphal Chowk in Dwarka. The person in

the Spiderman costume was identified as Aditya, a resident of Najafgarh. The driver of the vehicle was identified as a 19-year

-old Gaurav Singh, a resident of Mahavir Enclave, a senior police officer said. However, this is not the first time

this young boy has used such means for gaining popularity on social media. Previously, he was arrested for performing stunts on a motorcycle, with no number plate or mirrors, in South West Delhi's Dwarka. After the reel went viral, the traffic police took cognisance and arrested him along with one other female who was dressed as Spiderwoman. The police issued a challan under Motor Vehicle Act. While one expected the culprits to be ashamed of flouting the law, the young Spiderman called his arrest a proud moment. Calling himself "Najafgarh Spiderman", he has taken to the streets of Delhi while donning his superhero attire many times. He runs an Instagram account called Indian Spidey Official, where he posts videos of his stunts. The boy's bio reads, "Your Friendly Neighbourhood Indian

Spidey" and the account has over 12,500 followers, with the viral videos getting more than one lakh likes. A quick scroll through his Instagram page shows the "Indian Spidey" playing badminton, riding a tractor and dancing on trending songs. Meanwhile, the owner and driver of the vehicle have been prosecuted for dangerous driving, driving without a pollution certificate, and not wearing a seat belt, with a possible maximum fine of ₹6,000 and/or imprisonment or both, the officer said. "The Delhi Traffic Police reiterates its commitment to ensuring road safety for all citizens. Such reckless behaviour on the roads will not be tolerated, and strict action will be taken against offenders to uphold the law and protect the lives of road users," an official said.

Bantra SHO sent to lines

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after three cops posted at Bantra police station were suspended after for negligence in duty, the station house officer was sent to lines on Wednesday, Lucknow police said in a statement. "Bantra SHO Hemant Rawat has been sent to lines and Ram Singh has been given the charge of Bantra police station on Wednesday," the Lucknow police said in the statement. "The joint commissioner of police, crime and headquarters, taking cognisance of the laxity and negligence in the work of the government in a serious matter like argument and fight between the two parties over the getting electricity repaired

in Bantra town under Banthara police station area, has suspended Inspector-in-charge Hemant Kumar Raghuw with immediate effect," said the press note of Lucknow police. "Assistant commissioner of police (Gosaiganj) has been directed to investigate the entire incident," it further read. To recall, a 20-year-old youth was beaten to death by a rival group, allegedly over a dispute regarding restoration of electricity supply in his area, in Banthara on Monday. After the incident, the family staged a protest with the body of deceased Hritikh Pandey, alleging police negligence. Earlier on Tuesday, three cops — Sub-Inspectors Subhash Yadav, Susheel Yadav and constable Yatindra Singh — were suspended in connection with the killing of Pandey. DCP (South Zone) Tej Swaroop Singh had confirmed the suspension, saying teams had been formed to arrest the assailants, who have switched off their phones and are absconding. Seventy hours hours after the murder of the 20-year-old youth in Banthara over a dispute over restoration of electricity supply, police are yet to nab the assailants who belong to the same village. As many as five named and 10

unidentified people have been accused of murder in the FIR, including Avnish, Himanshu Singh, Priyanshu, Pratyush and Sani Singh of the same village. The police are continuously conducting raids in search of Avnish Singh, Himanshu Singh, Priyanshu Singh, Shani Singh. Police teams also went to their possible hideouts in Rae Bareilly, Sultanpur and Amethi but no one was found. Sources in police say that as soon as they learnt about the death of property dealer Hritikh Pandey, the entire family and associates of the accused locked their houses and fled. The sources said, even after coming to know about the dispute, the police personnel posted at the police station on Sunday night disappeared by making an excuse. Sub-Inspector Subhash Yadav, on coming to know about the incident, left without permission, making an excuse of court duty, while he was at his

Sorcerer held for drugging, looting family

Lucknow (PNS): A self proclaimed sorcerer was arrested for drugging a family and looting cash and ornaments from the house of the victim in Thakurganj.

The accused, Rehan alias Furkan (55), drugged the family by giving them prasad laced with sedatives. As the whole family fainted, he took off ornaments they were wearing besides those kept in the almshouses. Furkan had served an 8-year jail term. A case was registered and the accused was arrested. The police recovered a gold chain, ring, maangtika, three mobile phones and Rs. 6,400 from the accused. The accused met the family on the pretext of curing a six-month child by tantrik methods. The police said the incident took place at a house in Talkatora on July 14.

Hanging wires, garbage a bane for Damodar Nagar residents

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Residents of the Damodar Nagar lane in Alambagh have been facing the problem of hanging electrical wires, overflowing drains and garbage dump for several years. The residents of this particular lane located in front of Sardar Patel School have approached the LESA but to no avail as their problems have not been resolved. Satish Awasthi, a retired sales tax officer and resident of the area, while giving details of the problems they faced, said, "The electric wires have been dangerously hanging overhead in the lane between the houses which can prove to be fatal especially in the months of monsoons as any untoward incident can occur. There are 10 houses in the lane which deal with the problem on a daily basis," he said. He further pointed out that apart from the electric wire issues they face another major problem of garbage dumped in the vacant plot in the area as it could lead to the spread of infectious diseases.

"This pile of garbage has been lying in the plot for several years. Sometimes people burn the garbage and then again residents start throwing garbage in the plot. No vehicle of the nagar nigam comes to collect garbage from door to door in the area which only adds to our problem. Earlier, when these vehicles were coming to this area we had asked them to pick up the garbage from the plot but they told us that they were only directed to pick up garbage from houses," he said. Rinku Sonkar, another resident of the area who works in a bank in Gomti Nagar, said that the overhead electric wires were hanging precariously in the area. "Apart from that the garbage lying in the vacant plot creates a lot of problems. The nagar nigam employees do not visit the area even though they take payments from us. Being working employees, we do not get time to pursue them persistently to get the work done. This has resulted in garbage accumulating in the plot. The owner of the plot does not bother about the situation which we are facing," he added.

Sanjay Kumar Singh another resident of the area and an assistant professor in a private institute, said that there was only one electric pole in the lane which carried all the connections causing a cobweb of hanging wires. "Besides, the sewer line and the road are in a bad shape and walking in the lane becomes difficult as wires are hanging very low," he added. A female resident of the area said that the houses in the neighbourhood dumped the garbage in the empty plot. "I also dump my garbage there because we do not know where to dump our garbage. The drains are choked and if the rains occur it will be a great problem for us. The roads are also in bad shape. The electric wires are hanging and it is scary since our children move on the same roads. But nobody listens," she added. LESA Chief Engineer (Cis-Gomti), when contacted, said that the residents could approach the executive engineer at Chandan Nagar and get the issue of the hanging wire resolved.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I have changed the name of my daughter Laiba Alam Siddiqui to Hania Alam Siddiqui. Henceforth, my daughter will be known and recognized as Hania Alam Siddiqui. Shah Alam, Son of Late Mohammad Naem, Resident of 69/71, Lal Kuan, Bhedi Mandi, Police Station Hussain Ganj, Lucknow

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

It is informed to all that my son's name was Aditya Kumar Yadav, which is wrong. His real name is Aditya Yadav. He should now be known as Aditya Yadav. Akhilesh Yadav son of Satiram Yadav Village Raghapur, Post Kandharapur, District Azamgarh.

CLASSIFIEDS
AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 05-08-2024 प्रातः 11:30 बजे सहायक आरक्षक ब्यूरो (एस्. आई. बी), 110-माल रोड, लखनऊ में निम्नोक्त घोषित कम्प्यूटर / सहवर्ती उपकरणों आदि की नीलामी, विषयवर्ती रु० 5,000/- नगद साध में ई-वेस्ट डिपॉजिट / रिसाइकलर सर्टिफिकेट, जी. एस्. टी. पंजीकरण, आधार, बैंकाकड जमा करण अनिवार्य होगा। आई. पी. सिंस एण्ड सलन्.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I have changed my name from Poorvi Shukla to Purvi Tanwani, to be known as Purvi Tanwani in all future references. Purvi Tanwani W/o Saurabh Tanwani H.No. 122/338, Ganga Apartment Opp. Asha Nursing Home, Shastri Nagar Kanpur Nagar- 208005

CLASSIFIEDS
सूचना

सूचित हो कि चंदा पांडेय पत्नी हरिसंकर पांडेय निवासी ग्राम बरौंदा पोस्ट मुड़कुड़ा जिला चंदौली द्वारा वर्ष 2013 में सदीप कुमार पुत्र विनेश कुमार निवासी गीनसिटी अर्जुनगंज सुरतलपुर रोड लखनऊ की ग्राम सभा सरसवा की भूखंड गाटा संख्या 580 आसानी मूखंड रचना 25X60=1560 वर्गफुट है। जिसका मूल बेनामा वास्तव में मुड़से कहीं खो गया है। इस भूखंड को मैंने वर्ष 2023 में अपने नाम बेनामा कर लिया था। पवन कुमार पुत्र नंदकिशोर निवासी ग्राम महिपालखंडा पोस्ट अर्जुनगंज लखनऊ।

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I, Ganga Ram Chauhan, son of late Jai Karan Chauhan, resident of 536/2/78, New Madehganj, Khadra, Lucknow, hereby declare that I have disowned my son, Mukesh Kumar Chauhan, and his wife, Nidhi Singh Chauhan, from all my movable and immovable properties due to their misconduct, immoral behavior, frequent quarrels, physical assaults, and disobedience. Neither I nor any member of my family shall be responsible for any acts or dealings conducted by Mukesh Kumar Chauhan and his wife, Nidhi Singh Chauhan. Ganga Ram Chauhan 536/2/78, New Madehganj, Khadra, Lucknow

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my client, Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd., 2nd Floor Virendra Shri Civil Lines Kanpur intend to grant loan on the property scheduled below by of equitable mortgage by deposit of title deeds out of which one Sale Deed dated 12.02.2004 executed by Vijay Pal S/o Buddha Prasad as self and attorney holder of Chhatrapal, Rampal, Indrapal & Kailash Lal S/o Buddha Prasad in favour of by Munna Lal S/o Bhagwanand vide Book No. 1, Volume No. 2647, Page No. 203 to 220, Serial No. 396 on dated 12.02.2004 in the office of Sub Registrar, Kanpur Nagar is lost and not traceable. All persons having any claim in respect thereof by way of sale, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien or otherwise howsoever are hereby requested to make the same known in writing to the undersigned within a period of 10 days from the date of publication hereof, failing which, the claim of such person's will be deemed to have been waived and/or abandoned. Schedule Pvt. Plot No. 17, carved out from Arazi No. 637 (Admeasuring area 83.61 Sq. Meter) Mauza- Bairi Akbarpur Kachhar, Kanpur Nagar. (Shiva Kant Dixit) Advocate Mob:- 09415403399

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

It is informed to all that my name was Sharita Yadav, which is wrong. My correct name is Sarita Yadav. I should now be known by this name. Sarita Yadav wife of Akhilesh Yadav Village Raghapur, Post Kandharapur, District Azamgarh.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I SANA RAIS W/O MOHAMMAD TOUSEEF I have changed my daughter name from KAINAT to KAINAT TOUSEEF for future purpose. Add- 374/450/1 AKBARPUR KARELI PRAYAGRAJ.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I Anurag Singh Bhadouriya R/o A-246 Indiranagar Lucknow, hereby declare that I have changed my daughter's name from Ananya Singh Bhadouriya to "Ananya Bhadouriya." Therefore, from now on her name should be read and understood as Ananya Bhadouriya only, in all the documents including passport.

CLASSIFIEDS
सूचना

मैंने अपने नाम MOHD QAMAR AJAZ S/O AJAZUL HASAN से बदलकर QAMAR AJAZ S/O AJAZUL HASAN कर लिया है मेषिष्य मे मुझे इसी नाम से जाना पहचाना जाए। R/O -M/8/24 K-D - A COLONY GANGA VIHAR JAJMAU KANPUR

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

BE IT KNOWN TO ALL THAT I HAVE CHANGE THE NAME OF MY SON ABHINAV RANJAN TO ROHIT RANJAN. IN FUTURE HE SHOULD BE KNOWN AS ROHIT RANJAN NOW SHOULD BE CHANGE IN ALL DOCUMENTS. TARA W/O LATE SAURABH RANJAN. 16/998 INDIRA NAGAR - LUCKNOW

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

To be informed that my wife Rajni Singh's name is in the English alphabet in my army service record, while his high school certificate, Aadhaar card and other documents are Rajani Singh in the English alphabet in all future purpose. Ajeet Kumar Singh Army Service Record Number 15682638A Rank hawaladar Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh Resident Village - Arwal Keeri Karwat Post - Gaura, Thana Gosai Ganj District Sultanpur.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I, NISAR AHMAD holder of Indian Passport No. S2091191 issued at DUBAI on 11/01/2018 and Permanent Resident of AMAUNA TEWARI PANDA SIDDHARTH NAGAR and presently residing at DUBAI UAE do hereby change my name from NISAR AHMAD to NISAR AHMAD (Given name) KHAN (Surname) with immediate effect

Patient's attendants beat up city doctor

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

City's famed doctor and former professor of King George's Medical University, Dr Ravi Dev, was beaten up by attendants of a patient at a hospital in Gomti Nagar Extension police station area over alleged maltreatment with the patient' on Wednesday. The attackers are said to be attendants of a patient who died during treatment at the hospital on Tuesday night. He was suffering with some neurological disease and was admitted to the hospital on July 18. The attendants beat up the doctor and the staff of the hospital. The doctor was hit on the head with a chair. The doctor kept trying to escape, but the attendants kept slapping him. Two videos of the attack have also surfaced. In a 6-minute-long video, the doctor is seen treating the patient in the room. The dispute starts during the treatment. The incident took place at the hospital in Gomti Nagar Extension. Gomti Nagar Extension SHO Sudhir Awasthi said an FIR had been registered in the case of assault on Dr Ravi Dev in the hospital, and further action was being taken. The second 1.19-minute-long video shows the attendants beating the doctor in the waiting hall. The video starts with the doctor having an argument

with the relatives. Soon the relatives start beating the doctor. They pull the doctor out of the ward and bring him to the waiting hall and start punching and kicking him. When the doctor sat on a chair, the attendants tried to throw him off the chair. Later some staff reached the scene and rescued the doctor. The patient Shyam Kumar, of Banthra, Lucknow, was admitted to the hospital by his family on July 18. Shyam Kumar had a neurological problem. He died during treatment late Tuesday night. DCP (East) Prabal Pratap Singh said a case under relevant sections of the law was registered on the complaint of the doctor. A representative of doctors said the staff and doctor Ravi Dev tried their best to revive the patient who was already very critical.

YOUTH SHOOTS SELF TO DEATH
An 18-year-old student committed suicide by shooting himself in Indira Nagar on Wednesday. He shot himself using his uncle's .38 bore licensed pistol. The bullet pierced through his head and was embedded in the wall of the room. On getting information, a police team reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. The forensic team also collected evidence from the spot. The police they did not find any suicide note from the spot.

DCP (North) Abhijeet R Shankar said the student, Pratyush Singh, had come to his uncle Satendra Singh's house near Harihar Nagar in Indira Nagar and shot himself at 6 am. "Pratyush was studying in Dehradun. He had come to his uncle's house during vacation. It is being investigated what pushed Prayush to take the extreme step," the DCP said. The DCP North said Pratyush Raj Singh of Ghazipur district was preparing for competitive exams while living in Dehradun. He had come to his uncle's house a few days ago," the officer said. He said on Tuesday night, Satendra was sleeping with his family in the next room while Pratyush was sleeping in his room. Late at night, Pratyush shot himself with his uncle's licensed pistol. Satendra told newsmen that his nephew had failed in Intermediate two years ago and was in depression and had also become addicted to drugs. "He was undergoing treatment in Lucknow. After his condition improved a year ago, he went to Dehradun to his elder brother Udit Raj Singh and was studying there. A month ago his health deteriorated again. After this, he was brought here," the uncle said. The police are probing how the pistol reached Pratyush. Satendra told police that the pistol was kept under the pillow.

Goons vandalise house

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Goons vandalised a house while brandishing pistols and uprooted the DVR to destroy their digital trail in Sushant Golf City police station area on Wednesday. As per reports, the complainant, Aditya Kumar looks after a house owned by one Ved Prakash Tiwari and also stays in the house along with his family. Ved Prakash used to visit his house off and on. Some youths entered the house and beat up people living in it. After vandalising the house, the youths also took away the DVR of the CCTV. The youth looking after the house has filed a written complaint in the local police station. According to information received, Aditya Kumar lives with his family in Birampur, Lucknow. In the complaint given to the police, he told the police that he looks after Ved Prakash Tiwari's house in Sushant Golf City. Ved Prakash keeps coming to Lucknow due to his job. On Tuesday evening at 5 pm, the accused, identified as Arif, Manas Shukla and Saket Shukla came with their friends to the house in which Aditya stays. "They forcefully entered the house and abused us. Arif had a pistol in his hand. When asked about his name, Arif told me to call the landlord," Aditya alleged. He said the accused, who were armed, forcibly entered the house. "They broke the CCTV camera and took away the DVR of CCTV," he alleged. The police said that action would be taken after the investigation.

LOOT CASE REGISTERED AFTER 50 DAYS
A victim of loot had to do rounds of three police

stations for 50 days to get the case registered. Finally, the Hussainganj police registered an FIR of the victim, Dev Kumar Tiwari of Ayodhya district. Police said that different teams were searching for the miscreants involved in the loot. Dev Kumar Tiwari stated in the complaint that the incident took place on June 4 at around 8:30 pm. He was going from Charan brick kiln turning point to Charbagh by auto when two youths, who were sitting in the auto, attacked him and looted his belongings. Tiwari said both the youth got down at Utrethia underbridge and went to buy some stuff from a nearby shop. On returning, both sat side by side. "When we reached near the sugarcane institute on the way, the driver stopped the auto. He talked to both of the men and later the auto moved ahead. As soon as we reached under the KCC railway bridge, the miscreants put a knife to my neck and looted my bag containing a case file, my gold chain and other items besides a mobile phone and Rs 32,550 cash and fled the scene," he said. The police said the case was being investigated. The police spokesman could not explain the delay in registering the case.

HELLED
The cyber cell of Lucknow police arrested a man who had duped several farmers in the name of installation of solar pumps on Wednesday. The accused was identified as Sumit Chauhan aka Rahul of Madhya Pradesh. He was nabbed after a team of cyber sleuths kept tracking his digital presence on internet. His aide, Sachin Singh managed to flee, however.

2 AMU employees shot at on varsity campus

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Panic gripped Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) campus on Wednesday when two employees were shot at by motorcycle-borne miscreants. Giving this information, officials said that both the employees were admitted to a hospi-

tal in critical condition. Sources in police said that AMU employees Mohammad Nadeem and Kaleem were going on a two-wheeler inside the university campus when two assailants on a motorcycle stopped them on the way and shot at them from close range. On hearing the gunshot, the university security patrol team chased the attackers and caught them and handed them over to the police. The sources said that the attackers were being interrogated. The broad daylight firing on the university campus created panic among the students, who rushed to take shelter.

CM Yogi suspends officer for delay in issuing fitness certificates to school buses

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Continuing its crackdown on negligent government officials in line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directives, the Uttar Pradesh government has suspended the regional inspector (technical) and has recommended disciplinary action against the assistant regional transport officer (enforcement) for the delay in issuing a fitness certificate to a school bus in Chitrakoot district. It may be mentioned here that Chief Minister Yogi has warned all the officers against any kind of laxity in government work. He has also issued clear instructions to enforce strict measures under a zero-

tolerance policy, particularly targeting officers and personnel involved in corruption and negligence. On Tuesday, two buses transporting young children from Shriji Inter College in Khoh, Chitrakoot district, were seized by the team of the assistant regional transport officer (enforcement) due to expired fitness certificates. The buses, along with the children, were taken to the Fire Service Complex Police Lines, located 10 km away. The vehicles were seized at 11:15 am and remained at the police lines until 1:05 pm, causing the buses to be parked there for approximately two hours. According to reports, Regional

Inspector (Technical) Gulab Chandra of Chitrakoot district was directed to inspect the fitness of school buses at their respective schools. However, he did not follow these instructions, resulting in the fitness certificates for both vehicles not being issued. As a consequence, the buses had to be seized, causing inconvenience and distress to the children. After the issue was brought to light on Wednesday, the Yogi government adopted a firm stance and took strict action against the responsible officers. Regional Inspector (Technical) Gulab Chandra has been suspended with immediate effect, as he was found prima facie responsible for the lapses.

Woman cop abuses neighbour

Lucknow (PNS): A video showing a woman, who claims herself to be a constable, hitting her neighbour with her slippers went viral on social media, making the senior cops draw a silence about the conduct of the woman cop. The social media activist, however, found it a hot cake to pummel police by their stinging remarks. The incident is said to have taken place in Lucknow's Gudamba area. The fiery looking woman claims to be a police officer. PRV constables seen in the video remain mute spectators. The dispute is said to be over the passage near her house. While police said they were yet to investigate the matter, the sources said the woman was presently posted as a constable in the police commissioner's office.

