**OPINION 6** 

**WORLD 9** 

**MONEY 10** 

DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.160 Issue 207 \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH



WHY? WHY? WHY?

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

Phones kept buzzing with messages on WhatsApp groups with helpless students trying to find where their friends — studying at the Rau's Coaching centre's library on Saturday evening — were following the death of three civil services aspirants due to rain-induced flooding in the basement of the

coaching centre.
While reports claimed only three lives were lost, students who were witness to the tragic incident unfolding before their eyes claimed a higher number.

All the deceased had cleared their preliminary examination, the results of which was declared a few days ago and were burning midnight oil to prepare for the Mains examinations scheduled in October-November which is second stage of Civil Services Examinations to qualify to become an IAS, IPS or allied services officer.

Thousands like the ones who fell prey to lackadaisical civic amenities make national Government services.



Police detain students protesting outside Karol Bagh metro station after three IAS aspirants died in the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle at Old Rajinder Nagar area, in New Delhi, on Sunday

giving us the full picture," said Capital their *karambhoomi* 27-year-old Ankit, adding for a few years to get into elite that while protesting in the wee hours of Saturday, authorities also threw "We have WhatsApp groups of UPSC aspirants. Those groups are full with students wee nours of Saturday, authorities also threw drainage water on them to disperse them.

and the authorities are not their classes, witnessed protests of angry students who are worried about the whereabouts of their colleagues who are nowhere to be found.

Albeit, police claiming three lives, students claimed on asking about the whereabouts of their friends. I am sure that the numbers are much higher

Old Rajinder Nagar, which is usually bustling with UPSC aspirants in haste to get to authorities shutting the lights were not being allowed to see the bodies even though they have been waiting since

off regularly to not let the general public know the exact situation.

Meanwhile, at the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, there was anger among the relatives of the deceased, who claimed they were not being allowed to see

morning. Deceased Shreya Yadav's

uncle Dharmendra Yadav his harrowing shared experience. "I saw the news about the incident late at night and called Shreya over phone, but she didn't answer," he said.

A resident of Ghaziabad, he said when his niece did not

#### **Library running** illegally in basement

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

The Rau's IAS Study Circle centre in Delhi's Rajinder Nagar, where three students died in raininduced flooding, was functioning illegally as a library.

library.

The coaching institute was issued a fire safety certificate just 18 days before the incident.

Notably, the institute, had falsely shown that the basement was being used for parking and as a store

for parking and as a store room, as per the building plan and No Objection Certificate (NOC) of the fire department.

Continued on Page 8

respond to his calls, he rushed to the institute in Old Rajinder Nagar. "When I reached the coaching centre, I was directed to RML Hospital, where I learned that a body identified as that of Shreya had been found, but I was not allowed to see her," he

Continued on Page 8

## Two arrested

SAUMYA SHUKLA

A fter arresting two people, the Delhi Police has registered an FIR and formed multiple teams to probe the Rau's coaching probe the Raus coaching centre flooding incident which claimed the lives of three IAS aspirants, who had already cleared their prelims exam and were preparing in the library of the coaching institute for the Mains exams of UPSC. the coaching institute for the Mains exams of UPSC. According to the police on Sunday, they have arrested owner Abhishek Gupta and coordinator Deshpal Singh of the Rau's IAS Study Circle and booked them for culpable homicide and

culpable homicide and under other charges.

"Multiple teams have been formed to investigate the entire incident. We have asked the Delhi Fire Services to provide us report about the building and the basement which was being used as a library but mentioned as 'store room," a senior police officer said.

The officer said the basement was eight-feet below the ground level and more than 18 students were

present in it on Saturday

evening when it got flooded after heavy rain. According to sources in the police department, the gate of the basement was closed, but due to high pressure of rain water, it got damaged and water gushed in.

"We are checking CCTV footage from the area to ascertain the sequence of the events. After scanning the CCTV footage, we will identify the people who were standing close to the institute during the time of institute during the time of incident and will record their statements," said the officer.

Continued on Page 8

#### **Govt clarifies on tax** clearance certificate for going abroad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A fter social media outrage over a A Budget proposal making it mandatory to get tax clearance certificates for going abroad, the Government on Sunday clarified that the proposed amendment is not for all, and



only those accused financial irregularities or having substantial tax arrears need such clearance. Finance The Ministry, in the Finance Bill, 2024,

has proposed to add the reference of the Black

Money Act, 2015, to the list of Acts, under which any person should clear his liabilities to obtain the tax clearance certificate. "The proposed amendment does not require all the residents to obtain the tax

clearance certificate," the ministry said in a

statement. As per section 230 of the Income-tax Act, 1961, every person is not required to obtain a tax clearance certificate. Only in the case of certain persons, in respect of whom circumstances exist, which make it necessary to obtain a tax clearance certificate will be required to obtain such a certificate.