The Gudamba police said that two women were seen in the video. "One woman is trying to convince the other, but the former one is so angry that she is hitting her neighbour with slippers. She is seen lunging at the man who opposes her. Somehow the woman accompanying her stopped her, but she continued to misbehave," the police sources said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, MALKANGIRI (R&B) DIVISION, MALKANGIRI
E-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. S.E (R&B)-MLK-01/2024-25
Date: 22.07.2024
No. 3039

1. Name of the work:	Building Work.
2. Total No. of Works:	01Nos.
3. Estimated cost:	Rs.113.18 lakhs
4. Period of completion:	06 (Six) months
5. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal:	From 11.00 hrs. Of 29.07.2024 to 16.00 hrs. of 07.08.2024
6. Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the Portal:	16.00 hours of 07.08.2024
7. Date of opening of Tender:	11.00 hours of 08.08.2024
8. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid:	Superintending Engineer Malkangiri (R & B) Division

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
Additional Chief Engineer I/C Superintending Engineer Malkangiri (R&B) Division
ODPR-3060110003025

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ (छ. ग.)
Phone No. :- 07762-222911, Fax No. :- 07762-222923
Email:- nraigarh@gmail.com Website- www.nagariganraigarh.com

क्रमांक 1058-1059/वापि/नृपानि/2024 सूचना दिनांक 24/07/2024

॥ निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ॥
नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ वाहन विभाग में वित्तीय वर्ष 2024-25 तथा आगामी निविदा होने तक के लिए रिक्शा, हाथ उल्ला एवं ट्रैक्टर ट्राली मरम्मत हेतु सामग्री प्रदाय कार्य हेतु वार्षिक दर प्राप्त करने के लिए निम्न निविदा आमंत्रित कि जाती है।

क्र.	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की अनु. लागत राशि एवं अमानत राशि
1.	वाहन विभाग में संचालित रिक्शा मरम्मत कार्य हेतु सामग्री प्रदाय कार्य	12.00 लाख रु 12,000.00/-
2.	वाहन विभाग में संचालित हाथ उल्ला एवं ट्रैक्टर ट्राली मरम्मत कार्य हेतु सामग्री प्रदाय कार्य	07.00 लाख रु 7,000.00/-

नोट - कार्य का अग्र विवरण एवं नियम शर्त वेबसाईट www.nagariganraigarh.com पर एवं कार्यालय में कार्यालयीन अवधि में देखा जा सकता है।
हरता/-
कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)

SDMs, tehsildars to reside only in their assigned tehsils

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant move to address public concerns and ensure timely resolution of issues, the Yogi Adityanath government has issued a directive requiring sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) and tehsildars stationed in various tehsils across the state to reside only in their respective tehsils where they are posted. The aim of this order is to ensure that sub-divisional magistrates and tehsildars spend the majority of their time in their respective tehsils, actively

addressing public concerns and working to resolve issues within the designated time frame. This initiative is expected to enhance both the officers' and the government's public image. Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh has issued instructions to all divisional commissioners and district magistrates to enforce this order strictly. According to the chief secretary's instructions to divisional commissioners and district magistrates, timely resolution of public issues is a top priority for the government. He emphasised that for the

government to uphold its commitment to good governance, it is crucial that the tehsil-level administration remains alert and efficient. To support this objective, the tehsildar and sub-divisional magistrate must reside in their respective tehsils, he pointed out. Additionally, the chief secretary has stressed that it is the primary responsibility of district magistrates and divisional commissioners to ensure that all duties assigned under the tehsil revenue administration are effectively carried out. They are tasked with ensuring that

tehsildars and sub-divisional magistrates live in the tehsils where they are posted. "District magistrates must provide a certificate within seven days via email confirming this. Additionally, the government will conduct surprise inspections to verify compliance. If the tehsildar and sub-divisional magistrate are found not residing in their tehsil, strict action will be taken against them. The responsibility of the district magistrate will also be assessed. Strict adherence to this order is mandatory," the chief secretary stated further.



MLAs from Bareilly division paid a courtesy visit to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his 5, Kalidas Marg official residence in Lucknow on Wednesday

UP assembly's monsoon session from July 29 likely to be stormy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The five-day brief monsoon session of Uttar Pradesh assembly will commence here from July 29. The session will have five sittings and as per the tentative agenda approved by assembly Speaker Satish Mahana, the session will conclude on August 2. This will be the second session of the year. As per the agenda, the government is unlikely to seek supplementary grants for the current fiscal 2024-25. On day one, the government will transact the legislative business and table the bills for replacing ordinances promulgated when the assembly was not in session. The important bills for replacing ordinance include Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023 and Bharatiya

Sakshya (Second) Adhiniyam, 2023. The state cabinet on June 25 had also approved the proposal to bring an ordinance to make some exceptions in the anticipatory bail provisions. The cabinet had approved and ordinances were promulgated. They included UP Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, 2024, to bring amendments in the state laws, including the UP Gangsters and Anti-social activities (Prevention) Act, 1986; the UP Control of Goondas Act, 1970; the UP Recovery of Damages to Public and Private Property Act, 2020; the UP Dacoity Affected Areas Act, 1983; the UP Special Security Force Act, 2020; and UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021. The proceedings of the state legislature are likely to be stormy as the main opposition Samajwadi Party, upbeat after

winning 37 seats in recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, will be on the offensive against the government. The opposition party is all set to exploit the internal discord within the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party following its disastrous performance in the Lok Sabha elections. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has already stirred the hornet's nest with his monsoon offer. "Bring hundred MLAs, form the government!" stated Yadav in a post on X in Hindi. "The statements of BJP leaders speak on the situation in the BJP. If 100 dissatisfied MLAs part ways, the Samajwadi Party will ensure formation of their government," said SP spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary. "Samajwadi Party chief is confused. This reflects their ego. Whenever the Samajwadi Party gains a few seats, its leaders begin behaving in this fashion.

Such a statement is ridiculous," said Vijay Pathak, MLC and Uttar Pradesh BJP vice-president. Besides the floods that have affected several districts of UP, the opposition has given indications about raising issues of people's concern like rising inflation. Both the government and opposition have started preparations for the by-election to 10 assembly seats in the coming months. The bypoll outcome may prove to be an acid test for the BJP and the opposition alike. It may be mentioned that the state legislature's budget session was adjourned sine die on February 10. So, the state government is constitutionally bound to convene the state legislature's session before August 10. "We don't have much pending business for the state legislature. So, the monsoon session will be short," said a senior minister.

UP govt starts new course to connect youth with visual arts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the directives of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the UP State Lalit Kala Akademi, in collaboration with Bhatkhande Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, has launched an innovative initiative to engage the youth in visual arts. This effort is part of the Culture department's mission to enhance skill development among young people in Uttar Pradesh. Starting from the aca-

demical session 2024-25, a regular 4-year Bachelor of Visual Arts (BVA) course in painting will be offered under the National Education Policy 2020. The online application process for this course has commenced, with the deadline for submission of forms set for August 15, 2024 through the Samarth Portal of Bhatkhande Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya. Only intermediate pass students are eligible for admission. State Lalit Kala Academy, UP State

Lalit Kala Akademi Director Dr Shradha Shukla informed that the BVA (Painting) course will have 20 seats. The registration fee is Rs 500 for general and OBC candidates, and Rs 300 for SC, ST, EWS, and female candidates. Applicants must have completed their intermediate education from any recognised inter college. Admission will be determined through an entrance exam and interview. Dr Shradha Shukla further mentioned that the semester fee for the course is Rs

6,000, with an additional examination fee of Rs 800. During the BVA academic session, students will be trained in the renowned wash technique of Lucknow, which originated from the Bengal School of Arts and has become a hallmark of the city. Students will also be taught various folk art styles. Additionally, the academy will promote cultural activities to ensure the holistic development of the students.

3 die in Ballia road accident

Lucknow (PNS): A UP Roadways bus going from Ballia to Nagra via Gorakhpur ran over five people, including three youths riding a motorcycle, in Ballia on Wednesday morning. The incident took place in front of Barwa Chatti Bachaipur on the Nagra Gadwar road. Local police reached the spot and took all the five injured to the primary health centre at Nagra, where doctors referred them to the district hospital. While being taken to the district hospital, Om Babu and Ratnesh Rajbhar died on the way, while the third, Ajesh died during treatment. A woman and a youth, who were also injured in the accident, are being treated. The police have arrested the driver and seized the bus. Reports said that the bus going from Ballia to Gorakhpur had just reached Barwa Chatti on the Nagra road when 56-year-old Lalmoni Devi of Salempur, who was walking, was hit by the bus after which driver lost control over wheel and ran the bus over 24-year-old Sonu and then hit the motorcycle that Ajesh Rajbhar, Ombabu Rajbhar and Ratnesh of Naraon, were riding. The collision was so powerful that Ajesh and Ratnesh were flung a long distance.

Yogi govt to develop 'futuristic' township in 'Glass City of India'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is moving ahead with the plan to develop a 'Futuristic Township' in Firozabad, also known as the 'Glass City of India'. The township will be established in the Transport Nagar and Pachwan areas of the city. It will serve as a hub for residential, tourism, hospitality, and commercial activities, thereby driving the economic growth of both the city and the state. Preparations are underway, including the selection of a project management agency for designing, planning, and executing the project. The Firozabad-Shikohabad Development Authority has initiated this process and is currently seeking applications through a Request for Proposal (RFP). Notably, this township is being planned to accommodate a portion of the temporary population arriving in Firozabad. With the expected influx of tourists, the township aims to fulfill the growing needs of these visitors. The township will feature spaces for star hotels, guest

houses and residential areas for the service population, along with essential supporting infrastructure such as commercial zones, open and green spaces, ponds, cottage industries, warehouses, and other social amenities. Envisioned as an integrated development, the township will focus on residential, hospitality, institutional and commercial facilities, creating a stress-free environment conducive to a productive culture. It will feature institutions of excellence to foster innovation and serve as a hub for the development of eastern Uttar Pradesh. The township will be built on a sustainable model, prioritising a pollution-free, noise-free and stress-free environment. It will be designed as a self-sufficient, holistic community that aligns with natural principles. The township will be designed based on the 5-minute city concept, ensuring that all essential facilities within each sector are accessible within a 5-minute walk. This will include amenities such as nursery to secondary schools, healthcare centres, postal ser-

vices, police stations/control centres, e-facility centres and sports clubs. Additionally, two dedicated EV lanes will be constructed along both sides of the main road in the township. Fast-charging stations for electric rickshaws and vehicles will be set up, alongside facilities for non-motorised transport, including cycle lanes and parking areas. The township will incorporate both blue and green infrastructure, with green spaces designed around landscape and heritage themes, and connected to ponds and other water sources. In addition to multi-level car parking and centres of excellence, the township will be developed as a solar-powered and zero-waste community. The initial project covers 28 hectares and 13.766 hectares, with the potential for expansion based on future needs. The Project Management Agency will be responsible for tasks such as conducting topographical surveys in the selected area. The project will gain momentum following selection of the agency and allocation of work to it.

RC for mining ordinary soil valid for two months

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government has issued detailed instructions for the general public and farmers regarding the mining and transportation of ordinary soil. According to a prior government order issued by the Geology and Mining department, a registration certificate (RC) for mining and transporting up to 100 cubic metres of soil will be valid for two months, while a permit for over 100 cubic metres will be valid for six months. Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh has directed all district magistrates to distribute copies of this order to the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council members. The instructions emphasise that individuals may use the online system to mine and transport more than 100 cubic metres of

soil from their land. However, transporting soil from one state to another is strictly prohibited. Tehsil and police station staff have been instructed to enforce these regulations rigorously. The chief secretary's instructions reference the 2020 Government Order, which mandates online registration on the department's portal for mining and transporting up to 100 cubic metres of ordinary soil. A permit is not required for this process. During registration, the applicant must provide his or her name, address, mobile number, email ID, quantity of soil, landowner's consent (including Khatauni and a map), the purpose of mining, complete details of the mining area, the type of transport vehicle, and other necessary information. Upon completing registration, applicants will receive a self-gen-

erated registration certificate from the portal, which will serve as a transport form. An additional EMM is not required. The registration certificate will be valid for up to two months or until the specified quantity of soil is extracted, whichever comes first. The district magistrate concerned has the authority to terminate the registration via the portal if false information is provided. A permit must be obtained through an online application on the portal for the mining and transportation of more than 100 cubic metres of ordinary soil. The application requires submitting the applicant's name, address, mobile number, quantity of soil, landowner's consent (including Khatauni and a map), mining purpose, and mining area details. Once the online application is submitted, it will be verified, and the status of

approval or rejection will be displayed on the portal. The permit will also be issued online, and processing will be completed within seven days from the application date. After receiving the permit, the generation of EMM-11 for transporting the soil will be managed through the director of the Geology and Mining department's online portal. The permit will be valid for up to six months, as determined by the district magistrate, based on the approved quantity and available transportation resources. The district magistrate may also restrict mining operations in sensitive areas or establish protective distances to safeguard public property. Mining ordinary soil without a permit will be considered illegal, and action will be taken under the relevant sections of the Mines and Minerals Act.

Many students, teachers hurt in Chandauli

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Another road accident involving a school bus left several students and teachers injured, in Chandauli district. Passersby and local residents rushed to the scene to assist the injured. Emergency services were promptly called, and several ambulances arrived to transport the victims to a nearby hospital. While some have sustained minor injuries, a few are reported to be in critical condition. The local police also rushed to the spot to manage the situation and initiate a thorough investigation into the cause of the accident. Worried parents and guardians gathered at the hospital, anxiously awaiting updates on their children's conditions.

2 drug smugglers held

Bahraich (PTI): Two drug smugglers were arrested and heroin worth ₹1 crore was recovered from their possession in Rupaidiha area adjacent to Nepal border here, officials said on Wednesday. Ziaul Haq and Siraj, both of Indian origin, were arrested late on Tuesday night by a joint team of SSB and police, they said. According to the officials, they were going towards the railway track near Nepalganj Road Railway Station in Rupaidiha police station area when the joint patrol team stopped them and searched them. About 140 gram of heroin, which is worth ₹1 crore in the international market, was recovered from their possession during the search, they said. Deputy Commandant, SSB, Dileep Kumar said a case has been registered against the accused.

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Purvanchal's paniyala fruit to be revitalised

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government is gearing up to revitalise Paniyala (Indian plums) fruit of Purvanchal, enhancing both its production and quality in Uttar Pradesh. The Central Institute of Subtropical Horticulture in Lucknow, affiliated with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, has been actively working on this initiative since last year. The district horticulture department of Gorakhpur and local progressive farmers are also contributing to these efforts. CISH Director Dr T Damodaran, emphasised that the institute aims to enhance the yield and quality of paniyala. Gardeners will receive canopy management training, facilitating orchard maintenance. Historically, paniyala was plentiful in Purvanchal about five to six decades ago. However, today, it is found only in Gorakhpur, Deoria

and Maharajganj districts of UP. The fruit is known for its unique flavor — sour, sweet, and slightly astringent notes. Its ripe, round, flat purple fruits develop a sweeter taste when shaken. Besides its distinctive flavor, paniyala is valued for its medicinal properties. In order to enhance production and quality of paniyala, scientists from the CISH surveyed paniyala-dominant areas of Gorakhpur and nearby districts last year. Head scientists Dr Dushyant Mishra and Dr Sushil Kumar Shukla collected fruit samples from healthy plants. The fruits will undergo physical and chemical analysis in the institute's laboratory to assess their diversity. The best trees will be selected for preservation, and new plants will be produced through grafting to make them available to farmers and gardeners. Dr Dushyant said, "During last year's visit, the season had ended, and the fruit quality

was subpar. Nevertheless, the collected fruits and plants are cultivated in a dedicated block. This year, around Dussehra, when paniyala is in peak season, the team will return to collect high-quality fruits for evaluation. The best specimens will be used to establish nurseries, which will then supply farmers." Dr Damodaran added, "The organisation will assist farmers with technology and market access." Paniyala is known for its antibacterial properties, which are found in its leaves, bark, roots and fruits. These properties make it beneficial for various stomach ailments, dental issues, bleeding gums, coughs, pneumonia, and itching. Additionally, the fruit is helpful for liver diseases and contains several antioxidants. During the Chhath festival in eastern UP, paniyala fruit is sold for Rs 300 to Rs 400 per kilogram. In recognition of its value, the Government of India is working to designate

this fruit as a geographical indicator of Gorakhpur. Paniyala can also be preserved as jam, jelly or juice, extending its shelf life. It is valuable for wood, fuel and agricultural uses. GI tagging is poised to be a game-changer for paniyala, a fruit that is a treasure trove of medicinal properties. This designation is expected to ignite a surge in its demand, potentially catapulting it to the status of a distinguished product of Gorakhpur, akin to the revered Terracotta. Dr SP Singh, senior horticulture scientist at Krishi Vigyan Kendra Belipar (Gorakhpur), explained that the benefits of GI tagging would extend beyond Gorakhpur's farmers to include gardeners from neighbouring districts such as Deoria, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Bahraich, Gonda and Shravasti. These districts share the same agroclimatic

zone, resulting in similar agricultural product qualities. It is worth mentioning here that the GI tag legally protects regional agricultural products, preventing unauthorised use and enhancing their significance. It also acts as a trademark on the international stage, boosting exports and increasing local income. Paniyala farming yields higher profits compared to traditional crops. A few years ago, R Dubey of the UP State Biodiversity Board visited Paras Nishad's home in Karamha village within the Karamhiya assembly area. At that time, Paras had nine paniyala trees. In October, the fruit sold for Rs 60-90 per kilogram, and he earned approximately Rs 3,300 per tree. Today, the price has increased five to six times, leading to a corresponding rise in income. Notably, the trees grow to about nine metres in height, making them relatively easy to maintain.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)

CIN : L65110TN2014PLC09792
Registered Office : KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | **Fax :** +91 44 4564 4022

Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited) as per the details shown in the above table of the below-mentioned borrowers and co-borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loan were classified as NPA as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited) are mentioned as per respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates.

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Name of borrowers and co-borrowers	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice	Property Address
1	130097187	HOME LOAN	1. MR. SATYA NARAIN GUPTA 2. MS. CHANDRAMA GUPTA	29.05.2024	7,49,184.09/-	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF 1 KITA LAND, GATA NO.1202, AREA 0.231 HECT. OUT OF WHICH PURCHASED AREA 0.025 HECT. I.E. 253 SQ.M. OF GRAM ISIPUR, PARGANA AND TEHSIL SADAR, DISTRICT PRATAPGARH, UTTAR PRADESH-230502, AND, BOUNDED AS: EAST:KACCHA RASTA 8 FT. 3 INCH WIDE, WEST: KHET NANKU SINGH, NORTH: ANSH NUMBER HAJA SELLER, SOUTH : KHET BRAJESH SINGH
2	102113290	LOAN AGAINST PROPERTY	1.SATYA NARAYAN VISHWAKARMA 2.URMILA DEVI	29.05.2024	4,74,013.87/-	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY GATA NO 1606, ADMEASURING 0.077 HECT., OUT OF 0.019 HECT., PLOT/LAND AREA 2045 SQ. FT., OF VILLAGE UMARI, PARGANA & TEHSIL SADAR, DIST. PRATAPGARH, NEAR PRIMARY SCHOOL/ SHIV MANDIR, PRATAPGARH, UTTAR PRADESH-230501, AND, BOUNDED AS: EAST: RASTA 13FT. WIDE, WEST: HOUSE OF RADHEY SHYAM, NORTH: LAND OF RAJ NARAYAN SOUTH: HOUSE OF DHARM RAJ

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited) as per the details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings, under Section 13 (4) and section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereinabove to realize the amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited). Further you are prohibited under Section 13 (13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured assets either by way of sale/lease or otherwise.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer

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Budget will pave way to make UP 'Uttam Pradesh': Expert

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Dean of Commerce Faculty, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof Harendra Kumar Singh said that the first Union Budget of Modi government 3.0 will prove to be a visionary one. "This will create employment opportunities along with education sector, research development and agricultural aspirations", he said while expressing his views in the Budget discussion organised in the Platinum Hall of the Faculty of Commerce, BHU here on Wednesday.



Experts taking part in a discussion on Union Budget at BHU in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Pradesh a 'Uttam Pradesh', he said, adding that this Budget of Modi government will stimulate organic farming, financial discipline, urbanisation and capital market. "The Purvodaya Scheme in this Budget will accelerate the rapid progress of backward states, but the relief in the income tax will prove to

be 'sweet and sour' for the middle class population", he stated. Newly-appointed Dean, Faculty of Management Studies, BHU, Prof SK Dubey said that reducing the interest rate on the education loan from seven per cent to three per cent is encouraging. He said that the focus of the

Budget in infrastructure development oriented and progressive, which will pave the way to make India a 'Vishwa Guru'. In this discussion, CA Vishal Singh said that Budget-2024 has brought great relief to the middle class salaried people. In this Budget, young students will be given professional training for training in top companies and Rs 5,000 per month will be given as stipend from the CRS fund. In this Budget, attention has been given to the youth, which includes women and farmers. This Budget has also given a boost to the MSME sector by increasing the Mudra Loan from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh, he added. On this occasion, Prof FB Singh, Prof D Sahu, Dr Lal Baboo Jaiswal, Dr Meenakshi A Singh and others were present.

Protest against poor power supply

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Congress workers staged a massive demonstration at the KESCo Headquarters in Civil Lines on Wednesday noon in protest against the poor condition of power supply in the city. They staged dharna and raised anti-government slogans. Addressing the gathering, City Congress Committee president Naushad Alam said due to frequent power cuts, resentment is prevailing among the people. Former president of Kanpur Bar Association Naresh Chandra Tripathi, former MLA Sohail Akhtar Ansari, Dilip Shukla, Pawan Gupta, Mohit Dixit and Gaurav Pandey of Youth Congress threatened to intensify the movement if KESCo failed to improve in power condition. Former Congress candidate Alok Mishra said now he will work for the masses. Thereafter, activists handed over a memorandum meant for KESCo



Congress activists staging a demonstration at KESCO HQs on Wednesday

MD. Their main demands included stopping undeclared power cuts, replacing inoperative and old transformers with the new ones, immediate disposal of complaints related to wrong power bills and excess meter reading, fixing time limit to provide connection to new applicants, banning entry of touts at the sub-stations, ensuring cent per cent meter reading with transparency, details of units consumed through smart meters be provided to consumers and payment of interest on security deposit.