**Continued on Page 8** 

## Manu first Indian shooter to win medal at Olympics

RISHABH MALIK/AGENCIES

A 22-year-old Haryana girl clinched the first medal for India. Manu Bhaker strikes the bronze medal in Women's 10m Air Pistol event in Paris Olympics in 2024 With her medal she becomes the first female shooter to win medal for India in Olympic

games. On July 27 Manu Bhaker had qualified for the final of her event with a score of 580 points, finishing third out of 45 competitors with the topeight going through to Sunday's final.

Bhaker scored 221.7 in the final round in which she fought hard against Korea's Kim Yeji who bagged silver and Jin Ye Oh bagged the gold and Jin Ye Oh bagged the gold with a games record of 243.2. Bhaker stated, "I was fighting with all the energy I have. Really grateful that I could win the bronze. I read Bhagwat Gita and always tried to do what I am supposed to do, left everything else to god"

everything else to god".
"We can't fight destiny," said Bhaker who appeared in her second Olympic stint. Previously she couldn't make it to the final and registered a bronze in this 2024 Olympic ending a drought in Olympic



Manu Bhaker poses for a photograph with her bronze medal after finishing third in the 10m air pistol women's final round at the 2024 Summer Olympics, France, on

This was fifth medal in shooting for India. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (silver in Athens Olympics, 2004), Bindra (gold, Beijing 2008), Gagan Narang (bronze, London 2012) and Vijay Kumar (silver, London) have brought prestige to the Vijay Kumar (silver, London) have brought prestige to the

country in shooting.
Bhaker is one of the favourite contenders for India to top the medals in the Olympic. Bhaker, who hails from an accomplished athlete with and in her first appearance in

in Guadalajara, Mexico, clinching gold in the 10m air pistol final against top competitors like Olympic gold-medalist Anna Korakaki and three-time World Cup Jhajjar district in Haryana, is medalist Celine Goberville

Common Wealth Games she clinched gold in 10m air pistol at the age of 16. In 2018, Manu became the first Indian to win a gold medal at the Youth Olympic Games. She has competed in two Olympic Games but faced challenges during her debut in Tokyo three years ago when her pistol malfunctioned in the 10m air pistol qualification, preventing her from reaching the finals in both the mixed pistol 10m pistol and 25m pistol events. Despite this setback, Manu is now on a redemption path, earning the distinction of being India's first female Olympic medalist.

With her historic achievement, Bhaker has not only inspired millions of young Indians but has also solidified her position as one of the country's brightest shooting stars. Her bronze medal is a testament to her dedication, hard work, and unwavering belief in her

abilities. India is celebrating this momentous victory, with the entire nation joining in to congratulate the young champion. Her achievement is expected to give a significant boost to shooting in the country, encouraging more young talents to take up the sport.

### Major gubernatorial reshuffle

 $\label{eq:president density} P^{\text{resident Draupadi Murmu effected}}_{\text{major gubernatorial appointments}}$  with changes in the Governors of some States with Lakshman Prasad Acharva appointed as the Governor of Assam with the additional charge of Manipur while Gulab Chand Kataria replace Banwarilal Purohit as the Governor of Puniab.

Acharya has replaced Kataria, who has also been appointed the administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh, according to a communique issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Saturday night. According to a Rashtrapati Bhavan communication Murmu has accepted the resignation of Purohit as the Governor of Punjab and the administrator of Chandigarh, it said.

"Lakshman Prasad Acharya, Governor of Sikkim, appointed as Governor of Assam and has also been given additional charge of the Governor of Manipur," the statement said. Anusuiva Uikye has been serving as the Governor of Manipur since February last year. Veteran BJP leader Om Prakash Mathur will be the new Governor of

Sikkim, the communique said. Jharkhand Governor Radhakrishnan, who was also holding additional charge of Telangana, has been appointed as the new Governor of Maharashtra, succeeding incumbent Ramesh Bais.

Former Union Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar will be the new Jharkhand Governor in place of Radhakrishnan. Former Deputy Chief Minister of



Tripura, Jishnu Dev Varma, will be the new Telangana Governor.