TREE PLANTATION: Under the nationwide massive drive launched to plant 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Nnaam', Mayor Pramila Pandey planted saplings at The Sports Hub (TSH) and Palika Stadium. This marked the inauguration of the tree plantation week at the TSH on Tuesday. During the week, total 1,000 saplings will be planted at the TSH and Palika Stadium. Speaking on the occasion, Pandey said the sapling planted by her on Tuesday will protect the life of next generation. Hence, everybody should plant

more and more trees which also provide shade to people during scorching heat. Like a child feels safe with mother, these trees can also protect people from natural disaster. Corporator Saurabh Deo, cricketer Ankit Rajput, former international cricketer Shashi Kant Khandekar, TSH MD Rajiv Garg, Director Piyush Agarwal, Director (Operations) PK Srivastava, Director (Sports) RP Singh and other members were present. **TWO DIE OF SUFFOCATION:** Two labourers died of suffocation after falling into the ETP tank of a leather factory in Jaipur under Akbarpur Kotwali police station area of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday morning. Kin agitated at the factory gate demanding compensation. Police rushed to spot and pacified the issue. Kotwali incharge Satish Kumar Singh said a probe was on in the matter. After sending the bodies for autopsy, further action will be initiated, he said.

Budget to take India to new heights: Patel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Praising the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, regional president of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Dilip Patel said that the Budget will take India to new heights of progress. "The PM pays adequate attention to all departments for his welfare works as the Budget focussed on the welfare of the poor, youth, farmers and women", he said. Patel said in this budget, maximum emphasis has been given on employment generation. "From important minerals to space research, funds have been allocated for whatever will be important in the coming days. Mudra loan has been increased and interest on education loan has been reduced. This is a holistic budget", he added.

UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' said that it is a Budget working towards making India number one in the world by 2047. "The PM's dreams of every poor person to have a concrete roof, the resolution of three crore new houses in this direction is amazing", he said, adding that the custom duty on three important medicines used in the treatment of cancer will be made zero. "This step of the government will give a big discount to the patients in the

treatment of cancer", he said, adding that the facility of cervical cancer vaccination to girls aged nine to 14 years and the scheme related to solar plants in one crore houses are revolutionary steps. He said that the Budget allocation for the Ministry of AYUSH has been increased from Rs 3,000 crore to Rs 3,712.49 crore which is a welcome step. Reacting to the Budget, Varanasi South MLA Dr Neelkanth Tiwari said for the overall development of the country, investment has been increased so that the youth of the country get more resources and more self-employment and special attention has been given to agriculture, tourism and MSME. "These are the sectors which grow the GDP of the country and provide employment opportunities" he added. Varanasi Cantt MLA Saurabh Srivastava said that this is an inclusive budget. He said that this Budget is going to fulfill the resolution of developed India. Commenting on the Budget, district BJP president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma said the union finance minister has kept Rs 1.52 lakh crore for the agriculture sector in the Budget with nine priorities, including productivity in farming, employment and capacity development, overall human resource development, social justice, manufacturing and services, urban development,

Contractor found dead

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A building contractor was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a hotel room in Moolganj police station area on Wednesday morning. When the doors of his room did not open for the last two days, hotel staff peeped through the window and found the partly naked body lying on the bed. His son alleged that father had ₹70,000 cash with him but police have recovered only ₹21,000 from the spot. Police have started examining the CCTV cameras installed in the hotel and nearby establishments. A heart attack was suspected to be the cause of the incident. The kin did not blame anybody for his death. Gulab Rai (62) of Shivpur (Madhya Pradesh) was a building contractor. His son Sunny said his father had arrived Kanpur four days ago. Around 11 pm on Monday he had spoken to him. On Tuesday his phone was found to be switched off throughout the day. Late at night, he was informed about recovery of his body from the hotel room. Moolganj Inspector Vikesh Kumar said Gulab had checked in two days ago. On Monday, he had gone out to meet somebody and on return went to his room in the evening. Hotel staff had seen him last at 9 pm on Monday.

Consensus on implementing revised fares for city buses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The 29th meeting of Varanasi City Transport Services Limited was convened under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma here on Tuesday in which the board of directors decided to transfer the four water taxis given to City Transport back to the Tourism department. Besides, a consensus was also reached to implement revised fares for city buses. In view of the difficulty faced by operators in taking money from passengers and returning them due to the fare slab being ₹2 the round figure was revised to ₹5 like other cities. In it there was a discussion about revising the auction rate so that 11 unused vehicles and scrap could be auctioned on which the DC directed to form a committee as per the standards of UPSRTC. The Municipal Commissioner (MC) was authorised to finalise the logo on the buses of City Transport. On the proposal to reserve Rs 4 lakh annually for the emergency fund under City Transport, the DC directed the consent of the Finance Committee. An agreement was reached to take the buses of City Transport to Benia Bagh



DC KR Sharma addressing meeting of City Transport Services in Varanasi on Tuesday.

work so that its details could be checked. He also directed the Nagar Nigam to immediately take over the electricity, water and cleaning services of dharamshalas from UPPCL and remove the construction deficiencies and hand them over within two weeks. During the inspection of second 'parao' at Bhimchandi, Sharma directed to make arrangements for cleanliness of the dharamshala premises, toilets, electricity arrangements, drinking water and drains for water drainage. He warned the block development officer (BDO) concerned and the village secretary to take action against those sanitation workers who are not working properly. He also instructed the officers concerned to remove the board placed in front of the tap for drinking water next to the gate of Bhimchandi temple. The DC asked gram pradhan Vijay Gupta get the toilet cleaned from the Gram Panchayat fund. After that, during the inspection of Gandharva Sagar Tirtha Talab (pond), he instructed the officers to get the nets and gates and street lights installed all around repaired. Despite the lack of drainage system on the side of Panchkoshi Marg, he expressed displeasure on seeing the local people throwing water

on the road. At the end of the inspection, the DC visited Maa Bhimchandi Devi. He instructed the UPPCL to get the leaking roof of the temple repaired. During both the inspections, he expressed displeasure with the zonal officer and BDO for not paying enough attention to both the 'paraos' (shelters). He said that he would inspect both the sites again after some time. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, sub-divisional magistrate (SDM/Rajatalab) Amit Kumar, BDO (Arziline) Surendra Yadav, Public Works Department (PWD) Executive Engineer Ashutosh Singh, UPPCL Project Manager Praveen Sharma, Assistant Project Manager Jaiprakash Singh etc were also present. **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS:** District Magistrate S Rajalingam heard the complaints of the general public during the 'jansunwai' (public hearing) in his chamber at the Collectorate here on Tuesday. After listening to the complaints, the DM instructed the officials concerned to ensure quality disposal as per the wishes of the government. Rajalingam said that whatever problems are coming during the public hearing, their quality should be resolved on time.

Minister reviews works

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) AYUSH, Food Safety and Drug Administration Department, Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' reviewed in detail the works of Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani, Food Safety and Drug Administration department in the auditorium of Circuit House. While reviewing the works of Ayurveda department, He inquired about the progress of land, availability of medicines, OPD, herbal garden and the proposed 50-bed hospital in the hospitals. He said land should be made available for the hospitals which are being run in rented buildings as soon as possible and special attention should be paid to maintaining the availability of medicines. He said in hospitals where departmental land is available, herbal gardens should be made and only herbal plants should be planted. The minister informed that the government is taking nec-

essary action to arrange smart class, mess, hostel and furniture in all the 19 new medical colleges of the state and to appoint permanent personnel instead of contractual. He asked the officials of the Ayush department to collect samples of medicines from the shops where fake medicines are being sold and take necessary action. Reviewing works of Food Safety department, information was taken about how many samples have been taken, out of which how many were found to be as per the quality standards, how many were found to be substandard and how many were found to be unsafe etc. Officials were directed to collect samples from those places where there is a high possibility of adulteration. **HERITAGE MUSEUM:** To encourage and create awareness amongst the youth, visits by students of Government Inter College, Prayagraj and KV Barrauli to the Heritage Museum, Central Air Command (CAC) were conducted in coordination with the

civil administration for Prayagraj on Tuesday and Wednesday. The students from both the schools saw the displayed history and legacy of Indian Air Force and Central Air Command. The enthusiastic students went around the museum and familiarised themselves with some of the vintage aircraft, missiles, weapons and significant artefacts used by the IAF in the past. They were also made aware of the operational capabilities of Indian Air Force both in peace and war as well as its prominent role in safeguarding the nation, carrying out surveillance along with search, rescue and disaster relief operations. On culmination of the visit, students also witnessed the Light, Sound and Laser Show in the museum premises. The show, a joint venture of IAF and Prayagraj Smart City Limited showcases the rich legacy of CAC since its inception to the recent operations carried out by the Central Air Command.

Woman commits suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Upset by prolonged illness, a woman committed suicide by hanging herself in Babupur police station area late Tuesday night. On return, when her son found the doors locked from inside, he peeped through the window and found her hanging. On getting information police and forensic team rushed to the spot and carried out probe. In the suicide note, the woman confessed to have ended her life due to illness. Naval Kishore of NLC Babupura Colony said his wife Vimla Devi alias Kalpana was very upset due to liver disease for the past over one year and was undergoing treatment. On Tuesday night Vimla hanged herself from the ceiling fan. Police broke open the doors and sent the body for autopsy.

Woman's murder worked out

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

With the arrest of the accused, police claimed to have worked out the sensational murder of an elderly woman, whose body was found lying in a room on July 21 in Nayapura Bhavapur locality in Kareli. The son killed his mother by hitting her with a sharp-edged weapon after she scolded him. To mislead the police, the son had said that it was a case of robbery. However, the police got suspicious when he kept changing his statement. The police reached him through mobile location. During interrogation, he confessed his crime. DCP (City) Deepak Bhukar told journalists in a press conference that Subhadra (54) was murdered by her son Sachin. Sachin had a stationery shop. He did not sit at the shop for many days. His mother used to scold him for it and both of them used to fight. Also, he used to steal all the money

from the shop. That day also, when his mother scolded him he got angry and attacked her. As a result his mother died on the spot. Blood was found all around the bed. After this, he made up a story of robbery in front of the police. He said some robbers came and took money from the house. When his mother protested, they killed her. Maniram Pal is originally from Bilharu in Kanpur. He runs a photocopy shop near the High Court. He lives with his family in a rented house in Nayapura locality of Kareli. Apart from his wife Subhadra (54), his elder son Sachin lived in the house. His younger son had gone to the village for a few days. After killing his mother, Sachin told the police that like every day, his father went to the shop at 9:30 am. He also went to the shop at 12:30 pm. His mother was alone at home. When he returned at 6 pm he found the main gate closed, but it was not locked from inside. As soon as he went inside, he

screamed. His mother was lying on the bed in a pool of blood. All the belongings were scattered. When he shouted, people gathered and then the police arrived on getting information. **RESHUFFLE:** Police station in charges have been transferred in Prayagraj Commissionerate. Police station in charges of Soraon and Naini have been sent to the lines. Police Commissioner Tarun Gauba has appointed inspector Brijesh Tiwari as in-charge of Soraon police station. Praveen Kumar Gautam has been made the in charge of Phulpur police station. Ashwani Kumar Singh has been given the charge of Phaphamau police station. Vaibhav Singh, who was the in-charge of Dhoomanganj police station, has been appointed as the in charge of Naini police station while Nitendra Kumar Shukla has made the in charge of Koroan police station. Vinay Kumar Singh has been appointed as the in charge of

Shahganj police station. This is the first reshuffle after Tarun Gauba became the Prayagraj Police Commissioner. **FINED:** As many as 110 people were caught on Tuesday spreading filth by spitting gutkha, paan in Prayagraj division of North Central Railway (NCR). They paid a fine of ₹11,850. Under the direction of DRM of Prayagraj division Himansu Badoni, a campaign is being run at all the stations of the division these days. Passengers are being made aware to keep the station clean. Bottle crushing machines have been installed at Prayagraj Junction and Kanpur Central Station. A special cleanliness campaign is being run at the catering stalls of all stations. The campaign has been run at Prayagraj Junction, Kanpur Central, Aligarh Junction, Tundla Junction, Etawah, Mirzapur, Fatehpur, Phaphamau, Prayagraj Chheeki, Subedarganj, Manikpur and Vindhyachal stations.

Bid to explain concepts of genetics to students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Dr Chandana Basu and Dr Garima Jain currently working as scientists in the Centre for Genetic Disorders, Institute of Science, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) have created an e-book resource 'Genetic Odyssey - Genetics concepts through comics' for educating school children (grades 9-12) to make them understand the concepts of genetics. The art illustrations in this ebook are created by Nandini and her technical team at Learn with Comics. Here, they blend the artistry of storytelling with the rigour of scientific knowledge to create a unique learning experience.



Whether one is a student struggling with the complexities of genetics, a teacher seeking innovative instructional educational materials or simply a curious mind eager to explore

the secrets of heredity, the comics are crafted to make intricate genetic concepts accessible and enjoyable. Two of their stories presented in comic style entitled 'DNA code of life' explaining about our genetic material and 'DNA defenders' explaining about cancer. These stories are available in English and also in Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Gujarati in this e-book. This e-book and other resources created by them are available at <https://learnwithcomics.org/genetics4u#comics-resources>. This science outreach project was a part of IndiaBioscience Outreach Grant funded by IndiaBioscience and Dr Chandana and Dr Garima were

among the five teams across India who were awarded this grant, informed Coordinator, Centre for Genetic Disorders, BHU Dr Akhtar Ali. **BADMINTON COMPETITION:** The North Eastern Railway (NER) Inter-Divisional Railway Protection Force (RPF) Badminton Competition 2024 concluded at Badminton Club in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Tuesday. The chief guest of the ceremony, Principal Chief Security Commissioner (RPF) BLW Ranveer Singh Chauhan, presented the trophies to the winner and runner-up players. Varanasi Division was the winner and Lucknow Division was the runner-up in the team

championship of the competition. In men's open category singles, inspector Dashrath Prasad (Lucknow Division) was the winner and head constable Ram Bahadur (Varanasi Division) was the runner-up. In the open men's doubles, inspector Abhay Rai and inspector Parmeshwar Kumar (Varanasi Division) were the winners and constables Ram Bahadur Yadav and head constable Ram Praveesh Yadav (Varanasi Division) were the runners-ups. In women's singles, constable Poonam was the winner and constable Reena was the runner-up. The team of NER will be selected by the jury on the basis of the performances of the players in this competition.

FPC programme to start soon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

To ensure participation of all family members, especially men, in maternal and newborn care, Family Participatory Care (FPC) programme will be started in the district soon. Regarding this a two-day training workshop concluded on Tuesday in the Dhanvantari auditorium of the Chief Medical Officer's office. In the training, one Block Community Process Manager (BCPM), Community Health Officer (CHO) and ANM from each block were trained. Along with this, they were also made master trainers, who will go to the block and train all the staff nurses, CHOs, ANMs, Sanginis and ASHA workers.

The training was organised under the joint aegis of Nutrition International (NI) and New Concept (NCIS) organisation and under the direction of CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary. Under the leadership of Deputy CMO (RCH) Dr HC Maurya, trainers Sanjay Verma and Prabha Sharma told all the health workers that the family plays an important role in the care of maternal and child health. With the help of the family, pregnant and lactating women as well as the nutrition of the newborn can be supported. The men of the family should also cooperate 100 per cent in this. It was said that the pregnant woman should get at least four prenatal checkups done and the family should fully cooper-

erate in postnatal care. During this, detailed information was given about Home Based Newborn Care (HBNC), Home Based Youth Care (HBYS), Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC). Maternal and infant mortality rate can be reduced with the participation of the family. For this, the responsibility of training pregnant and lactating women and the family members of the newborn has been given to the health workers. It was told in the training that a healthy and balanced diet during pregnancy provides better nutrition to the fetus growing in the womb. Along with this, the health of both remains good. There is also no problem at the time of delivery.

Border villages get ₹1,050 cr to curb migration

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Government continues its thrust on comprehensive development of villages located remote areas along the border with China, the Union Budget has allocated Rs 1,050 crore for the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) that will benefit select villages in 19 districts in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. The Government approved the VVP as a centrally-sponsored scheme on February 15, 2023, with an outlay of Rs 4,800 crore for 2022-23 to 2025-26 for development of these villages in 46 blocks abutting the northern border. The Budget, presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday, has earmarked Rs 1,050 crore for the VVP for 2024-25. The objective of the programme is comprehensive development of these villages to improve the quality of life



of people and thereby reversing out-migration, officials said. The VVP, which is being implemented by the Union Home Ministry, envisages focused areas of interventions for creation of opportunities for livelihood generation through promotion of agriculture, horticulture, tourism and cultural heritage, skill development and entrepreneurship, development of co-operative societies for managing livelihood opportunities including agriculture, horticulture, cultivation of medicinal plants and herbs, road connectivity, housing and village infrastructure, energy including renewable energy, television and telecom connectivity and financial inclusion. One of the sectors identified for development is promotion

of tourism and culture by augmenting various tourism-related infrastructure, promoting community managed home stays, organising local fairs and festivals, promoting ecotourism, agro-tourism, wellness, wildlife, spiritual and adventure tourism and local cuisines. The VVP was conceived as an outcome-oriented programme with outcome indicators at three levels—village, household and individual beneficiary. Under the VVP, so far 136 border villages are being provided connectivity through 113 all-weather road projects at a cost of Rs 2,420 crore. Mobile 4G connectivity is being worked on rapidly in these areas and by December, all villages under the VVP will be covered by the 4G network, officials said. Showing its focussed attention, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, after assuming charge in the Modi

3.0 Government, had reviewed the implementation of the VVP at a high-level meeting here on July 13. He had stressed the need to provide employment opportunities to the residents of border villages and increase connectivity to prevent migration from such remote areas. Shah had directed authorities to continue the efforts being made by Senior Ministers and officials to better understand the issues of border villages under the special initiative taken by the Central Government. He said the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Army deployed around the border villages should encourage purchase of local agricultural and handicraft products through cooperatives. The Home Minister said the healthcare facilities of the Army and CAPFs should be regularly made available to benefit the residents of nearby villages.

BJP asks Rahul to apologise after SC's verdict on NEET

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday accused Rahul Gandhi of fuelling lack of trust in India's examination system following the NEET-UG paper leak at a few places, and asked if he will apologise after the Supreme Court's verdict on the issue. The court on Tuesday dismissed the pleas seeking cancellation and re-test of the examination, holding that there was no evidence on record to conclude that it was "vitiated" on account of "systemic breach" of its sanctity. The court said the leak occurred in a couple of cities. BJP leader and former union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad hit out at the opposition, especially Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, following the verdict, accusing him of defaming India's examination globally with his strong words. His choice of words was



violative of Parliament's dignity and the dignity of the office of the Leader of Opposition, a position Gandhi holds, Prasad said. He also dismissed Rahul Gandhi's criticism of the budget as a "kursi bachao budget", saying it was not the BJP's fault if people have repeatedly rejected him and his party in the elections. Defending the government's action on the NEET row, the BJP leader said the probe in the matter was handed over to the CBI and the candidature of 155 examinees was cancelled. He highlighted the enormity of the examination, noting that over 23.5 lakh students took it at 4,750 centres across 571 cities. Rahul Gandhi was using words like "fraud" to attack the entire examination and now the court has made it clear that there was no systemic breach in the sanctity of the test, he said. "Will Rahul Gandhi apologise..." he asked, claiming that paper leaks were rife during the governments led by the Congress.

First Advanced Frigate launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The first of two Advanced Frigates under construction by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for the Indian Navy, was launched on Tuesday, defence ministry said here on Wednesday. In keeping with maritime tradition, the ship was launched by Rita Sreedharan to the invocation from Atharva Veda, in the presence of Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai. The ship has been named Tripud, after the mighty arrow, representing the indomitable spirit of Indian Navy and its ability to strike far and deep. The contract for building two Tripud class Advanced Frigates was signed between Ministry of Defence and Goa Shipyard Limited in January, 2019. The ship is designed for combat operations against enemy surface ships, submarines and air crafts. The Tripud class ships are 124.8 m long and 15.2 m wide, with a draught of 4.5 m. Their displacement is approximately



3,600 tons and speed a maximum of 28 knots. The ships are equipped with stealth features, advanced weapon and sensors and platform management systems. Being constructed at GSL, the Tripud class of ships are follow on ships of the Teg and Talwar class ships acquired from Russia. These frigates are being constructed for the first time indigenously by an Indian shipyard. In line with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, a large percentage of the equipment fit, including weapons and sensors is of indigenous origin, thereby ensuring that large scale defence production is executed by Indian manufacturing units, generating employment and capability enhancement within the country.

UK Foreign Secretary visits India for talks on FTA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy on Wednesday began a two-day visit to India to galvanise negotiations for an ambitious Free Trade Agreement and reset the overall bilateral partnership in crucial areas such as clean energy, new technologies and security. As he embarked on the high-profile trip, Lammy described the negotiations for the trade deal as the floor and not the ceiling of the ambitions to unlock shared potential and deliver growth. The British Foreign Secretary's visit to New Delhi is the first high-level engagement between India and the UK after Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour Government came to power on July 5. India is the emerging superpower of the 21st century, the largest country in the world with 1.4 billion people and one of the fastest growing economies in the world," Lammy said. "Our Free Trade Agreement negotiations is the floor not the ceiling of our ambitions to unlock our shared potential and deliver growth, from Bengaluru to Birmingham," he said. A British Government readout said, Lammy will push for a "reset" of the UK-India partnership, including through reinforcing London's commitment to securing a



free trade agreement that will benefit both economies. It said the Foreign Secretary will also galvanise support for accelerated action on the climate crisis with India as an "indispensable partner", driving forward the clean energy transition and creating opportunities for British and Indian businesses. He will discuss partnering on Indian-led global initiatives to build clean power access, climate resilience in the global south and small island states, it said. "We have shared interests on the green transition, new technologies, economic security and global security," Lammy was quoted as saying in the readout. "I am travelling to India in my first month as Foreign Secretary because resetting our relationship with the Global South is a key part of how this Government will reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home," he said. In a social media post, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Lammy's visit will strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries. Lammy and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will hold wide-ranging talks this evening that is expected to focus on the FTA and New Delhi's concerns over activities of pro-Khalistan elements in Britain, people familiar with the matter said. The British Foreign Secretary is also scheduled to meet Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal during which both sides are likely to reaffirm their commitment to the proposed free trade pact, they said. It is learnt both sides have already agreed on almost 90 per cent of the trade pact but the remaining 10 per cent comprised several sticky

issues such as import duties on automobiles and scotch whisky and visas for business people. The British readout said Lammy will highlight the importance of a new partnership with India that focuses on economic, domestic and global security. Economic, domestic and global security will be at the heart of the Foreign Secretary's first visit to India as he travels to New Delhi to unlock the full potential of the UK-India partnership. He will tell his Indian counterpart that he wants to drive forward greater growth for both countries, it said. The Foreign Secretary will underscore the importance of the "living bridge" between the UK and India. It represents the 1.7 million people with Indian heritage that have made their home in the UK and make an exceptional contribution to British life, the readout released by the UK high commission in New Delhi said. "In a visit to India's third largest technology company, the Foreign Secretary will meet business leaders to highlight how the UK and India are working together on shared ambitions such as cutting-edge science to encourage innovation, boost trade, and improve the livelihoods of working people in both countries," it said.