Former IAS officer K Kailashnathan, one of the trusted aides of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been appointed as Lt Governor of Puducherry with effect from the date he assumes charge of his office. Kailashnathan, chief principal secretary to Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, stepped down on June 30 after holding the post for more than a decade after his retirement.

Senior BIP leader from Maharashtra Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde has been appointed the Governor of Rajasthan, succeeding Kalraj Mishra. Former Lok Sabha member from Assam Ramen Deka has been appointed as the Governor of Chhattisgarh, and C H Vijayashankar, the former Lok Sabha member from Mysore in Karnataka, will be Meghalaya Governor, the communique appointments will take effect from the dates they will assume charge of their respective offices, the statement added.

## Row as students seek special space for namaz in Kerala college

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Nirmala College at Muvattupuzha (established in 1953) in Kerala finds itself in the middle of a institution are on a warpath with the college management. On Friday, students under the leadership of SFI (the students' wing of the CPI-M) and Muslim League gheraoed the college principal Father Jestin K Kuriakose, for almost two hours demanding special before classrooms/auditoriums for offering namaz.

This is a new development in the history of the 71-year-old college, which was established by the Catholic Church to make higher education institution, we follow the accessible to students belonging to the State's high

ranges.
"We were taken aback by the action of the students picketing the principal or gheraoing the teachers or management. Till now the new controversy as hundreds of Muslim students were making of Muslim students in the use of the mosques in the Muslim students were making neighbourhood for offering Friday prayers. What made them demand for special classrooms or auditoriums remains a mystery," Kuriakose told The Pioneer on Sunday. The demand made by the students has been put up college the management. "To set apart

exclusive prayer auditoriums for students believing in different sects is not an easy task. Though ours is a minority Christian



said a senior official of the management.

Though the church is keen on resolving the issue amicably, the recent developments in the State have to be seen as factors that made the students resorting to extreme measures.

The CPI (M)-led Kerala Government has recently appointed a senior IAS officer as the de facto foreign secretary of the State to communicate and coordinate with Governments in Europe, USA, Australia and Africa. Sources in Government Secretariat said the move has turned out to be a "treatment worse than the disease" as the External Affairs is an area that comes under the exclusive domain of the Centre.

Another demand that has been overlooked by the media

in the State is the creation of separate district Muvattupuzha and the bifurcation of the State itself as Kerala and Malabar. The change in Kerala's religious

demography and the emergence of Muvattupuzha as a hotbed of religious extremism are seen as the factors contributing to the change in the attitude of the people. Christian Association and Alliance for Social action (CASA) has condemned the students picketing the principal of the college over an issue which has nothing to do with academics.

'We have heard about people who disrupt normal life and traffic by forcibly occupying public places under the pretext of religious congregation and namaz.

Continued on Page 8

#### **NTA** announces **CUET-UG results**

PNS NEW DELHI

National Testing Agency (NTA) on Sunday announced the results for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG, paving the way to begin the undergraduate admission process which has been delayed this year.

The NTA had on July 7 released the provisional answer keys of the CUET-UG 2024. A retest for more than 1,000 candidates whose grievances were found genuine by the agency was conducted on July 19.
The delay in the CUET-UG results came amid a row over alleged irregularities in

competitive exams, including in the NEET-UG and the UGC-NET. Continued on Page 8

## **Brahmin organisations up in arms**

#### **HRITHIK PANDEY MURDER CASE**

PNS LUCKNOW

In a show of solidarity with the family of deceased prop-erty dealer Hrithik Pandey, leaders from various Brahmin organisations and local residents staged a protest at Banthra police station on Sunday. They demanded severe punishment for the accused involved in Pandey's murder. As part of their protest, Brahmin leaders threatened to symbolically take off their 'janeu' (sacred threads) and jump into the Gomti river if the murderers were not punished

appropriately.

Despite efforts by police officers to pacify the protesters, the crowd remained resolute. They insisted on the presence of the police commissioner and joint commissioner of police (law and order) at the scene and demanded the dismissal of sub-inspector Ibne Hasan as a precondition to disperse. The police officers offered to take the memorandum of demands themselves, but this did not satisfy the protesters.

As tensions escalated, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, South, Shashank Singh arrived at the Banthra police station. He accepted the memorandum and assured that action would be taken soon.

Nevertheless, the protesters remained unconvinced and demanded cancellation of the



RLD national spokesman Anil Dubey with the bereaved family in Banthra on Sunday

accused's arms licences and security for the family members of the victim.