People walk past as sea waves crash against the promenade during high tide, at Marine drive, in Mumbai, on Wednesday. PTI

Over 12K complaints filed through PMO grievance portal pending, LS told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 12,000 complaints related to the central government departments filed through a public grievance portal of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) are pending, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday. In a written reply, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said <https://www.pmindia.gov.in> is a centralised portal for registering public grievances related to central ministries or departments and also for state and Union territories. He said the status of the grievances filed using the portal can be tracked with a unique registration ID generated at the time of filing of the complaint. The grievances received are redressed by the ministries, departments, states and Union territories concerned in a decentralised manner, the Minister said, adding that a majority of these are redressed in less than 30 days. According to data he shared, as many as 58,612 complaints were received between

January and June. In addition to that, 34,659 complaints were brought forward from the previous year. Of these, 80,513 were redressed and 12,758 are pending, the data showed. In 2023, 1,84,227 such complaints were received (in addition to 19,705 brought forward from the previous year). Of these, 1,69,273 were redressed and 34,659 were pending. The Minister also shared data on pending complaints related to the state governments and Union territories. As many as 46,696 complaints (excluding 25,724 brought forward from the previous year) about states and UTs were received during January and June. Of these, 46,219 were redressed and 26,201 were pending. During 2023, 91,973 complaints were raised against state governments and UTs. Of these, 2,58,633 complaints were redressed (redressal was also done from 1,92,384 complaints brought forward from the previous year) and 25,724 were pending, according to the data.

Maratha-Dhangar quota: Cong urges Govt to start negotiations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Congress MP from Maharashtra on Wednesday made a demand in Lok Sabha that the government should start negotiations with Manoj Jarange-Patil to find a solution to the Maratha-Dhangar reservation issue at the earliest. Raising the issue of reservation for Maratha and Dhangar communities in Lok Sabha, Congress' Praniti Shinde also made a strong demand for conducting a caste census to ensure reservation to women. Shinde, the Lok Sabha member from Solapur, said Jarange-Patil is sitting on a fast and the Dhangar community also wants to be included in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category. "The government is adding to the existing tensions in Maharashtra. The BJP is in the government in Maharashtra and at the Centre. Why can't there be a negotiation to find a solution to it? Why is there a delay? It is my demand that the government enter into talks on the Maratha-Dhangar reservation issue and find a solution to the problem," Shinde said. Shinde also demanded that a caste census be conducted at



the earliest so that women and Maratha and Dhangar communities get reservation due to them. BJP MP from Palghar, Hemant Savara, demanded setting up of a Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Thane district of Maharashtra. Savara said he was educated in a Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) in Palghar, which was a part of Thane district. He said Thane district ceased to have a JNV after Palghar district was carved out of it in 2014. Congress member from Idukki, Dean Kuriakose, wanted the government to reintroduce the vermin list under the Wildlife Protection Act to allow culling of "cruel animals" entering farm land and destroying the crop. Congress Deputy Leader Gaurav Gogoi raised the issue of over 12 lakh elementary teachers who lost their jobs after the Supreme Court



India, Russia review defence ties in key meeting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Russia reviewed the entire gamut of their defence ties in Working Sub Group on Planning of Military Cooperation of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) here on Tuesday and Wednesday. It was the third meeting, defence ministry said. Giving details, officials said the discussions focused on strengthening the ongoing defence engagements between the two sides, pondering over new initiatives under the ambit of the existing bilateral defence cooperation mechanism. The Working Sub Group Meeting is a forum established to carry forward defence cooperation between the countries through regular talks at the operational level between Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff (HQIDS) and the Main Directorate of International Military Cooperation of the Ministry of Defence, Russian Federation.

SC rejects plea to include tribunals in e-courts project

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to entertain a plea seeking to include tribunals in the e-courts project aimed at upgrading the digital infrastructure of courts across the country. The public interest litigation said quasi-judicial panels like the Armed Forces Tribunal and the National Green Tribunal should be made part of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). The NJDG falls under the e-courts project that pertains to the formulation of a national policy on the computerisation of the country's judiciary. It is monitored and funded by the Department of Justice of the Law Ministry. The NJDG portal is a national



repository of data relating to cases instituted, pending, and disposed of by the courts across the country. "You may approach the Department of Justice regarding this. The NJDG is part of the e-courts project. It

looks at district courts, the high courts and the Supreme Court and this does not look at tribunals at all," the CJ said. The bench made clear that it cannot "impinge" the contours of the project. The bench said, "Rs 7,000 crore was allocated for the courts and not for the tribunals. The moment we say the tribunals will be brought under it then the funds will be spent on tribunals as well." "Today there is no administrative sanction for the tribunals under the e-courts project. So, the tribunals cannot come under it now." The plea to bring tribunals under the NJDG cannot be accepted since it is a project under the e-courts project. The petitioner can avail other remedies it has under law and can approach the Government as well," it ordered. The bench, however, permitted the PIL petitioner to approach the Central Government seeking the computerisation of tribunals.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Balancing growth with populism

Though the budget 2024 is growth-centric, it has populist overtones and addresses concerns of NDA allies

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the first Union Budget for Modi 3.0 government on July 23, 2024, aiming to bolster India's economic growth while addressing social equity and the interests of the NDA allies. This budget is an exercise in balancing economic growth with political dividends. This budget outlines allocations for infrastructure, green energy initiatives, and the digital economy, reflecting a comprehensive approach to development. The Union Budget 2024-25 focuses on macro-economic growth and fiscal stability but offers limited welfare for the poor, relying on effective policy implementation for success. While the fiscal deficit has improved to 4.9% of GDP, significant disparities persist, with increased capital expenditure intended to boost private investment but widening rural-urban and income divides. The budget maintains a similar outlay as the interim budget, prioritising agriculture, rural development, housing, and MSMEs to create jobs. New measures include direct payments for first-time



employees and incentives for employers to increase hiring. The budget does not adequately address rising inflation, which stands at 5.08%. To support manufacturing, the government has introduced initiatives like the Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs and increased Mudra Loan limits, along with developing industrial parks enhancing agricultural practices through Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and increasing support for natural farming. Despite these efforts, the success of the budget depends on effective implementation and addressing broader economic challenges.

The Union Budget 2024 outlines a comprehensive plan to deal with the rising unemployment by increasing the skill set of the youth. It plans to provide skills to 20 lakh youth over five years. As part of this initiative, 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes will be upgraded into hub and spoke arrangements with a focus on outcome orientation. The course content and design will be aligned with the skill needs of the industry. The budget's positives include the significant investment in infrastructure, expected to create jobs and stimulate economic growth. However, the budget also presents challenges. The ambitious spending plans may widen the fiscal deficit, posing challenges to macroeconomic stability and inflation control. Effective implementation of the proposed schemes and projects remains a critical concern, given historical delays and inefficiencies. The 2024 budget reflects a populist approach, aimed at addressing the concerns of its allies — Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu and has generously allocated funds for their states. The BJP has learned from its performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections, where it faced criticism for not adequately addressing issues like rural distress, job creation, and social equity. By focusing on infrastructure development, rural welfare, and social sector spending, the budget seeks to win back the support of these crucial demographics.

PICTALK



Pigeons fly past the new sculpture 'Natyashastra' installed at Mandi House, New Delhi

RANJAN DIMRI

Indian education system: Building a vibrant nation

By integrating knowledge and skill development with modern practices, we can nurture youth who are proficient and emotionally and physically resilient

Bharat's educational policies are geared towards fostering a balanced approach that integrates learning with modern skills, reduces unnecessary burdens, and nurtures the unique potential of every child. These efforts are crucial for building a future-ready youth capable of seizing new opportunities in a rapidly evolving world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been a vocal advocate for educational reforms and skill development. One of the landmark steps taken by the government is the introduction of the New National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, established after almost four decades. The introduction of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has started giving positive dividends. Being a transformative policy, it formalises skill training by integrating it into the education system from Class VI onwards. This policy underpins the importance of combining schooling with skilling, and teaching-learning materials for classes III rd onward are also being made available now. The government's plan to incorporate emerging and



applied areas, such as semiconductor technology, into the school curriculum is a promising step towards meeting the skilling needs of the diverse and talented Yuva Shakti. Additionally, the School Bag Policy aims to enhance student well-being by addressing the physical burden of school bags. This policy focuses on streamlining educational materials, promoting digital resources, and encouraging ergonomic designs. States like Assam and Madhya Pradesh have taken significant steps to alleviate the burden on students, with new notifications set to take effect from the academic session 2024-25. Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) outlines the vision and priorities of the government. During the 7th edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC), Prime Minister Modi inter-

acted with students, teachers, and parents, emphasizing the need to create an educational ecosystem where each child's unique individuality is encouraged and fully expressed. The government has been making concerted efforts to achieve this goal, recognizing that cultural and societal expectations often add undue pressure on students. Modi advocates for healthy competition, reminding us that "Teachers are not in a job role but they shoulder the responsibility of grooming the lives of students." With the rapid pace of technological advancements, its adoption in the process of learning is very crucial and technology should be harnessed as a tool for learning, reminding us that "one cannot run away from technology," as the Prime Minister remarked. Reforms are necessary as they can lead Bharat to a higher stage of advancement. The holistic approach involves aligning educational practices with principles that promote mindfulness and resilience. Education should encompass a broad spectrum of human

development, not just intellectual growth. Proper methodologies should be used to assess and nurture various aspects of a child's development. The new education system is all set to enhance individual potential and it also contributes to the nation's economic growth. It is widely admitted that a well-educated population is better equipped to drive economic progress and social mobility, reducing disparities and fostering a more equitable society. Moreover, education contributes to better health, increased civic engagement, and enhanced personal satisfaction. Bharat's examination system needs further reforms. Hence, going forward, the nation is bound to have a more fair, transparent, stress-free, flexible and robust examination system. The holes are being plugged on an urgent basis at all levels. Bharat is on the right path to building a stronger, more vibrant nation where talent, knowledge, and skills thrive. (The author is the BJP Councillor from Narayana, New Delhi; views are personal)



UMANG BAJAJ

The unfulfilled promise of Ram Rajya

The BJP's electoral setback in Ayodhya and UP, despite the grand Ram Temple inauguration, necessitates introspection on the foundations of cultural nationalism



SIDHARTH MISHRA

Covenanted for deity, indifferent to the movement Sidharth Mishra In Hindu tradition, Lord Shiva is the symbol of faith, always speaks the truth, and is Trikaladarshi (knows the past, present and future). In Goswami Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas, there is a reference to Shiva telling his wife Sati, "Hohi Soi Jo Ram 'Rachi Rakha'" meaning what happens has been designed by Ram himself. Shiva explains to his wife that Ram is Param Brahma (ultimate creator), and writes the fate of a person based on his or her deeds. To the followers of Ram, this couplet forms the essence of Ram's divinity and majesty. The starting lines of the couplet are followed by Tulsidas saying, "Ko Kari Tark Badhaye Sakha" that is why disputes his decision with inane discussions and then completes the couplet saying "As Kahi Lage Japan Harinama; Gai Sati Jahan Prabhu Sukhdhama," the essence of this being that in seeking refuge in Ram one attains solace as did Sati, Shiva's wife. Though Tulsidas demands faith in Ram nowhere he mentions that a human being's own 'karma' (deeds) would not have a bearing on Ram's 'rachna' (creation). To those for whom Ram is the symbol of the revival of cultural nationalism, it's time to retrospect on their 'karma' which led to Ram's 'rachna' of the setback that they received in the just concluded Lok Sabha polls. Defeat in Ayodhya is indeed the symbol of the setback, which is spread across Ram's territory of Awadh and beyond it. Ramjanambhoomi movement played an important role in the revival and strengthening of the concept of cultural nationalism.

The consecration of the statue of Lord Ram at the much-awaited temple should have proved to be the culmination of people's faith in Ram and its natural expression in the electoral gains for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It did not happen. Celebrated English poet TS Eliot writes in his epochal poem, Hollow Men, "This is the way the world



ends/Not with a bang but with a whimper." Earlier in the same poem, Eliot writes, "Between the conception/ And the creation/ Between the emotion/ And the response/ Falls the Shadow." The question is why the Ramjanambhoomi movement culminated electorally the way it did, not with a bang but with a whimper. The inauguration of the Ram temple in January this year was the event of the century. The fluttering flags bearing Ram symbols across the states, and the cultural build-up through popular Bollywood renditions had even the sceptics once believed in the movement bearing the soul of our culture and nature. It was complete with immaculate camera coverage, with itinerary being unveiled with clockwork precision, weather at its shining best in generally a gloomy climate and a massive build-up of expectation of dawning of Ram Rajya (the rule of Ram, the ideal form of governance). The event, however, surprisingly did not bring good electoral tidings for the BJP. The party strategists were left befuddled at the morally demoralising electoral setback. For the pontiffs of cultural nationalism, the reason for 'shadows between the con-



TO THOSE FOR WHOM RAM IS THE SYMBOL OF THE REVIVAL OF CULTURAL NATIONALISM, IT'S TIME TO RETROSPECT ON THEIR 'KARMA' WHICH LED TO RAM'S 'RACHNA' OF THE SETBACK THAT THEY RECEIVED IN THE JUST CONCLUDED LOK SABHA POLLS

ception and creation, between the emotion and the response' will not be known until they decide to come out of the echo chamber of the 'VIP route' and have a 'darshan' of Ram Lalla by joining the milieu of the masses. Rama Rajya has been defined as the ideal state of society as intended by Lord Ram, comprising perfect harmony, justice, dharma and prosperity, where people live in peace and happiness. Gandhi took the interpretation forward, saying that true Ram Rajya would be to ensure equal rights to both prince and pauper. Ask the Ram Bhakts standing in the line of the paupers, for the darshan of Ram Lalla, if an ideal state had dawned. The management of the whole 'darshan' process at the Ramjanambhoomi temple today is a prototype of how it's a case study of not being the Ram Rajya model. The uncarpeted red sandstone floor of the pathway from the temple entry to the sanctum sanctorum in the heat of the summer leaves the Bhakts with blisters, cursing the temple management for their scorn. Providing carpets to cover the hot stone floor, functional air coolers on the pathway to beat the sultry weather or water coolers to quench the

thirst from standing in a queue is something that should not be beyond the command of 'caring' temple management. But then that care is lacking. The whole environment at the temple grapples with the attitude of Suraksha (security) rather than sewa (service). The teeming throng of untrained private security guards stands out as a sore thumb. The curt replies by these guards to the simple queries of the devout worshipper are all adding to the dwindling goodwill about the temple movement, though not for the temple deity. Ram lives in all humans, as notable lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi penned (*mere rom rom mein basne wale ram*) for Bollywood super hit Neel Kamal. This song over the years has become the anthem for all the Ram worshippers. If the attitude of disdain at the Ram temple is not replaced with that of service, Ram Bhakts would continue to vow for their deity albeit without much goodwill for those associated with the temple movement.

(Sidharth Mishra is the author and President of, Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BUDGET REACTIONS

Madam — It is not unusual for mixed opinions to arise on budgets presented by Central or State Governments. While ruling parties typically praise the budget, opposition parties are quick to criticize it. Congress leader Pawan Khera claims that the job-related schemes are merely copied from the Nyay Patra. If this is true, Congress might feel validated for having their scheme adopted. However, this could simply be Khera's personal view. What the opposition says often has little impact on the central government. Opposition parties have labeled the budget as specific to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. It is natural for the opposition to be disappointed with the budget, especially since it does not upset the Chief Ministers of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. They had hoped that by denying special status to these states, discontent would grow, possibly leading to a withdrawal of support from Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu. The budget allocates Rs. 15,000 crore for the development of Andhra Pradesh's capital and grants for its backward regions. Bihar receives Rs. 26,000 crore for various road projects and Rs. 21,000 crore for power. An industrial center is planned for Gaya, and there is a welcome initiative to revive Nalanda University. On the fiscal front, the current budget lacks encouragement for savings. The government seems to believe people have no choice but to deposit their money in nationalized banks, thus avoiding tax deductions for savings. It would have been fair if the Finance Minister had emphasized savings as well. KV Seetharamaiah|Bengaluru

AN HORRIFIC INCIDENT

Madam — A horrifying incident in Rewa (Madhya Pradesh). I am deeply concerned about the recent incident in Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh, where Mamta Pandey and Asha Pandey were partially buried while protesting against

Kamala is the right choice



This would seem to have come about a little late, a mere four months before the decisive election. For Democrats there are two options. One, go for Kamala by nomination, thereby making her a very probable scape goat in lieu of Biden, given Trump's stamped and vivid image of a clenched fist, post the shooting, or stage a grand show where their candi-

dates at the upcoming convention mount the podium and vigorously debate as to how they intend to run the nation rather than run for office. The party convention must set exemplary tenor and substance by navigating through issues on hand than throwing mud on a Teflon coated Trump, on whom nothing will stick. Under extreme pressure and for want of time on its hands, the party could find great sense in gathering both its wits and resolve to have Kamala as their candidate. Kamala is one person who is most suited to take on Trump. Remember Trump carries a heavy baggage of his own and the recent episode can blur some of his glaring negatives, not all.

R.Narayanan| Mumbai

road construction on private land. This inhumane action raises serious questions about women's safety under the current government. On one hand, we hear slogans like "Nari Shakti" and "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao," but on the other hand, women are being harassed and buried alive. Is this what we call women's safety, freedom, and security? How long will such incidents continue to occur? The nation cannot tolerate such atrocities. Authorities must address this matter urgently and find a solution to prevent such incidents from happening again. I urge the government to prioritize women's safety and take immediate action to address this issue. Masood Ahmad |Barabanki

A BOOST TO THE GDP

Madam — This refers to the front page article, "India's GDP to surge 6.5 - 7% in 2024-25 : Economic Survey", (July 23) this is my response. The economic survey of the year 2024 revealed the positive growth figures of India's GDP

surge of 6.5 to 7% in the year 2024-25. The evangelist numbers are welcoming for speeding up the growth trajectory of India, to make it a 5 trillion dollar economy as soon as possible. Although the inflation figures are stressing, as it burdened the pockets of the locals. But the growth figures are surely welcoming for each one of us. This will also help India to target 'Vikshit Bharat' vision, and help ensure balanced regional development for all together. Sectoral growth with equality from agriculture to export will power boost India to practically visualize these figures in real life. There are provisions in the budget which will definitely lead to the spurt in economic activity, especially the push for employment and skill development is likely to create more jobs and give boost to manufacturing sector. However, it will all depend upon the execution of these schemes. Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



GOURAV VALLABH

UNION BUDGET 2024: POINT COUNTER POINT



PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI

Transformative changes for the middle class



The middle class in India has long been the backbone of the nation, driving consumption, innovation, and overall economic growth. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has witnessed transformative changes that have significantly impacted this demographic. In the last decade, we have moved from a Low Growth, High Inflation Nation to a High Growth, Low Inflation Nation. Currently, we are the only large economy in the world to have High Growth and Low Inflation. The GDP growth rate consistently outpaced other major economies, with 8.2% growth in FY 2023-24 compared to 7.0% in FY 2022-23. These economic improvements have directly benefited the middle class. Primarily, what the middle class expects from a Budget is more disposable income in hand, Quality jobs for the next generation, and an improved quality of life.

More Disposable Income in Hand Generally, the government tries to increase the middle class's disposable income by controlling inflation or by giving tax relief to the personal income tax category. This budget and government fiscal policies provide relief by both instruments. Inflation management has been crucial, with the Modi government adopting an inflation-targeting regime in 2016.

This approach stabilized and lowered inflation, which has averaged 5% since 2014, never breaching the 8% mark. In June 2024, retail inflation was 5.08%, with core inflation at its lowest in over 12 years, providing further relief to the middle class and enhancing their purchasing power. In addition, the budget brings significant tax relief for the middle class. FM has rationalized slab rates under the new tax regime and allowed an additional standard deduction of Rs 25,000, effectively making the total standard deductions Rs 75,000 effective from AY 25-26. The new tax regime continues to be the default tax regime of taxation.

These changes increase disposable income in the hands of the middle class to the extent of Rs 17,500 per

annum. In other words, after these changes, there will be no tax till income from the Salary of Rs 7.75 Lakh under the new tax regime.

Empowering the Backbone of India The Union Budget 2024-25, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, introduces a series of measures aimed at empowering the middle class and ensuring inclusive growth. This budget focuses on employment, skilling, MSMEs, and infrastructure, which are all pivotal for middle-class prosperity. The budget allocates Rs2 Lakh Crore for education, employment, and skilling, directly benefiting the middle class by facilitating job opportunities for 4.1 crore youth over five years. Schemes like the Employment Linked Incentive provide direct benefits to first-time employees, boosting job creation in the manufacturing sector.

Additionally, a new centrally sponsored skilling scheme will train 20 lakh youth, aligning their skills with industry needs and ensuring the middle class remains competitive in the job market. Under the PM Awas Yojana Urban 2.0, the housing needs of 1 crore urban poor and middle-class families will be addressed with an investment of Rs 10 lakh crore. This will include the central assistance of Rs2.2 lakh crore in the next 5 years.

A provision of interest subsidy to facilitate loans at affordable rates is also envisaged. For small business owners within the middle class, the budget introduces a comprehensive package for MSMEs, including a credit guarantee scheme for machinery and equipment purchases and support during stress periods.

A Brighter Future

The measures outlined in the budget are set to have profound implications for the middle class. Increased employment opportunities, enhanced skilling programs, and support for MSMEs ensure stable incomes and improved living standards.

Affordable housing initiatives make homeownership more accessible to the middle class, and the focus on infrastructure development creates a con-

ducive environment for businesses, fostering economic growth and stability. Let us understand this with the help of an example - The story of a middle-class family. Sachin is a middle-class professional living in Delhi. With the recent changes introduced in the budget, his yearly take-home salary has seen an increase of Rs17,500 due to the new tax benefits.

This increment has allowed Sachin to invest more in his children's education and save for the future. The constant control of inflation also eased his household expenses, making it more affordable for his family to maintain their standard of living. Sachin's son, Amit, recently graduated and was worried about finding a job.

However, with the government's focus on creating employment opportunities, Amit secured a position in a manufacturing firm that benefits from the Employment Linked Incentive scheme. This job provides Amit with a stable income and gives him the confidence to contribute to the family's finances. The government's commitment to skilling programs has also allowed Amit to enrol in a training course that enhances his skills, making him more competitive in the job market.

In addition, Sachin's wife, Priya, who runs a small business, has benefited from the support extended to MSMEs. The credit guarantee scheme has enabled her to purchase new machinery, increasing her business's productivity and profitability. The Union Budget 2024-25 is a testament to the government's commitment to fostering inclusive growth and empowering the middle class.

By addressing key areas such as employment, skilling, MSMEs, housing, and infrastructure, the budget paves the way for sustained economic growth and prosperity. As the middle class continues to thrive, it will undoubtedly propel India towards becoming a global economic powerhouse, realizing the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' in 2047.

(The writer is Professor of Finance, XLRI Xavier School of Management and BJP Leader; views are personal)

The budget skips pressing issues



The Union Budget of the newly elected alliance government presented its first budget. Smt Nirmala Sitharaman as the Finance Minister of India presented her 7th budget, and a new record was made too. Considering a lot of promises were made to the people of India and lots of challenges they face - unemployment, price rise, stagnant income one would have hoped that BJP would, after its underperformance in the general election have learnt some lessons and course correct. However it was disappointing to see the same mistake of ignoring the Jann ki Baat, Madam Minister also like the Prime Minister delivered her Mann ki Baat speech. This was to be the Union Budget but now can easily be titled PradhanMantri Sarkar Bachao Yojana announcement where huge financial packages have been earmarked for states that are run by their alliance partners and whose crucial support they need for their government to run uninterrupted- JDU in Bihar and TDP in Andhra Pradesh. While a package worth 59000 crores was announced for Bihar, it was 15000 crores for Andhra Pradesh.

However, their demand for special status has so far not been addressed. Making specific politically motivated state budget allocations over other states' interests sets a wrong precedent for future governments to follow. These funds aren't addressing the requirements but rather addressing their political commitments. Alliance-run Maharashtra, a state that pays the highest taxes to the centre got no specific allocation from the PMSBY (PradhanMantri Sarkar Bachao Yojna) besides many opposition-run states.

It is a shame that the centre has blatantly disregarded the principle of equality but chosen to discriminate between states. Maharashtra seeks new airports, a GIFT city like dedicated business /smart city, highways and roads but all of this was ignored. The real BJP hate for Maharashtra stands exposed yet again. The opposition-led state has now made their displeasure over this discrimination obvious by choosing to boycott an upcoming

NITI Ayog meeting to be chaired by the Prime Minister. In the budget, the Finance Minister introduced an apprenticeship program for youth between 20-30 years of age and committed 1 crore internship programmes for youth in the top 500 companies of India. That would mean every company will have to absorb 20000 interns at Rs 5000/pm stipend earmarked from their CSR. This also means that graduates/postgraduates who are part of the record 9.2% unemployment rate and looking for meaningful employment will have to be content with this program, what it doesn't address is creating jobs or entrepreneurial opportunities for the highly skilled youth.

This is the corporate Agniveer programme not meant to address the elephant in the room which is unemployment but rather mock the plight of the youth. Similarly, FinMin spoke of women-led development but fell short of offering anything that would help address the gender pay gap, bring them more jobs, incentive savings through tax breaks or ease their burden of inflation in running family budgets. SAMBAL is an umbrella scheme that includes Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre, Nari Adalat, Mahila Police Volunteer, Women's Helpline etc. In 2020-21, when these schemes were separate, the BE for just four of those included under SAMBAL was ₹640 crores, which is more than what has been allocated in the BE for 24-25 (₹629 crores).

The Finance Minister and the entire government have been patting themselves on the back for maintaining fiscal prudence and keeping fiscal deficit under check but it is a classic case of operation successful but patient dead with Aam Janta not having enough savings, enough money to invest and consumption growth amongst its weakest ever.

The fact that private final consumption growth was just 4% in 2023-24 against the overall GDP growth rate of more than 8% shows this clearly. The Government has once again managed to turn a deaf ear to the plight of farm-

ers. If shutting down internet services and using tear gas shells to stop the farmers from protesting was not enough, the Union Budget has no mention of a legal guarantee on minimum support price (MSP) for farmers or any support for farm loans through waivers or lower interest rates. With billionaires continuing to have thousands of crore weddings and stamped-like situations occurring over jobs by unemployed youth, the Union Budget has missed out on addressing wealth inequality at large. While packages for youth employment have been introduced, the Budget does not address reducing the gap between the poorest and the richest sections of the population. Despite the economic survey pointing out the disparity in income with the top 10% accounting for one-third of the income, measures to uplift farmers, and labourers or increase wealth taxes are absent. The Finance Minister's announcement of the reduction of tax on long-term capital gains (LTCG) is a bane in disguise. While seemingly, the tax on LTCG has reduced from 20% to 12.5%, the indexation benefits have been eliminated.

This means that profits on sales of property, gold and other unlisted assets will not be adjusted to inflation and a higher amount would be taxable, thus effectively increasing the tax burden on investors, and making investments in property, gold and shares unprofitable. The PradhanMantri Sarkar Bachao Yojana caters to the BJP's essential allies.

The needs of the public, the opposition, and most states have been ignored. While ignoring the concerns of 90% of the nation is not new for this Government, it is disappointing to see it continue after the BJP's performance in the General Elections. One can, however, be hopeful that the increased representation and enthusiasm of the opposition members in Parliament can lead to fruitful deliberations and additions to the Union Budget this session.

(The writer is Rajya Sabha MP, Shiv Sena -Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray, views are personal)

ESG: The key to sustainable business in a post-pandemic world

Environmental, social, and governance considerations are crucial for sustainability in an era marked by environmental degradation

The interest in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations isn't merely a trend—it's a critical pivot towards sustainability in an era marked by environmental degradation and widening social gaps. At its core, ESG represents a comprehensive framework guiding businesses towards practices that not only ensure profitability but also address pressing global challenges.

As we advance in the post-pandemic landscape, collaboration and cooperation are more crucial than ever. For India, these priorities align with ambitious climate targets, a rapidly growing digital economy, and global trade aspirations. Amid climate change and environ



PIYUSH NIRANJANA

mental degradation, there is growing recognition that businesses play a vital role in promoting sustainable development. Last year, Business 20(B20) was one of the most prominent Engagement Groups in India's presidency of G20. It has become an increasingly important forum for private sector leaders to deliberate on subjects such as the adoption of ESG standards. One of the

B20 Action Councils has focused on encouraging the rapid and broad implementation of ESG principles among businesses of all sizes and economic contexts.

Their primary suggestions include creating universally applicable ESG standards and ensuring transparent, comprehensive, inclusive, and equitable disclosures across all regions. ESG goals are typically a set of operational standards that require companies to adhere to better governance, ethical practices, environmentally friendly measures, and social responsibility. It emphasizes non-financial factors as a metric for guiding investment decisions in a world where only financial returns are no longer the sole goal for investors or

employees. ESG enables businesses to have a long-term vision instead of a myopic vision. The horizon of ESG has evolved significantly over the years. It is more than simply checking a box on the compliance checklist. Accelerating a shift to cleaner energy carriers and other efficient technologies can improve global standards of life while also contributing to long-term decarbonization goals. For instance, ESG can align with traditional medicine to forge an environmental path by promoting the use of natural, organic, and sustainable resources in Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) practices, thus reducing the environmental footprint. To



promote greater adherence to ESG standards, businesses must be transparent about their practices and their impact on the environment and society. This can include initiatives such as reporting on greenhouse gas emissions, disclosing supply chain practices and engaging with stakeholders to address concerns about labour standards and human rights. The path to a universally embraced ESG

framework is fraught with challenges.

Diverse and sometimes conflicting definitions and standards set by various entities have led to inefficiencies in reporting and general sluggishness in adopting responsible practices on a global scale. The solution lies in harmonizing ESG frameworks for disclosure, reporting, and rating. Such a unified approach would streamline efforts, making it easier for companies of all sizes to participate in the global movement towards sustainability. Companies that address ESG risks tend to experience fewer disruptions, gain more trust, and achieve consistent financial results, adhering to a triple-bottom-line strategy that combines financial

returns with environmental and social norms.

Progressive ESG reporting standards, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and dialogue between businesses and civil society can address these challenges. Indian corporations are increasingly incorporating ESG considerations into their business decisions, with several asset management firms launching ESG funds. These ESG-indexed companies have outperformed non-ESG-indexed companies, as per data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE). [1] Investors in India are using novel tools to fund social and environmental initiatives. The Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation, which is also listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange, issued India's first

green bond (BSE). The Corporation raised ₹150 crores in capital to help fund the water treatment plant and tertiary sewage. According to a survey conducted by Singapore-based bank DBS and Bloomberg Media Studios, 92% of Indian SMEs said ESG measures are a high priority for their business, compared to 83% of SMEs across Asia.

The corporate world is aligning with climate science, with thousands of businesses adopting initiatives like the Science-Based Targets. (The writer is member Invest India, the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry; views are personal)

Centre reserves 10% vacancies in CAPF, Assam Rifles for ex-Agniveers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has decided to reserve 10 per cent of vacancies in the Central Armed Police Forces and Assam Rifles for ex-Agniveers, the Rajya Sabha was informed Wednesday. A provision has been made for relaxation in the upper age limit and exemption from the Physical Efficiency Test in the recruitment to the post of constable (general duty) and rifleman in the CAPFs and Assam Rifles for ex-Agniveers, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said in response to a written question. "The number of vacancies as of July 1, 2024, in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Assam Rifles (AR) is 84,106 against a total sanctioned strength of 10,45,751," he said. Rai said the ministry has

been taking and will continue to take earnest steps to fill up the vacancies expeditiously through the Union Public Service Commission, Staff Selection Commission and the forces concerned. "Time taken in the medical examination has been reduced to expedite the recruitment. Cut-off marks for shortlisting candidates for constable/GD has been lowered to get sufficient candidates (especially in categories where shortfalls have been observed)," he said. The minister said 67,345 people have been recruited between April 2023 and February 2024. "Further, 64,091 vacancies have been notified and are at different stages of recruitment. It is clear from the above, with insignificant effective vacancies compared to the size of the forces, the question of overtime doesn't arise," he said.

The minister said a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the SSC for the early recruitment for the post of constable. Besides, a nodal force each for recruitment in the rank of constable, sub-inspector, and assistant commandant (all general duties) has been nominated on a long-term basis for coordinating recruitment to general duty posts. To fill vacancies, the minister said, directions have been issued to all CAPFs and AR to undertake recruitment against vacant posts in non-general duty cadres in a 'time-bound manner', and timely conduct of Departmental Promotion Committee meetings for filling up of promotional vacancies.

In June 2022, the government rolled out the Agnipath recruitment scheme to bring down the age profile of the



three services.

The scheme provides for recruiting youths between the age bracket of 17-and-half

years and 21 for four years with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years.

The chiefs of the CISF, BSF and CRPF said last Thursday that 10 per cent of the posts of soldiers will be reserved in

their respective forces for ex-Agniveers in line with a decision of the Union home ministry. "The Union home ministry has taken an important decision regarding the recruitment of ex-Agniveers. Accordingly, the CISF is also preparing the process of the recruitment of ex-Agniveers," CISF DG Nina Singh had said.

The chief of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) said 10 per cent of jobs will be reserved for ex-Agniveers in all future appointments of constables. "In physical tests also, they will be given exemption along with the relaxation on the age. In the first year the age relaxation is for five five years and in the subsequent year, the age relaxation will be three years," she had told DD News.

"Ex-Agniveers will be able to take advantage of this and the CISF will ensure that. This

will be beneficial for the CISF too as the force will get trained and disciplined personnel," Singh had said.

CRPF Director General Anish Dayal Singh had said all arrangements have been made in his force to recruit former Agniveers.

"The recruitment rules have been accordingly amended. A reservation of 10 per cent has been made for ex-Agniveers. They will also get relaxation in age. The first batch will get five years of relaxation while it will be three years afterwards," he had said.

Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Daljit Singh Chaudhary said a quota has been fixed for ex-Agniveers in his force.

"We have amended the recruitment rules accordingly. The first batch will be given an age relaxation of five years. And, there will be no physical efficiency test for them," he had said.

SC to examine plea on right to be forgotten after acquittal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Removing judgements from public domain by court orders under the right to be forgotten after the acquittal of an accused in criminal cases will have "very serious ramifications", the Supreme Court observed on Wednesday. The top court, however, agreed to examine the knotty question of law as to whether an accused, after being absolved in a criminal case, can seek removal of the judgement from the public domain, including digital platforms, in exercise of their right to be forgotten. "How can a court order this? To say that the judgement, a public document, be pulled down will have very serious ramifications," said a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB

Pardiwala and Manoj Misra after taking note of the submissions of Ikanon Software Development Pvt Ltd, a Bengaluru-based legal website. The firm said the Madras High Court asked it to take down a judgment which revealed the identity of a person who was acquitted in a rape and cheating case. "Issue notice, and in the meantime, the directions of Madras High Court shall remain stayed," the bench ordered. The court said it will settle the law on the issue. The website, in its plea filed through lawyer Abiha Zaidi, said the high court decision "adversely impacts the freedom of speech and expression of the petitioner and the public at large, guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution as well as the



petitioner's freedom of trade, occupation and profession protected by Article 19(1)(g)." The counsel for the website said the high courts of Kerala and Gujarat have held that there was no right to be forgotten in such cases, while the Madras High Court in the present case took a contrary view. "There is a genuine question of law emerging from contradictory judgements from

different high courts," the lawyer said. The bench asked the counsel, appearing for the person who had moved the high court, "Assuming you are being acquitted, how can the high court ask him (the website) to pull down the judgement which is part of the public document...Once the judgement is delivered it is part of the public record". The bench said in some cases, the courts, on their own, redact names or mask the identities of people in sensitive cases. "Ordering the removal of an entire judgment was farfetched," the CJ said. The bench said such a precedent would lead to a situation where the litigants in commercial disputes may say that the judgements be removed as they may reveal financial information about the litigat-

ing parties. "Then people may say look my commercial secrets are involved, there is an arbitration case, pull down the judgement in the arbitration case, that will have very serious ramifications," it said. The bench said even a convicted person may come up with the plea, saying he or she has served the sentence. A nine-judge bench headed by then CJ J S Khehar had on August 24, 2017 declared the right to privacy a fundamental right under Article 21 (right to life and personal liberty) of the Constitution. It had also held that the right to privacy would include the right to be forgotten and the right to be left alone. The website said it has removed several sensitive judgements and cited examples of sexual offence cases

involving children as victim or accused. "It is submitted that the impugned judgement contravenes settled law established by this court in the case R Rajagopal vs. State of Tamil Nadu, wherein it was held that the right to privacy is intrinsic under Article 21 of the Constitution but does not extend to protecting an individual from publication of public records, such as court decisions," the plea said. The high court judgment adversely affected various fundamental rights of the citizens by limiting their "access to court records, curtailing its database and impeding its operations", the website said. The high court had directed the website to remove the judgment of April 30 from its legal database under the "right to be forgotten."

Mahayuti Govt wants to put me in jail, kill me, claims Jarange-Patil

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after a Pune court issued a Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW) against him in more a decade-old cheating case, Shivba Sanghatana leader and crusader for Maratha reservation Manoj Jarange-Patil on Wednesday charged that the BJP-led MahaYuti government had hatched a conspiracy to put him behind the bars and eliminate him in the jail. A Pune Magistrate A C Birajdar on Tuesday issued an NBW against Jarange-Patil and two of his associates Datta Bahir and Arjun Jadhav for allegedly flouting an agreement with a drama producer way back in 2013. Tuesday's was the second arrest warrant issued against Jarange-Patil. Jarange-Patil's grouse is that Pune's Kothrud police station was pursuing a 11-year-old case at the behest of the ruling BJP which, he said, was out to throw him behind the bars and bump him off there as it wanted to "silence" him ahead of the State Assembly polls to be held in October this year. In his interaction with the media, Jarange-Patil exhorted his supporters that in the event of him being jailed, they should make all-out efforts to "defeat" both the ruling MahaYuti and Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidates across Maharashtra in the forthcoming Assembly polls. Debunking Jarange-Patil's charge, Maharashtra's deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP distanced

state government from the case in which the Maratha reservation crusader has been issued NBW, saying it had role to play in it. Today was the second occasion in the last four days, when Jarange-Patil accused the BJP-led MahaYuti government of conspiring to "eliminate" him ahead of the State Assembly polls. Earlier on Sunday, Jarange-Patil had alleged that deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis was hatching a conspiracy to eliminate him by poisoning him through saline or in a police encounter. During his recent four-day-long fast undertaken to press for reservations to the Maratha community, Jarange-Patil had singled out Fadnavis for vicious criticism. "The state government wants me to die while I am on hunger strike. It is Fadnavis who is trying to eliminate me by poisoning me through saline or in a police encounter," Meanwhile, Jarange - Patil's lawyer Harshad Nimbalkar said that he had urged the court not to issue the warrant as he is busy with the Maratha agitation and on a hunger strike from July 20. He, however, gave an undertaking to the court that his client will come for the next hearing on August 2. The contention of Dhananjay Ghorpade, a drama producer from Pune, who has filed a cheating case against Jarange-Patil, claimed that in 2013, the latter had hired him for organising multiple shows of his stage drama, "Shambhuraje", in Jalna.

Maha proposes to fund laser show at Kargil Memorial

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan to attend the 25th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas in Ladakh on July 26, the Maharashtra government is seeking an approval of its proposal to fund a 'laser sound-&light show' at the iconic Kargil War Memorial (KWM) in Drass town in Kargil district. In the run-up to the silver jubilee celebrations of Kargil Vijay Diwas Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde has written a letter to Indian Army Lt. Gen. Hitesh Bhalla, expressing his government's desire to fully fund the new attraction there, estimated to cost around Rs. 3 crore. In his letter dated July 9, 2024, Shinde said that his government was committed to the promise it had made in October 2023 to the then Lt. Gen. Rashim Bali that it would



support the "laser sound-&light show" the KWM. However, in October 2023, the proposal had run into procedural hassles, resulting in the delay in the completion of the KWM "laser sound-&light show" project. Having cleared the funding for the project, the Eknath Shinde dispensation is awaiting a go-ahead from the BJP-led NDA government. Once it gets final clearance from the Centre as per the Indian Army recommendation, the MahaYuti

determination of the Indian soldiers who defended the region against Pakistan's insurgency, between May and July 1999. "The show will cover the examples of bravery and shining moments of our jawans as they re-captured from enemy control the strategic areas like Mushkoh Valley, Kaksar, Chorbat, Turtuk, plus the Tiger Hill, Tololing, Batra Top and other unnamed mountains plus the highways, during the two-month long 'Operation Vijay', as it was code-named," Nahar said. Shinde has said that he would visit the KWM laser sound-&light show once it becomes operational. On its part, the Maharashtra government had earlier given Rs 3 crore for the Trishul War Memorial in Leh and the proposed laser sound-&light show will be the second major contribution by the state.

government will hand a cheque for Rs 3 crore to the KWM authorities. Pune NGO Sarhad Founder-President Sanjay Nahar, who is pushing the KWM "laser sound-&light show" project, expressed confidence the Maharashtra government would make the project a reality in the 25th year of the Kargil War". The world-class 'laser sound-&light' show will be an indoor affair with a capacity of 500 getting glimpses of the valor plus

GNSS toll collection to make NH driving hassle-free

From Page 1

The minister also informed that at the beginning of the current financial year, under ongoing/awarded projects, the ministry had about 20,000 km national highways remaining for construction. Moreover, the ministry has a shelf of projects under DPR and tendering process, to further augment the construction progress during the current and next

fiscal years, he said. Gadkari also said that about Rs 1.94 crore has been incurred till date towards clearing of two bills related to the rescue and relief operations at Silkyara Tunnel in Uttarakhand. "A few bills have not been paid. Expenditure made on rescue and relief operations is on account of the engineering company," the minister said.

Jail, ₹10 lakh fine for paper leak: Bihar's new...

From Page 1

Service providers, a term used to describe agencies entrusted with conducting such tests, could be slapped with a fine of Rs one crore besides debarment of services for up to four years and even attachment of properties, Chaudhary told the House. A portion of the total cost of conducting such an examination will also be recovered from the offending service provider, the minister said. He also said the bill, "brought with the future of

lakhs of young men and women in mind", provided that investigating officers in such cases shall "not be below the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police". It may be recalled that the state has, of late, been in the news for the Bihar Public Service Commission's (BPSC) Teachers Recruitment Exam (TRE 3.0) paper leak case. The new legislation also comes in the backdrop of stringent anti-paper leak laws enacted by the Centre and states like Uttar Pradesh.

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After Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected notices under Rule 267 that called for the suspension of the listed agenda to take up the issue, Leader of Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Union Budget for the 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) fiscal year provided funds and schemes for only two states - Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. As Dhankhar gave Sitharaman the floor to respond, Kharge led the Opposition bloc out of the House, saying they were walking out in protest. The Finance Minister said she did not name many States either in the interim Budget presented in February ahead of the general election or in the full Budget tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, but that does not mean that government schemes are not working for the states. Sitharaman said she can go on to cite several other states that have got major projects.

IN BRIEF

AUG 15 DEADLINE FOR M TECH APPLICATION IN GRSP

Amritsar: M.Tech (Transport Planning) and M. Tech. (Urban & Regional Planning) Five Year Integrated Programme, are run in Guru Ramdas School of Planning, Guru Nanak Dev University, Prof. (Dr.) Ashwani Luthra, Head of the Department said that the candidates willing to take admission against these vacant seats are required to apply on the University website www.gnduadmissions.org. Last date to deposit the application fee and online application form is 15.8.2024. Counseling will be held on the basis of "First Come First Serve Basis" till 16.8.2024. Eligibility for admission to PG programme M. Tech. (Transport Planning) is Bachelor's Degree in Urban & Regional Planning/Architecture/Civil Engineering with at least 50% marks (45% for SC) in aggregate OR Master's Degree in Geography/Sociology/Economics with at least 50% marks (45% for SC) in aggregate or any other examination recognized equivalent thereto.

PSPCL'S HRD WING CONDUCTS TREE PLANTATION DRIVE

Patiala: The Human Resource Development (HRD) wing of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) conducted a successful tree plantation drive at the AE Hostel of Technical Training Institute (TTI) in Patiala today. The initiative, part of PSPCL's ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, saw the plantation of 255 trees, including shade, flowering, fruit, and ornamental varieties. Er R.S. Saini, Director Human Resources (HR), led the drive, accompanied by Er Inderjit Singh, CE/HRD, along with other officers and staff members. The event underscores PSPCL's dedication to greening initiatives, championed by Er Baldev S Sran, CMD, PSPCL.

EX-RTI COMMISSIONER VISITS GNDU LAW DEPARTMENT

Amritsar: Dr. Viney Kapoor Mehra, Former Head, Department of Laws, GNDU; Former RTI Commissioner and Former Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Law University, Haryana visited the Department of Law of Guru Nanak Dev University. Expert in Family Law, Dr Mehra delivered a lecture on 'The Nuances of Live in Relationship, Same Sex Couples and the changing Social Structure in the Society'. She advised the students to cling to their traditional roots and give a mark of caution for future generations. The session was very interactive and informative for the students.

DSU ENDS LEVEL-3 SPORTS TEST FOR ADMISSION

New Delhi: Delhi Sports University is pleased to announce the successful completion of Level-3 Testing for sports talent identification for admissions in Delhi Sports School for academic session 2024-25, conducted from July 16th to July 18th, 2024, across various venues in Delhi. The Level-3 Testing aimed to assess and identify promising sports talent across multiple disciplines. Prior to the event, all shortlisted students who were called for the Level-3 testing were promptly notified through circulars posted on the DSU/DSS website, emails, and contact was established on their registered mobile numbers. Admit cards were also sent to them on their registered mail id containing the schedule of the tests. Accommodation arrangements were made free of cost for students traveling from outside Delhi/NCR, ensuring

INDIA Bloc protests over...

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"This is a deliberate attempt of the Opposition parties, led by the Congress, to give an impression to people that 'oh, nothing has been given to our States, it has only been given to two States'. I would challenge the Congress party for all the Budget speeches they have delivered, that in each of the Budget speeches, have they named every State of the country?" she asked. "This is an outrageous allegation", which is "not acceptable", she added. As the MPs belonging to opposition parties returned to the House, the finance minister said the Trinamool Congress (TMC) had raised questions on Tuesday about nothing being given to West Bengal in the budget, but the fact is that several schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last 10 years have not been implemented in the state. Her statement was met with vociferous opposition from the TMC members, who said the BJP-led Centre owes Rs 1 lakh crore to West Bengal.

experience barring Deepika. Ankit Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur, who have been Indian regulars in this Olympic cycle and won a World Cup Stage-4 bronze here in 2023, are slated for their respective Games debut. They have together won the Asian Games bronze last year and will look to draw inspiration from that. Twenty-six-year-old Ankit, who hails from Bengal but

India's archers aim to strike Gold in Paris

From Page 1

At the Tokyo Olympics, all the male archers finished outside the top-30 and got the ninth seeding as a team. Deepika, the sole woman archer there, also got a ninth place in rankings. Both ended up losing to top-seed Koreans in their respective quarters. On form front, India will have high hopes from the men's team, which won a

historic World Cup this year in Shanghai, upsetting Korea for the first time in a final. They will have the experience in Rai and Tokyo Olympian Pravin Jadhav, while debutant Dhiraj Bommadevara will be on a high after beating Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist Mauro Nespoli of Italy en route a bronze at the World Cup Stage-3 in Antalya just a month back.

Individually, debutant Dhiraj is seen as a bright prospect as he has tasted success by winning the Asian Games team silver last year, albeit with different teammates. Known to be "ice cool" in tough situations, Dhiraj would look to overcome the bitter memories of Hangzhou Asian Games where he botched up his release twice to exit in the individual

quarters. Deepika will fight against herself in a redemption act. All eyes would be on her especially after her stunning comeback to win a World Cup Stage-1 silver in Shanghai in April this year, less than 16 months after becoming a mother. Last time in Tokyo, An San of Korea was her nemesis as she went on to become the gold-medallist.

There is no An this time, but they have another Korean in Lim Si-hyeon who has defeated Deepika twice this year including in the Shanghai World Cup final. "If she gets going, Deepika churns out perfect 10s at ease. But at the same time, she suffers from inconsistency and makes silly mistakes at crunch times. If she overcomes her mental blockade, there is no

stopping her," India's high performance director Sanjeeva Singh said. Dhiraj and Deepika, if they manage to top their ranking rounds, would be an exciting prospect for the recurve mixed team. Dhiraj's composure and Deepika's skills would complement each other well at the highest level. The women's team, on the other hand, will be low on

represents Tata Academy, is relatively more experienced having won a clutch of World Cup team medals including a gold and silver, both in Paris in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Controversial build-up The archers Olympic build-up was marred by their foreign coach Baek Woong Ki's return to India after not getting accreditation to enter the Games.

PILOT ONLY SURVIVOR OF NEPAL PLANE CRASH

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

A Nepalese private plane crashed and caught fire shortly after taking off from the Tribhuvan International Airport here on Wednesday, killing 18 people aboard, including a child, and seriously injuring the pilot - the only survivor.

The Bombardier CRJ-200 aircraft of Saurya Airlines, carrying 19 people, including two crew members and technical staff of the airline, was bound for Pokhara International Airport for regular maintenance service when the accident occurred at 11.11 am (local time).

"Shortly after takeoff from runway 02, the aircraft veered off to the right and crashed on the east side of the runway," said a statement issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

It said rescue operations were initiated immediately and fire was brought under control. "One injured person (Captain Manish Ratna Shakya) was rescued and taken to the hospital, and 18 people were found dead," it added.

The aviation authority identified one of the passengers as a child named Adhiraj Sharma, who was the son of Manu Raj Sharma, a technician of Saurya Airlines.

Sharma's wife Priza Khatiwada and their four-year old son Adhiraj died in the crash.

A statement issued by the airline said that Priza and her son were initially identified as



The injured pilot of the Saurya Airlines being rescued after the Pokhara bound aircraft crashed during takeoff at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), killing 18 of the 19 people on board, in Kathmandu on Wednesday. PTI

employees of the company, but it was later revealed that they were passengers.

Videos posted online showed the plane being enveloped in fire and smoke. Fire engines and ambulances were rushed to the spot after the incident.

The deceased were identified as co-pilot S Katuwal and employees of Saurya Airlines and a Yemeni national (Aref Reda). Pilot Captain Manish Shakya, 37, is undergoing treatment at Kathmandu Model Hospital. Of the deceased, 15 died on the spot while three died during treatment at a local hospital, authorities said.

Prime Minister KP Sharma

Oli and Home Minister Ramesh Lekh separately visited the accident site to gather details about the incident and provide necessary directives. Oli said he was deeply saddened by the tragic deaths in the crash and was at the site to inquire about the cause of the air crash with the Civil Aviation Authority's officials. He urged all for patience at this hour of grief. According to Tribhuvan International Airport chief Jagannath Niraula, the plane flying from Kathmandu to Pokhara turned in the wrong direction.

"As soon as it took off, it turned right instead of turning

left," Niraula was quoted as saying by the BBC News Nepali. However, "the cause of the accident has not been revealed yet," he said. The accident happened less than a minute after the plane took off, Niraula said. The aircraft "suffered a runway excursion and burst into massive flames immediately," the Search and Rescue Centre of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal earlier said. The aircraft, manufactured by the Canadian company Bombardier in April 2003, was the sixth of its kind purchased for use in Nepal, according to information from planesspotter.com.

US revises travel advisory for India 'Don't travel to Manipur, J&K, India-Pak border and Central & East India'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has asked its nationals not to travel to Manipur, Jammu and Kashmir, the India-Pakistan border, and parts of central and eastern parts of the country where Naxalites are active. In a revised travel advisory for India, the State Department said it has updated to reflect information on the northeastern states.

"Exercise increased caution in India due to crime and terrorism. Some areas have increased risk," it said.

Overall India has been placed at Level 2. But several parts of the country have been placed on Level 4: Jammu and Kashmir, India-Pak border, Manipur and parts of Central and East India.

"Do not travel to: The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir (except the eastern Ladakh region and its capital, Leh) due to terrorism and civil unrest; within 10 km of the India-Pakistan border due to the potential for armed conflict; portions of Central and East India due to terrorism and Manipur due to violence and crime," said the State Department.

In addition, it recommended Americans to reconsider travel to the northeastern states due to terrorism and violence.

"Indian authorities report that rape is one of the fastest growing crimes in India.

Violent crime, such as sexual assault, has happened at tourist sites and other locations. Terrorists may attack with little or no warning. They target tourist locations, transportation hubs, markets/shopping malls, and government facilities," the travel advisory said.

The US government has limited ability to provide emergency services to US citizens in rural areas. These areas stretch from eastern Maharashtra and northern Telangana through western West Bengal. The US government employees must get special authorization to travel to these areas, it said.

Placing Manipur at "Level 4: Do Not Travel", the State Department said: "Do not travel to Manipur due to the threat of violence and crime. Ongoing ethnic-based civil conflict has resulted in reports of extensive violence and community displacement. Attacks against Indian government targets occur on a regular basis. US government employees traveling in India require prior approval before visiting Manipur."

Similarly, terrorist attacks and violent civil unrest are possible in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. "Do not travel to this state (with the exception of visits to the eastern Ladakh region and its capital, Leh). Violence happens sporadically in this area and is common along the

Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan. It also occurs in tourist spots in the Kashmir Valley: Srinagar, Gulmarg, and Pahalgam. The Indian government does not allow foreign tourists to visit certain areas along the LOC," it said. "India and Pakistan have a strong military presence on both sides of the border. The only official border crossing for non-citizens of India or Pakistan is in Punjab. It is between Attari, India, and Wagah, Pakistan. The border crossing is usually open, but check its current status before you travel. To enter Pakistan, you need a Pakistani visa. Only US citizens residing in India may apply for a Pakistani visa in India. Otherwise, apply for a Pakistani visa in your home country before traveling to India," it said.

Maoist extremist groups, or "Naxalites", are active in a large area of India that spans from eastern Maharashtra and northern Telangana through western West Bengal, the advisory said.

Attacks against officers of the Indian government continue to occur sporadically in the rural parts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand that border Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Odisha. Southwest areas of

Odisha are also affected. The Naxalites have carried out many terrorist attacks, targeting local police, paramilitary forces, and government officials, it said.

"Due to the fluid nature of the threat, US government employees are required to obtain permission prior to traveling to most areas in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Meghalaya, and Odisha. Permission is not required if employees are traveling only to the capital cities of these states. US government employees also need approval to travel to the eastern region of Maharashtra and the eastern region of Madhya Pradesh," the advisory said.

In addition, Northeastern States has been given - Level 3: Reconsider Travel. "Ethnic insurgent groups occasionally commit acts of violence in parts of the northeast. These incidents include bombings of buses, trains, rail lines, and markets. There have been no recent reports of violence in Assam, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Sikkim, or Tripura," it said.

"US government employees traveling in India require prior approval before visiting the states of Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh, as well as when visiting any areas outside of the capital cities of Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Tripura," it said.

Kamala Harris hits out at Donald Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US Vice-President Kamala Harris has hit out at her Republican rival Donald Trump in the first rally of her presidential campaign, portraying the election as a choice for the American people between a former prosecutor and a convicted felon.

Harris told supporters in the battleground state of Wisconsin on Tuesday that she will spend the coming weeks to unite the party ahead of the Democratic National Convention next month and her showdown with former president Trump in the November 5 presidential election. Speaking about her record as tough a prosecutor in California, Harris, 59, said she "took on perpetrators of all kinds: Predators who abused women; fraudsters who ripped off consumers; cheaters who broke the rules for their own

gain." "So hear me when I say, I know Donald Trump's type," Harris said, a day after she secured the support of a majority of Democratic delegates, paving the way for her to become the party's presidential nominee.

Trump, 78, became the first former president to be convicted of a crime when a New York jury found him guilty in May of 34 felony counts involving hush money payments to a former porn star with whom he allegedly had an extramarital affair. "In this campaign, I promise you, I will proudly put my record against his any day of the week," Harris, the daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, said. President Joe Biden, 81, announced on Sunday that he was withdrawing from the race and endorsed Harris as the Democratic Party's nominee, amid mounting pressure from



top Democrats and donors following his disastrous debate against Trump last month. Harris noted that less than two days after Biden exited the race and endorsed his vice president, she had amassed enough support from the delegates to become the party's presumptive nominee. She also nodded at the critical role Wisconsin will play in the race for 270 electoral college votes. "The path to the White House goes through Wisconsin. And to win in

Wisconsin, we are counting on you, right here in Milwaukee. And you helped us win in 2020. And in 2024, we will win again," she said.

Political fundraisers are saying that they have seen a breathtaking financial turnaround for Democrats since Biden's withdrawal effectively ended a donor blockade in the aftermath of his poor debate performance last month.

Harris' campaign said it had collected a staggering USD 100 million between Sunday and Monday evening across all its fundraising committees - far surpassing the USD 53 million that Trump's political operation touted raising after his May conviction in a Manhattan business fraud case. More than 1.1 million donors have contributed - with 62 per cent of them first-time givers this cycle, Harris' campaign said.

Trump rally gunman searched info on Kennedy assassination: FBI director

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The gunman in the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump is believed to have done a Google search one week before the shooting of "How far away was Oswald from Kennedy?" FBI Director Christopher Wray said Wednesday, revealing new details about a suspect he said had taken a keen interest in public figures but had otherwise not left behind clear clues of an ideological motive.

The search, recovered from a laptop tied to 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, is a reference to Lee Harvey Oswald, the shooter who killed President John F. Kennedy from a sniper's perch in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

The revelation to the House Judiciary Committee was part of

a collection of new details offered by Wray about the July 13 shooting at a Trump rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. The FBI's investigation has thrust the bureau into a political maelstrom months before the presidential election, with lawmakers and the public pressing for details about what may have motivated Crooks in the most serious attempt to assassinate a president or presidential candidate since President Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981. The FBI has built out a detailed timeline of Crooks' movements and online activity, but the precise motive - or why Trump was singled out - remains elusive, Wray said.

"A lot of the usual repositories of information have not yielded, anything notable in terms of motive or ideology," Wray said. He did note that Crooks had

grown interested in public officials - besides Trump, Crooks also had photos on his phone of Democratic President Joe Biden and other prominent figures - and in the days before the shooting had appeared particularly consumed by Trump, the Republicans' White House nominee.

Wray also said that Crooks, about two hours before the shooting, had flown a drone about 200 yards (180 meters) from the rally stage where Trump would later stand and that Crooks used the device to livestream and watch footage. The use of the drone so close to the rally site just hours before Trump took the stage for the rally added to the questions about the security lapses preceding the event. Wray pledged to lawmakers that the FBI would "leave no stone

unturned" in its investigation. "I have been saying for some time now that we are living in an elevated threat environment, and tragically the Butler County assassination attempt is another example - a particularly heinous and public one - of what I've been talking about," Wray said. The hearing had been scheduled well before the shooting, as part of the committee's routine oversight of the FBI and the Justice Department. Questions about the shooting dominated the session.

Despite being appointed by Trump, Wray typically faces antagonistic questions from the Republican-led panel, a reflection of lingering discontent over the FBI's investigation into potential ties between Russia and the 2016 campaign, when Trump defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Starmer faces first House of Commons grilling from lawmakers

AP ■ LONDON

Newly elected British leader Keir Starmer faces a House of Commons milestone on Wednesday, fielding lawmakers' queries at the boisterous weekly Prime Minister's Questions session.

It's the first such session since Starmer's Labour Party won a landslide election victory on July 4, returning to power after 14 years. The centre-left party won 412 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons. Starmer is more accustomed to asking the questions after spending four years as leader of the opposition to a Conservative government. Former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak now fills



that role as leader of the defeated Conservative Party.

Labour won a landslide election victory on July 4 on a

promise to get the UK's sluggish economy growing, unleash a wave of housebuilding and green energy projects and patch the country's frayed public services.

Labour's large majority means Starmer should easily be able to pass legislation. But he has already had to quell a rebellion, suspending seven Labour lawmakers for voting against the party over social welfare.

The government is under pressure from anti-poverty groups and many Labour lawmakers to scrap a policy introduced by the Conservatives that limits a widely paid welfare benefit and tax credit to a family's first two children. The new government says it can't afford to

immediately abolish the two-child cap. On Tuesday night, seven Labour lawmakers on the left of the party sided with an opposition call to scrap the limit. The party said the seven, who include former deputy leader John McDonnell, had been suspended from Labour's parliamentary caucus for at least six months. They will remain lawmakers, but will sit as independents.

Zarah Sultana, one of the suspended legislators, said she had "slept well knowing that I took a stand against child poverty that is affecting 4.3 million people in this country." "It is the right thing to do and I am glad I did it," she told broadcaster ITV.

Man who attacked Salman Rushdie charged with supporting terror group

AP ■ BUFFALO

A man who severely injured author Salman Rushdie in a frenzied knife attack in western New York faces a new charge that he supported a terrorist group.

An indictment unsealed in US District Court in Buffalo on Wednesday charges Hadi Matar with providing material support to Hezbollah, a militant group based in Lebanon and backed by Iran. The indictment didn't detail what evidence linked Matar to the group.

The federal charge comes after Matar earlier this month rejected an offer by state prosecutors to recommend a shorter prison sentence if he agreed to plead guilty in Chautauqua County Court, where he is charged with attempted murder and assault. The agreement also would have required him to plead guilty to a federal terrorism-related charge, which hadn't been filed yet at the time. Instead, both cases will now proceed to trial separately. Jury selection in the state case is set for Oct. 15. Matar's lawyer, Nathaniel

Barone, didn't immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Matar, 26, has been held without bail since the 2022 attack, during which he stabbed Rushdie more than a dozen times as the acclaimed writer was onstage about to give a lecture at the Chautauqua Institution. Knife wounds blinded Rushdie in one eye. The event moderator, Henry Reese, was also wounded.

Rushdie detailed the attack and his long and painful recovery in a memoir published in April.

Chinese scientists find traces of water in lunar soil brought by Chang'e-5 mission

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese scientists studying the soil samples of the moon brought by Chang'e-5 mission found water molecules in lunar soil, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The research - carried out jointly by researchers from the Beijing National Laboratory for Condensed Matter Physics and the Institute of Physics of CAS and other domestic research institutions - was published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Astronomy on July 16, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. Based on lunar soil samples returned by Chang'e-5 mission in

2020, Chinese scientists have found a hydrated mineral "enriched" with molecular water, CAS said on Tuesday. In 2009, India's Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft detected signs of hydrated minerals in the form of oxygen and hydrogen molecules in sunlit areas of the moon. Among its suite of instruments, it carried NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3), an imaging spectrometer that helped confirm the discovery of water locked in minerals on the Moon.

In 2020, Nasa announced the discovery of water on the sunlit surface of the moon based on data from the airborne Stratospheric Observatory for

Infrared Astronomy, which detected water molecules in the Clavius crater, one of the largest craters visible from Earth, in the moon's southern hemisphere. But the lack of returned lunar samples from high latitude and polar regions means that "neither the origin nor the actual chemical form of lunar hydrogen has been determined," according to the Nature article.

The Chinese scientists studying the lunar soil isolated more than 1,000 mineral "clasts". The researchers said that among them was a platelike transparent crystal, dubbed "unknown lunar mineral" (ULM-1), that contained water molecules, the Post reported.

The researchers ruled out the possibility that the water-bearing mineral was contaminated by terrestrial sources or rocket exhaust.

But one geochemist said he expected the team to find more evidence in their further study. "If this water-bearing mineral is present in the lunar samples, more than one piece should be found," said the scientist who asked not to be named and was not associated with the study. The lack of returned lunar samples from high latitude and polar regions means that "neither the origin nor the actual chemical form of lunar hydrogen has been determined," according to the Nature article.

Crowdstrike blames bug for letting bad data slip through

AP ■ WA

Crowdstrike is blaming a bug in an update that allowed its cybersecurity systems to push bad data out to millions of customer computers, setting off last week's global tech outage that grounded flights, took TV broadcasts off air and disrupted banks, hospitals and retailers. Crowdstrike also outlined measures it would take to prevent the problem from recurring, including staggering the rollout of updates, giving customers more control over when and where they occur, and providing more details about the updates that it plans.



The company on Wednesday posted details online from its "preliminary post incident review" of the outage, which caused chaos for the many businesses that pay for the cybersecurity firm's software services. The problem involved an "undetected error" in the

content configuration update for its Falcon platform affecting Windows machines, the Texas company said. A bug in the content validation system allowed "problematic content data" to be deployed to Crowdstrike's customers. That triggered an "unexpected exception" that caused a Windows operating system crash, the company said. As part of the new prevention measures, Crowdstrike said it's also beefing up internal testing as well as putting in place "a new check" to stop "this type of problematic content" from being deployed again. Crowdstrike has said a "signif-

icant number" of the approximately 8.5 million computers that crashed on Friday, causing global disruptions, are back in operation as customers and regulators await a more detailed explanation of what went wrong. Once its investigation is complete, Crowdstrike said that it will publicly release its full analysis of the meltdown. The outage caused days of widespread technological havoc, highlighted how much of the world depends on a few key providers of computing services and drawn the attention of regulators who want more details on what went wrong.

Stock markets fall for 4th day on selling in banking shares, STT hike

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex declined for the fourth day in a row on Wednesday due to selling in financial and banking shares and the government's move to hike securities transaction tax and short term capital gains tax. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 280.16 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 80,148.88 with 19 of its components closing lower and 11 with gains. During the day, it tumbled 678.53 points or 0.84 per cent to 79,750.51. The NSE Nifty dropped 65.55 points or 0.27 per cent to 24,413.50. From the Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv declined by 2 per cent after its first-quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Adani Ports, Axis Bank and State Bank of India were the other big laggards. However, Tech Mahindra, ITC, NTPC, Tata Motors and Sun Pharma were among the gainers.



Conglomerate ITC surged to 52-week highs before closing higher by 0.42 per cent in its second straight day of gains after the budget proposed no new tax on tobacco products. "The budget event has gone by leaving a mixed bias while reshuffling of capital gain tax is only a short-term negative surprise. The broad market seems to be losing momentum due to lack of further traction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Key benchmark indices ended marginally lower in volatile trade on Tuesday as

the government proposed to hike the securities transaction tax on futures & options in the Budget for 2024-25. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended marginally lower on Tuesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,975.31 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 0.75 per cent to USD 81.62 a barrel.

Abolition of Angel tax will boost startup ecosystem, says CBDT chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The abolition of Angel tax for all classes of investors will act to "prompt" innovators and venture capitalists to better invest in startups and any instances of money laundering here will be taken care of by the existing legal mechanism, CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal said on Wednesday. He said the removal of this tax will act to boost the startup ecosystem in India. He would urge the community to "please come forward, please invest as the country is waiting for your investment, initiatives and innovations", Agrawal told PTI in a post-Budget interview. Asked how would a possible case of money laundering through investor funds be tackled after the removal of the Angel tax, he said if such a violation is found or it is detected that the fund has come through "undisclosed" sources, there are provisions

in the respective statute and that will be taken care of. The head of the direct taxes administration of the country responded in the affirmative when asked if the taxman would make a reference to its sister agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) if a violation of the anti-money laundering law is noticed. "This (money laundering) issue is one. The intention, always, was never to dissuade the startups. It was never to put any stop on the investments... We in coordination with the DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) had actually provided relaxations insofar as the investments are concerned..." Agrawal said. This (removal of Angel tax) step of the government would actually prompt the startups and also the angel investors to invest in these initiatives and that will help the country, he said.

Rupee falls 1 paisa to revisit all-time low of 83.70 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 1 paisa to revisit its all-time closing low of 83.70 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by a strong dollar against major crosses overseas amid investors' weak appetite for riskier assets. Forex traders said the increase in capital gains tax and removal of indexation benefits announced in the FY25 Budget on Tuesday was the main reason for dollar buying by foreign investors sold stocks. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.69 and touched an intra-day high of 83.68 and a low of 83.72 against the dollar during the session. It finally settled at an all-time low level of 83.70 (provisional) against the American currency, registering a fall of 1 paisa from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee declined 3 paise to 83.69 against the US dollar after the government raised tax rates on capital gains in the FY25



Budget. Forex traders said US dollar buying continued to be the theme after the increase in long-term capital gains tax (LTCG) and short-term capital gains tax (STCG) and then the removal of indexation benefits. The government on Tuesday proposed reducing the long-term capital gains tax on immovable properties to 12.5 per cent from 20 per cent but removed the indexation benefits to adjust for inflation, a move experts termed as "negative" for sellers. As per the memorandum to the Union Budget, with rationalisation of rate to 12.5 per cent, indexation available under section 48 of the Income Tax Act is proposed to be removed for calculation of any long-term capital gains,

which is presently available for property, gold and other unlisted assets. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.05 per cent at 104.50. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading higher by 0.79 per cent at USD 81.65 per barrel. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 280.16 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 80,148.88 points, and Nifty dropped 65.55 points or 0.27 per cent to 24,413.50 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,975.31 crore, according to exchange data.

Budget proposals lay ground for long-term reforms: NITI Aayog VC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NITI Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery on Wednesday said the review of the direct tax and the custom's duty rates as announced by the Finance Minister in her Budget speech will prepare the ground for long term reforms. Bery further said that the Budget for 2024-25 was a structural budget, which will help in improving labour productivity by building a relationship between the workforce and the private sector. "The Budget (2024-25) proposals provide a roadmap for review of direct taxes, customs duty rates meant to be done in the six months... Will prepare the ground for longer term reforms," he told PTI in an interview. The government on Tuesday announced that it will undertake a comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act to make it easy to read. Presenting the Union Budget for 2024-25, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said



the government will come out with SoP (Standard Operating Procedure) for TDS defaults and simplify and rationalise the compounding of such offences. "I am now announcing a comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act, 1961. The purpose is to make the Act concise, lucid, easy to read and understand. This will reduce disputes and litigation, thereby providing tax certainty to the tax payers. It will also bring down the demand embroiled in litigation. It is proposed to be completed in six months," Sitharaman has said. She has also said that in Budget 2022-23, the government reduced the number of customs duty

rates. "I propose to undertake a comprehensive review of the rate structure over the next six months to rationalise and simplify it for ease of trade, removal of duty inversion and reduction of disputes," Sitharaman has added. Bery noted that fiscal consolidation is being maintained and improved in this year's budget which is important. According to him, the Budget proposals provide long term vision and it is the first step towards Vikshit Bharat. Responding to a question on economic growth, Bery said it is easiest for India to increase its growth rate by increasing labour productivity and increasing the number of people who work. "India has been doing well, but it can do better, should do better, and needs to do better," he said. According to Bery, a big push is given in this year's Budget for the MSMEs who survived COVID pandemic shocks, Bery said. Asked whether the Budget proposals will promote

private consumption and private investments, he said private consumption has been primarily affected in the rural areas. "So I think a lot depends on this year's monsoon," Bery opined. He pointed out that the whole point about adjusting the tax slab and raising the deduction on income tax is to provide a bit more money for consumption. "If the government's efforts in fiscal consolidation and inflation control succeed then the interest rate will come down, and if interest rates come down, then that will help in increasing consumption of consumer durables, many of which are financed on EMI," Bery explained. Pointing out that private investment depends pretty much on the business environment, he said that the finance minister has come out with proposals in the Budget document to improve the ease of doing business, which is of course affected by the state government's action as well as federal government action.

Cut in customs duty, credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs to help boost exports: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Budget announcements such as cut in customs duties on range of goods, credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs and setting up of e-commerce hubs will help boost domestic manufacturing and exports, experts said. They said reducing customs duty on goods like spandex, leather and marine goods will help industry to be self-reliant. Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC) Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said the garment industry hails expanding the list of trims and embellishment under IGCR (import of goods at concessional rates), which will help increase shipments of ready-made garments. "The enhancement of limit under credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs in the manufacturing sector, grant of one month wage to new entrants in all formal sectors up to Rs 15,000, EPFO contributions for new manufacturing employees for four years, and upgrading the industrial training institutes will help the garment industry scale up



and be future ready," Sekhri said. Council for Leather Exports (CLE) Chairman Rajendra Kumar Jalan said rationalisation of export duties and inclusion of more inputs, including wet blue chrome tanned leather, wet white leather, crust leather and finished leather under a duty-free scheme will help create more jobs and increase shipments. "On the export duty front, the export duty on wet blue and crust leather has been brought down from 40 per cent to 20 per cent. This will facilitate export of value-added processed leathers from the country, as there is a huge demand for these leathers in the global market," Jalan said.

He hoped that the government will remove this export duty for crust leathers so as to achieve the objective of enhancing the export of value added leathers by USD 1 billion in the next 2-3 years. Hi-Tech Gears Ltd Chairman Deep Kapuria said the Budget has not made any major changes in the existing import duty rates barring very few sectors. "This is a message to the large global companies who always prefer a low and predictable import tariff regime for their seamless operation of cross-border production network," Kapuria said, adding that elimination and cut in the import duty on 25 critical minerals, along with capital goods for manufacturing of solar cells and panels will give a big boost to not only renewable energy sector but many high-tech strategic sectors such as defense, electronics, space. Chemical & Petrochemical Manufacturers' Association President Kamal Nanavaty said the Critical Mineral Mission will facilitate domestic production, recycling of critical minerals, and overseas acquisition of

critical mineral assets. "While thrust would be on developing domestic production capacity of critical minerals, but parallelly the Budget proposes to fully exempt customs duties on 25 critical minerals and reduce basic customs duty on two of them," Nanavaty said. Startup firm WOCE (World of Circular Economy) Director Anup Garg said the abolition of the angel tax for all classes of investors is a welcome move that will certainly spur investments in startups, especially those with a vision for environmental sustainability. "Most investors now wisely invest in forward-thinking companies, particularly those that consider the environment and human well-being," Garg said. Saroj Kumar Mahapatra, Executive Director, PRADAN, said the Budget marks a significant step forward in agricultural development. "By prioritising agricultural research focused on climate-resilient crop varieties, it aims to bolster future food security and mitigate inflation risks," Mahapatra said.

Investors base of REITs likely to rise with changes in LTCG rules: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government's decision to reduce the holding period for determining long-term capital gains for REITs to 12 months would help in broadening the investor base of this financial instrument, according to industry experts. According to the Union Budget document, the government has reduced the holding period for determining long-term capital gains for business trusts -- Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) -- from 36 months to 12 months. "Thus units of listed business trust will now be at par with listed equity shares at 12 months instead of earlier 36 months," the document noted. A REIT is made up of a portfolio of commercial real estate assets, the majority of which are already leased out. Commenting on the move, Ramesh Nair, CEO of Mindspace REIT, said this would enhance liquidity, boost transaction volume, and increase investments, making REITs a more attractive asset class compared to other long-term investments. "It will appeal to investors seeking quicker returns and attracts short-term investors who may have previously been deterred. This is expected to attract a broader investor base eventually leading to more diversified



and robust investment portfolios, ultimately driving growth in the commercial real estate market," Nair said. Aravind Maiya, CEO of Embassy REIT, welcomed the move that the LTCG (long term capital gain) regime for REITs matches that of listed equities. "Embassy REIT's unitholder register has over 1 lakh holders, a 25x increase since our IPO. The reduction of the LTCG period from three years to one illustrates the commitment of our regulators to growing this critical asset class," Maiya said. Indian REITs Association, which has been formed by four listed REITs, hailed the decision to reduce the holding period for determining long-term capital gains for business units. "This change addresses a long-standing industry request and enhances liquidity in Indian REITs,

making them more effective investment instruments. Previously, investors were required to hold units of business trusts for 36 months to qualify for the long-term capital gains tax rate. "This extended holding period often acted as a barrier to investment flexibility and liquidity, particularly in the real estate sector," the association said. "By shortening the holding period to just 12 months, the Union Budget fosters a more agile investment environment," it added. The Indian REITs Association, a non-profit group formed under the guidance of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and the Ministry of Finance, has four founding members -- Brookfield India Real Estate Trust, Embassy Office Parks REIT, Mindspace Business Parks REIT, and Nexus Select Trust.

Indo-Bangla trade resumes after two days of shutdown

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Trade between India and Bangladesh, which was stalled for the last two days due to the violence in the neighbouring country, resumed on Wednesday. Trade to all major land ports in West Bengal, including Petrapole, Gojadanga, Fulbari, and Mahadipur, resumed after Bangladeshi Customs resumed work and the restoration of the internet link, an export body official said. "Trade has resumed from the Petrapole border since this morning after the Benapole side reopened to receive cargo," Kamlesh Saini, manager of the Land Port Authority of India (Petrapole), told PTI. Petrapole, located in Bongaon in the North 24 Parganas district, serves as South Asia's largest land port and plays a crucial role in facilitating trade between India and Bangladesh. "Benapole border has resumed functioning. Altogether 220 trucks entered Bangladesh from Petrapole while 27 trucks reached Bangladesh today," said Sajedur Rahman, general secretary of the Benapole C&F Staff Association. "Trade has resumed after the

Bangladesh customs department began functioning and internet services were restored. Though the flow is slow due to congestion, it will get normalised over the next few days as there is a huge backlog," West Bengal Exporters' Coordination Committee Secretary Ujjal Saha said. Bilateral trade had stalled after Bangladesh customs went on a two-day nationwide holiday due to student protests over the job quota issue and general unrest in the neighbouring country. On average, 400-450 trucks with goods cross the Petrapole land port from India, while 150-200 trucks come to India from Bangladesh every day, officials said. Till Monday, 800 trucks were stranded. Officials said it would take some more time for cargo flow to return to normal. They said priority was given to perishable cargo as the shutdown in Bangladesh has resulted in a spike in the price of essential commodities. Saini said passenger flow continues from the Bangladesh side, with a significant number being students.

Budget employment-centric, pro-agriculture, says SJM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch on Wednesday termed the Union Budget as employment-centric, pro-agriculture and pro-business, especially MSMEs, and urged the government to adopt more measures to promote entrepreneurship. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for fiscal 2024-25 in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, outlining nine priorities of the government which included productivity, jobs, social justice, urban development, energy security, infrastructure, innovation and reforms. "The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch appreciates the budget proposals as they are employment-centric, pro-agriculture, pro-business, especially MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises)," the organisation's co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said in a statement. However, Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) expects from the government that "more measures be adopted for the promotion of entrepreneurship in the country," he added. SJM is an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) ideological fountainhead. Noting that the budget offers an "innovative comprehensive internship opportunity" in 500 top



companies to develop skill sets for educated youth and make them employable, SJM said if the scheme is implemented properly, this can prove to be a watershed moment for our younger generation. "This can help 1 crore youth to skill themselves for future job opportunities in the next five years," it added. Apart from this, SJM said, a good number of schemes have been announced in the budget to incentivise the creation of jobs in the private sector, including support to businesses for EPFO contribution and also providing first salary to first-time employed from the government's kitty. "The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch congratulates the central government, especially the finance minister, for innovative schemes announced in the budget for promoting job creation and also self-employment," Mahajan said. SJM also appreciated the

increase in the capital expenditure and "encouragement" given in the budget to increase private investment. Increasing the cap for Mudra loans from Rs 10 lakh to 20 lakh is also a step in the right direction, it said. "Introduction of a credit guarantee scheme for MSME, credit support to MSME during the stress period, e-commerce export hubs for MSME, development of investment-ready plug and play industrial parks, rental housing for industrial workers etc. Are some of the good measures adopted for development of MSMEs," the SJM said. Scheme for street vendors is yet another step towards inclusive growth, it added. The SJM said that the budget's push to infrastructure both by way of public capital expenditure and also private investment can go a long way towards much-desired infrastructure development. Encouragement in renewable, especially solar energy, is also an "appreciable programme," it added. The RSS affiliate said budgetary proposals made to encourage natural farming and provide support to the farmers in crop diversification can help improve the farmer's welfare. "Reforms and strengthening debt recovery tribunals, steps towards speeding up insolvency resolution are also welcome steps," it added.

Neeraj's advice boosting high jumper Kushare's confidence in Paris

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Just focus on training and don't get scared by the fame of the opponents' is the mantra Paris Games-bound high jumper Sarvesh Kushare learnt from none other than Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra. Kushare said Chopra's advice has boosted his confidence as at one point in time this year, he was not even sure of making the Paris Games cut. He made it to the Olympics through world ranking quota. The Paris Games automatic qualification mark was 2.33m. From doing practice on fodder-made makeshift mat to becoming the first Indian high jumper to qualify for the Olympics, Kushare has come a long way. "I have not met Neeraj bhai for a long time, but when we met last time, he told me to focus on training and not be afraid of the fame of the opponents. He always keeps giving important tips," Kushare told PTI Bhasha in an interview from Poland where he is training along with other Paris-bound Indian athletes. "He (Chopra) is my idol and he gave us confidence by winning the first ever Olympic medal in athletics. We also want to be like him and bring pride to the country," said the high jumper, who hails from

Deogaon village, a few kilometres from Nashik in Maharashtra. With a personal best of 2.27m and season's best of 2.25m, making it to the final round in the Paris Games can be a realistic target. The 29-year-old, who is making his Olympic debut, though, claimed that he has been jumping over 2.30m mark frequently during practice. "It is only my height that is small but I am also very strong from within. There is no fear of seeing my opponent's personality. It is important to be in top form at the right time and have faith in your preparation," Kushare, who stands at 5 feet 9 inches, said. "Right now the focus is on the qualification round which will be held on August 7 at 10 am. The first goal is to make it to the finals. I will plan for the rest later." Kushare, who is currently training at Spala, Poland, along with other Olympic-bound Indian athletes, started the sport on a makeshift mat made of waste from corn which was used as fodder for cows. "There was no high jump mat in our village, so the corn fodder collected for the cow was used as a mat with a foam cover on it. It was used as a landing area and we used to do practice on it," he recollected.



I started playing under the guidance of my school's PT teacher R W Jadhav sir. Then I went to the Army Sports Institute and also got support from Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ) which sent me to

America for training." He became a father nine months ago but he will be able to see his newborn daughter only after the Olympics. "I have a nine-month-old daughter but I have not met

her since November. Initially, I stayed with her for just five days and now I will meet her only after the Olympics," he said. It will, however, be a tough task for Kushare to be in the

medal bracket in Paris. At least nine athletes have jumped 2.33m or above in the last one year. Qatar's Mutaz Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy shared the gold medal in

Tokyo with an identical jump of 2.37m. Tamberi is the leading the chart this season with 2.37m while Barshim has been struggling a bit with a season best of 2.31m. At one point in time, Kushare,

who won gold with a jump of 2.25m in the National Inter-State Championship in Panchkula in June, was uncertain whether he would qualify for the Paris Olympics or not. "Before June, my ranking had gone down to 36 because I could not play in May when competitions were going on all over the world. I was afraid whether I would be able to play in the Olympics or not. I was under a lot of pressure but then I qualified by performing consistently well in Malaysia, Kazakhstan and Panchkula," he said. "I had a lot of problems due to an ankle injury but now my confidence has increased by practising well consistently. Talking about his daily training routine at Spala, he said, "Practice includes gym, speed work, strength training. The recovery sessions here are very good. We just rest in our free time because it is very important to give rest to the body." He said when asked about his routine. "I talk to a sports psychologist regularly for mental preparation. He tells me how to deal with pressure and how to keep myself mentally fresh. I do yoga and meditation every morning." The Indian athletics team has been training at Spala from July 8 and will leave for Paris on July 29.

Women's boxing fights its way to parity with men's game Just 12 years after its Olympic debut

AP ■ COLORADO (USA)

Charley Davison's husband and their three young children were already in bed back home on the east coast of England before she pulled on her headgear and stepped into the World Boxing ring in southern Colorado earlier this year. The 30-year-old Davison was able to pursue her Olympic dreams half a world away from her family only because of the spectacular growth of women's boxing. In just over a decade, the sport has proliferated from its Olympic debut with only 36 fighters in three weight classes in London to become an equal part of the tournament in Paris, where half of the 248-fighter field will be women competing in a record six weight classes. The addition of a 54-kilogram bantamweight division at the Paris Olympics changed the game for fighters like Davison. "After the Tokyo Olympics, if there wasn't going to be a 54 (division), I would have hung my gloves up," said Davison, a former youth champion who left boxing for seven years before returning to get in shape after having kids. "Because 51 (kilos) was getting too hard, and 57, I'm not quite big enough for that one, I feel," she added. "So 54 was a blessing. As soon as I heard that weight, I knew it was for me. Every kilo makes a difference. I know I'm not the only one who's grateful. I think it's ideal for a lot of women to have this many weight classes. It makes such a difference for the sport." Davison fought for Britain in Tokyo, but lost early. Three years later, she has the opportunity to try again only because of the IOC's commitment to the sport's growth. Boxing essentially has reached gender parity along with the rest of the Olympic



program, and dozens more women are getting a shot. "Since I've started, especially on the international level, the level (of women's boxing) has raised incredibly," said Canada's Tammara Thibault, the middleweight world champion and an Olympic quarterfinalist in Tokyo headed to her second Games. "That makes us all better, because we elevate each other. That's how a sport grows, and we're really growing right now." Women's boxing entranced athletes like Australia's Tiana Echegaray, who had never boxed just five years ago. She was 25 and working at a boring office job in the music business in Sydney when she threw herself into training - and now she's an Olympian. "I think maybe the creative side of me saw boxing as an art," said Echegaray, who studied music. "It's really pretty, you know? When you see really skilled boxers compete, it's the prettiest thing I've ever seen. It's so cool to watch. "It's not just the sport itself, but the community around the sport," she added. "It's the people. Boxing teaches you so much about life. I'm so grateful that I found it now. I think I would have loved to have found it younger, but I don't think I would have had the emotional maturity to get

punched in the face and be all right with it." Britain's Chantelle Reid was a teenage pugilism prodigy who returned this year after a lengthy break. She was bowled over by the sport's growth in her absence. "The level in women's boxing has increased massively in the six years" since her return, Reid said. "There's so much talent out there now. It just makes me push a little bit harder to be on top. It's exciting. ... Sport science has come into the sport a lot, and everyone is just much more strong. They've all got that grit, whereas before it was more point-fighting boxing. No one really had that grit, but I'm seeing that a lot now." Reid is among the many fighters in the Paris field who got hooked when they watched the inaugural women's boxing competition in London as girls. "(Gold medalist) Nicola Adams and Katie Taylor, they've set a high standard now," Reid said. "They've set an amazing example for women's boxing. We're just trying to reach that level now, and hopefully the next generation is that much better." Indeed, women's boxing has changed dramatically in the 12 years since its Olympic debut in London - and not just on the amateur level.

It's a now-or-never situation for me: Tarundeep

PTI ■ PARIS

It's a "now-or-never situation for me," says veteran Indian archer Tarundeep Rai as he seeks to win a maiden Olympic medal in his fourth appearance at the Games while also serving as the team's unofficial mentor in Paris. The 40-year-old Rai has won medals in every championships at the global and continental level but not the Olympics. He has two silver at the World Championships (2005, 2019), nine World Cup medals, including three gold, a silver and a bronze in Asian Games, two silver and a bronze in Asian Championships. "It's emotional every day. It's the fourth time. It's a now-or-



never situation for me, and that's what I tell my teammates too. Maybe someone playing his first or second Olympics should think like it's now or never. You have to put in an effort as if it's going to be your last," Rai told PTI in an interview. The veteran archer from Sikkim was part of the Indian teams at the 2004

Athens, 2012 London and 2021 Tokyo Olympics. He exited in the first round in the individual event in Athens, and in the second round in both 2012 and 2021 editions. In Tokyo, the men's team, which had Tarundeep Rai in it its ranks, reached the quarterfinals. "Olympics is a dream for

everyone, and I'm no different. You need an extreme level of preparation for this, and you have to put in a lot of hard work to qualify and win a medal. The colour of your sweat sometimes turns red," Rai said ahead of the Paris Games. "This Olympics, I'm playing with a three-year gap. Positive sign. Many changes. Tokyo, whatever I lacked, the objective is to rectify. Will do my best," said Rai who hails from Namchi in Sikkim. More or less regular at the Olympics since debuting back in 1988, the Indian archers will be aiming to fetch their maiden medal as they began the country's campaign here on Thursday with the

qualification rounds. "There are always expectations. We had the potential to win, but for small margins, we have returned empty-handed," Rai rued. "We have kept that in control (this time). Coaches, management, players' mentality, we have kept that in check. Everyone is in their best form." For the first time since London 2012, India will have a full six-member squad after both the men's and women's teams qualified on the basis of rankings. This means they will compete in all the five events. Rai failed to make it to the Hangzhou Asian Games last year and said it was a wake-up call for him.

Noah looks to be star of Olympics, and bring all of track along for ride

AP ■ PARIS

Winner. Entertainer. History maker. By the time the Paris Olympics are over, Noah Lyles hopes to be all of that and maybe more. The confident 26-year-old sprinter thinks he can win medals, break records and bring the entire sport of track and field onto America's screens for more than 10 days every four years. These are audacious goals. Winning the 100 and 200 meters and maybe a relay or two would put him in a category with Usain Bolt, Carl Lewis and Michael Johnson, to name a few. Making track popular again - that's a whole different, and more complex, mission, and one Lyles has not shown any fear of tackling. "I want to see everybody be able to see the stories we create, the moments that are shared, and the big events that we have," Lyles said. "And, we need personalities to be able to show that. Because just going out there and winning doesn't mean everybody's watching." USING BEHIND-THE-SCENES DOCUMENTARIES TO DRAW NEW FANS: Lyles has a two-pronged strategy. The first part is dominating the sprints.



That second part is becoming a must-see personality who transcends both track and sports, the way Bolt did. Lyles has spent the last year or more laying the groundwork for that second part. He has opened up his life for two behind-the-scenes documentaries. The first, "Untitled: The Noah Lyles Project," came out last year. The second, a Netflix production called "SPRINT" that debuted this summer, features Lyles as a main character among some Olympians including Sha'Carri Richardson and the stable of Jamaica's fastest women sprinters. When he's not on TV, Lyles has curated a look outside - or make that coming into - the track.

He is making his "walk-in" to meet an event, arriving in everything from a green sweater with church-window-shaped cut-outs to black leather pants to the tailored navy suit with the signature Adidas stripes down the side of the slacks he wore to the US Olympic trials. There, he was greeted by Snoop Dogg, who carried a briefcase they opened for a big reveal of Lyles' track kit for the 100-meter final. "It's to keep hype," Lyles explained. "If you're generating excitement and hype, it's like, 'What's in the briefcase?' You want to know what's in the briefcase." LYLES TOOK A NOTABLE DIG AT THE NBA: Getting others to follow his lead in a sport filled with solo artists is only part of the mountain Lyles is trying to climb. Another part might have been best illustrated last year when, while articulating his vision for track after completing the 100-200 double at world championships, he made an off-hand comparison between track and the NBA. "The thing that hurts me the most is I have to watch the NBA finals and they have World Champion" on their head," Lyles said. "World champion of what? The United States?"

Indian men finish 6th, women 7th in World Junior Squash Championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India finished sixth and seventh in the men's and women's sections respectively in the World Junior Squash Championships held in Houston, USA. The Indian men lost to England 1-2 in the match for fifth position while their women counterparts beat New Zealand 2-1 in the clash for the seventh on Tuesday. Both the matches went into deciders. RESULTS: Men: India lost to England 1-2 (Shaurya Bawa bt Yusuf Sheikh 3-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-7; Yuvraj Wadhvani lost to Bailey Malik 11-5, 9-11, 8-11, 14-16; Ayaan Vazilalli lost to Dylan Roberts 11-6, 9-11, 9-11, 7-11). Women: India beat New Zealand 2-1 (Shameena Riaz lost to Ella Lash 7-11, 12-10, 13-11, 4-11, 4-11; Nirupama Dubey bt Anabel Gemmell 9-11, 11-6, 11-4, 8-11, 11-9; Unnati Tripathi bt Ella Hill 11-4, 11-3, 11-6).

Salt Lake City celebrates announcement that it will host 2034 Winter Olympics

AP ■ SALT LAKE CITY

Salt Lake City was formally awarded the 2034 Winter Olympics following a Wednesday vote by the International Olympic Committee in Paris, which gives Utah its second Games after hosting in 2002. A watch party was planned at 3 a.m. local time - 11 a.m. in Paris - to celebrate the announcement. Large crowds were expected at the event that coincides with a state holiday marking the date Mormon pioneers discovered the Salt Lake Valley in northern Utah. Olympic fanatics were already starting to gather downtown and pitch tents before sunset Tuesday.

Salt Lake City was the lone contender the Olympic committee was considering for 2034. Climate change and high operational costs have reduced the number of cities willing and able to welcome the Winter Games. Utah has capitalized on low interest elsewhere, pitching itself to Olympic officials as an enthusiastic repeat host if the committee goes forward with a proposed permanent rotation of Winter Olympic cities. Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi had said Salt Lake City would be a prime candidate for such a plan. Local leaders had their sights set on hosting multiple times even before Salt Lake City

welcomed its first Games, bid team spokesperson Tom Kelly said. Remnants of the 2002 Games are nestled throughout the city and have kept the Olympic fever alive for more than two decades. Organizers of the 2034 Games touted that enduring enthusiasm throughout the selection process and showed visiting Olympic officials how they have preserved the venues used in 2002. In their final presentation to the Olympic committee Wednesday morning, the bid team was expected to outline its plan for one of the most compact layouts in Olympic history, with all venues within a one-hour drive of the athletes village on the



University of Utah campus. The plan requires no new permanent construction, with all 13 venues already in place and each having played a role when the city first hosted. For Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, securing the bid was central to his goal of cementing the state as North America's winter sports capital. He and other local leaders were in Paris for the bid presentation, while many winter Olympians stayed in town to train and join in the festivities. American freestyle skier Christopher Lillis, a gold medalist at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, said the 2034 games would be a dream come true for young people with Olympic aspirations. Salt

Lake City has grown a lot since 2010, when Lillis said his family started visiting, and it's become more expensive. Lillis has been training at nearby Utah Olympic Park and said the sports facilities in the area are "top notch." Matthew Lindon, a 45-year resident of the ski resort community of Park City, Utah, where many events would be held, said the city has expanded considerably since he arrived. "With the 2002 Olympics, the motto was, 'The world is welcome here.' And really what happened was we brought Utah to the world, and now we're a world-class destination skiing resort," he said.

Zubin Bharucha helping us, Lankans should take advantage of Indian retirements: Jayasuriya

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Sri Lanka's interim head coach Sanath Jayasuriya on Wednesday revealed that IPL side Rajasthan Royals' high performance director Zubin Bharucha has helped his batters prepare for the upcoming T20 series against India where he expects them to take advantage of the recent retirements by stars like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Rohit, Kohli and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja retired from the T20 Internationals after India's World Cup triumph last month. The T20 series against Sri Lanka will get underway here on July 27. Jayasuriya revealed despite some of the Sri Lankan players' involvement in the Lanka Premier League, they have held a six-day camp with Bharucha. "We just started the sessions just after the LPL. Most of the players are playing the LPL, so they were busy with cricket and what we wanted (for them) was to play cricket as much as possible," he said. "We got Zubin from Rajasthan Royals and we had about six days of work and also with the other cricketers who finished with the LPL. I hope the players have learnt what you (management) wanted to do in terms of practice and their



technique. "The preparation was good, and we have two more days in Kandy before the T20 starts," he added. Jayasuriya said the sessions with Bharucha were intense and the players have been able to learn a lot from him. "It is important to learn as international cricketers new techniques, new approaches and shot making to be effective," he said. India also has a new captain in Suryakumar Yadav for T20Is and Jayasuriya, while acknowledging the struggles of his side, urged them to make the most of the opportunity. "Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are best players in the world.

Looking at their talent and the kind of cricket they have played we all know where they belong, along with Jadeja," Jayasuriya was quoted as saying by Associated Press during a press meet. "Their absence will be loss to the Indian team and we have to take maximum advantage out of that," he said. Heads rolled in the top management of Sri Lanka team after the debacle in the T20 World Cup in the Americas. After Sri Lanka made a preliminary round exit, upon return the team captain Wanindu Hasaranga, head coach Chris Silverwood and high performance consultant Mahela Jayawardena all

resigned. When asked about Sri Lanka's current state, Jayasuriya hoped the players are able to develop themselves. "It is up to the players, we have been doing all the work in terms of practice, we have given training, we have got best coaches. I think Sri Lanka Cricket has provided most of the things and now it is up to the players," he said. "For the present cricketers to come to that level, we have been doing all the necessary work and I hope in next two years there will be a lot of development in these boys," the batting great added. "We need to give a little bit of time. I know, for the cricket-loving public it is frustrating

sometimes but be patient, give us time, we are working on it. It is really hard work on it with the players and they will do well." The 1996 World Cup winner said Sri Lanka have enough talent in ranks to come out of troubled times while acknowledging the frustration of the fans. "We have enough of talent. What we want (from them) is to go out in the middle and deliver -- it is not easy, we know that," he said. "We have delivered when we were playing and now the time has come, people are waiting for this present team to perform and with what we are doing at the moment they will deliver very soon," he added.



Indian women team's mantra has been to take one game at a time: Deepti

PTI ■ DAMBULLA (SRI LANKA)

Senior player Deepti Sharma said India's mantra in the Women's T20 Asia Cup has been to take one game at a time as conditions haven't really changed from the last time the team played here. India marched into the semifinals with a thumping 82-run win over Nepal on Tuesday after fireworks with the bat from Shafali Verma (81 off 48 balls) and Deepti's impressive 3/13 with the ball. India amassed 178 for 3 after batting first and then restricted Nepal to a paltry 98 for 9 in their 20 overs. "From the first game we are

pretty confident about each (match) and every situation and the condition as well. We are looking forward to semi-final as well," Deepti told the media after the match. She said not much has changed in terms of the nature of the pitches and conditions in Sri Lanka from the team's previous tour to the island nation in June 2022. "Nothing (has) changed, just keep it very simple and just focus for another match. I played (here) last time also and yeah, nothing changed," she said. "We (are) only backing ourselves and you know, conditions are really (the) same."

The right-arm off-spinner is topping the bowling charts with eight wickets in three matches and she credited her success to her readiness to bowl in all situations. "I (am) always ready to bowl in any kind of situation. I like to take the challenges from the front. (It's) nothing, just (that) I'm enjoying each and every match, plan accordingly and what we discussed in the meeting, I just apply myself," she said. "If we win the toss, it's (a) positive (approach) from the upfront. As a batting unit also, we are doing really well from the game one and we finished also well," she added.



Ollie Pope reckons England can make 600 Test runs in a day's play

PTI ■ LONDON

Ollie Pope reckons England can breach the 600-run mark inside a day's play in Test cricket while ruling out any let up to their ultra aggressive 'Bazball' approach with the bat. England hold the record for the most runs scored in a day when they piled up 588 for 6 on the second day of the Manchester Test against India in 1936, and Pope believes the current side under Ben Stokes can eclipse that. "Sometimes we might score 280 to 300 in a day but that's OK and probably because we're reading situations. There might also be a day where we go and get 500 to 600 at some point in the future as well. And that's a cool thing to have," Pope was quoted as saying by BBC Sport. In December 2022, England smashed 506 runs on the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan in Rawalpindi. England are currently 2-0 up in

the three-match Test series against the West Indies after they followed up a victory by an innings at Lord's with a comprehensive 241-run win at Trent Bridge, Nottingham last week. The third and final Test starts on Friday at Edgbaston. The win in Nottingham was the first time England scored 400-plus in both innings of a Test match with totals of 416 and 425. Pope (121 in first innings) was one of three England centurions in the second Test alongside Joe Root and Harry Brook. Pope said there might be times England batters will have to "manage the game a little bit more" but that their attacking Bazball style under coach Brendon McCullum and captain Stokes has now become second nature. "I got asked on day one at Trent Bridge 'do you get told to play like that? No, we don't. It's just our natural games and the way we go about it,'" Pope said.

Mind Games: The psychological challenge of being Olympian

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Human excellence is often closely linked to human fortitude and Olympics is the prime example of it. The Paris Games, starting on Friday, will be a gathering of 10,500 athletes, 117 of them from India, competing for a mere 329 medals. Needless to say, talent alone won't decide who finishes on the podium. It will also boil down to the mind and how one can discipline it to cope with the grandeur and pressure of the big moments. Visualisation, blocking out the noise and being focussed are among the techniques that are often talked about but are they as easy to implement in a highly competitive environment? "There is a lot of pressure (already) in sports and when you compete at the Olympics, you have to be someone who has gone through a lot of highs and lows as well," explains Dr Divya Jain, a sports psychologist with Fortis Healthcare. "In sports, you're confronted with winning and losing on a day-to-day basis, so it's not about winning every time; it's about how you recover, how quickly you bounce back from a mistake," she said while explaining the difference between Olympians and other athletes. "There is public scrutiny, staying away from family, the noise of the Games... All of these are aspects that athletes have to cope with at a psychological level," she added. "For the next few weeks athletes will try to be at the peak of their form. To do that, they have trained physically and



mentally but the medal winners will be those who are a tad more tenacious and focussed than the rest. "Not only do they have their own high expectations, but they also carry the hopes of their entire country and scrutiny of a global audience," says Keerthana Swaminathan, a sports psychologist and president of the Indian Sport Psychologists Association. "Being away from families, friends and home is a part of sportspersons' lives but in Olympics, with all eyes on them, it could lead to further stress and anxiety. "Olympians often have to deal with extensive travel and long periods away from family and friends, which can be really isolating. This combination can take a serious toll on their mental health, making it crucial for them to have strong support systems and access to mental health resources," she adds. And to ensure that Indian athletes have calmer minds, the first of its kind specialised medical team is accompanying the contingent, featuring wellness specialists, and a sleep scientist among the regular medical staff.

"Representing and competing for one's country can instill a deep sense of responsibility and pride but that also adds an additional layer of pressure as athletes at the Olympics often feel that they are competing for national glory," says Dr Nanaki J Chaddha, a Sport and Performance Psychologist. Dealing with distractions is something that every athlete needs to learn since focussing on the 'here and now' goes a long way. "It's also about being able to harness that pressure because it's natural for anyone to be in a high-stress situation, to have certain responses to that pressure. Your heart rate may increase, muscle tension may change, your rhythm may change," explains Dr Divya Jain. "So you need to train yourself to work through that pressure and also to harness that pressure to help do better, actually become stronger, (to) have more explosive movement, recognising that that's the body we are preparing, rather than clearing that kind of competition situation," she explains. That mental health is a crucial aspect of an athlete's overall

competitive preparedness has been stressed quite often by India's first individual Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra. Bindra has often talked about his own struggles before the Beijing top finish. **WHAT SEPARATES AN OLYMPIC MEDALLIST FROM OTHERS?** "Medallists have an extraordinary ability to maintain unshakeable focus and concentration, even in the most intense situations," Keerthana says, "They can block out distractions - whether it's the noise of the crowd, the pressure of the moment, or the actions of their competitors - and stay entirely present in their performance," she adds. It is something that Bindra and some of other top Indian sportspersons have also often pointed out. Being flexible to last-minute changes and self-assurance are also an important aspect. "They trust in their training, abilities and preparation, which helps them take risks when necessary and push their limits without fear of failure. This self-assurance also acts as a buffer against the pressure and expectations they face, enabling them to perform at their peak," Keerthana says. The winners also tend to remain focussed for the entirety of the competition, says Dr Nanaki. "Medallists often possess superior mental resilience, allowing them to perform under pressure and that also helps them recover quickly from setbacks. Now, throughout the competition, the ability to maintain focus and concentration is extremely crucial," she says.

For TT great Sharath Kamal, running into Roger Federer tops favourite Olympic memories

PTI ■ PARIS

From lurching alongside tennis icon Roger Federer to taking a set off Chinese legend Ma Long, India's flag-bearer for Paris Olympics, Achanta Sharath Kamal, on Wednesday recalled the most memorable moments from his five appearances at the Games so far. The 42-year-old table tennis legend helped the Indian men's team qualify for the first time in history and is believed to be set for his final appearance at the Games. The multiple-time Commonwealth Games gold-medallist believes that qualifying as a team could become the catalyst of growth for table tennis in India. For someone who has a huge bank of memories from the Olympics having made his first appearance in 2004, Sharath recalled running into Federer at a dining hall in his debut Games. "One day I was just out for lunch and as I was entering from this side, there was another person coming from the other side with a tennis bag and hair let loose. I feel like I have seen him somewhere. I couldn't recognise who he was with his hair let loose," he said in a release from Ultimate Table Tennis. "We pass each other -- we actually cross paths -- (and) he goes to give his bag at the baggage keeping area. I walk in, take my plate looking at what to eat and it suddenly strikes me. Man, it's Roger Federer!" Sharath said he was rather shy at that time but nonetheless searched for the Swiss ace. "He was sitting at one of the tables all by himself. I went as close as possible. I didn't want to get in his place but still got close and I was eating (on the same table)," he continued. "Suddenly, a guy comes in with a reverse hat and shorts and they are clapping hands. I look at him and it's Andy Roddick," Sharath recalled. With the Tokyo Olympics postponed by one year during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sharath recalled facing difficulties in training and yet he was able to make a dent in Long's march to the gold medal. "Out of the five times I have played with him, I have won just one set against him and that was in Tokyo. And I am very proud of what happened



there, especially coming in after COVID," he added. "India had a very tough situation especially after the second wave. People in the rest of the world started their training back and, mid-way in the lockdown in India, we were still confined to home workouts, I was playing on my terrace. It was very tough. "I was training all the time in India with the limited resources we had. From that difficult mindset to getting to the Olympics and doing my best, I really feel I did well," Sharath continued. Even though he suffered a knee injury during the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Sharath fought bravely to reach the second round. He defeated Spain's Alfredo Carneros in the first and pushed his Austrian friend Chen Weixing to five sets in the next. Also, in 2008, he was still in awe of international athletes and Sharath recalled observing basketball legend Kobe Bryant and his 'mamba' mentality closely during the opening ceremony. Sharath also remembers his Athens 2004 meeting with double trap shooting silver medallist and former sports minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore before the final. "Probably, I disturbed him in his alone time, but he was sitting outside and relaxing. Coach Kamlesh Mehta said, 'Come, let's go and wish him' and then we both went and he spoke very nicely, asked about my match etc," Sharath recalled. "He went on to win the medal and after he won the medal, it was so easy for me to go and look at the medal because I had already spoken to him the night before," he said.

New Zealand Olympic soccer team complains after Canadian team drone flown over its training session

AP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand says it has complained to the International Olympic Committee's integrity unit after a drone flown over a New Zealand women's soccer team training session was found to be operated by a member of the Canadian team's support staff. Defending Olympic champion Canada and New Zealand meet in their opening match at the Olympic tournament on Thursday. The drone incident occurred earlier this week, the New Zealand Olympic Committee said Wednesday.

"Team support members immediately reported the incident to police leading to the drone operator, who has been identified as a support staff member of the wider Canadian Women's football team, to be detained," the NZOC said in a statement. "The NZOC has formally lodged the incident with the IOC integrity unit and has asked Canada for a full review." The Canadian Olympic Committee has apologized to the NZOC and New Zealand Football. "The Canadian Olympic Committee stands for fair play and we are shocked and disappointed," the statement said. "We offer our heartfelt



apologies to New Zealand Football, to all the players affected, and to the New Zealand Olympic Committee." The NZOC said it and New Zealand

Football "are committed to upholding the integrity and fairness of the Olympic Games - at this time the NZOC's main priority is to support the New Zealand women's football athletes and wider team as they start their campaign." It's not the first time a Canadian soccer team has been involved in a drone controversy involving an international rival's training session. In 2021 at Toronto, Honduras stopped a training session ahead of its men's World Cup qualifier against Canada after spotting a drone above the field, according to reports in Honduran media.

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