National president of All India Brahmin Sabha Pandit Rajendra Nath Tripathi also joined the protest. By noon, the initially small gathering swelled into a massive crowd. The protesters blamed police negligence and bias for Hrithik Pandey's death, asserting that if the police had promptly regis-tered an FIR and sent Pandey to hospital, his life could have been saved. Instead, they alleged, the family members were treated rudely and even mocked when they sought

Ashish Dwivedi, one of the protesters, alleged that Hrithik Pandev was murdered due to police inaction and expressed fears that the accused, who belong to the Thakur community, would escape justice due to their political connections. He emphasised the need for security for the victim's family, warning of potential future

Despite assurances from ADCP Shashank Singh that action would be taken against the errant sub-inspector, the protesters refused to budge. Hrithik Pandey (20) assisted his

father Indra Kumar Pandey in property business. Their village had been experiencing electricity supply disruptions, and on July 21, only a few houses had

Hrithik asked an electricity department employee to fix the issue, which led to a confrontation with Himanshu Singh and his friends from the same village. Shortly after Hrithik returned

home, Himanshu, along with Avnish, Pratyush, Priyanshu, and Shani Singh, allegedly attacked his house. Hrithik sustained severe injuries and died on the way to the hospimurder and exposed police attempts to cover up the crime. They maintained that Hrithik was murdered in cold blood and demanded justice. Five people, including the main

accused, have been arrested in connection with Hrithik Pandey's murder. Avinash alias Lucky Singh, his cousin Himanshu Singh, Pratyush Singh, Aman Singh, and Pramanshu Singh Chauhan were apprehended by the police and subsequently sent to jail.
The accused had been absconding since the incident, further fuelling the anger and frustration of the Brahmin community and local residents.

## RLD LEADER MEETS BEREAVED FAMILY Rashtriya Lok Dal national

spokesperson Anil Dubey also reached the house of Hrithik Pandey and consoled the bereaved family members. He assured all possible help to the father of the deceased.

While consoling Hritik Pandey's father Indu Kumar Pandey and other family members, Dubey said he would meet higher authorities to demand the immediate arrest of all the accused, full-time security and proper compensasecurity and proper compensa-tion for the family, government job to a family member and dismissal of a sub-inspector, Ibne Hasan. Along with Dubey, hundreds of people, including Somendra Nath Shukla, Dayashankar Pandey, Devesh Pandey, Ashish Pandey, Praveen Trivedi, etc were pre-

## Close shave for 4 youths as fire erupts in shopping complex



PNS LUCKNOW

A fire broke out at a shopping complex on Hewett Road near Bhanumati Chauraha Aminabad Building on Sunday. Upon being informed, the chief fire officer of Lucknow directed the Hazratganj fire officer to respond. The fire officer, along with two fire tenders, promptly arrived at the scene. Úpon arrival, the officer discov-

ered that the fire had originated in a shop on the ground floor

with its shutter down, filling the entire building with smoke. Four youths were on the roof, shouting for help. The fire offi-cer immediately deployed a unit to extinguish the fire and sent two firemen, equipped with breathing apparatus sets, to the roof. The chief fire officer also instructed the Hazratganj Fire Station control room to despatch a hydraulic platform.

The firefighters tried to douse the flames from the front of the building while the lock on the other side was cut with a bolt cutter, allowing entry to the shop and installation of a smoke exhauster. The four youths on the roof — identified as Abhishek Mishra, Mohammed Sabir, Abhishek Kumar Singh, and Abhishek Mishra — were safely evacuated by the firemen. The firemen used two smoke exhausters to clear the smokefilled rooms. The fire in the shop was completely extinguished with no loss of life reported.

# **NOTICE**

marksheet of my son Nikhil Chaudhary his father's name is registered as Sandeep Chaudhry, which is incorrect while in his Aadhar Card his father's name is registered as Sandeep Chaudhari, which is correct. Hence, in my son's all documents his father's name will be known and written as Sandeep Chaudhari only.Shashi Chaudhary W/O Late Sandeep Chaudhari R/O Mill Colony,East Maholi, Tehseel-Maholi, District-

#### **NOTICE**

I, 15812738X Hav Debasish Tripathy, COD Kanpur residing at Qtr No- B/284, Sector-2, PIN-769006, ODISHA has changed my mother's Name & D.O.B Premalata Tripathy (05 Oct 1959) instead of Premlata Tripathy (05 Mar 1959) vide Affidavit No 94AE659444 dated 24 Jul 2024 for correct documentation

#### NOTICE

I, 15825935Y Nk Kuljeet Singh COD Kanpur residing at Vill-Isharheri, Post Massingan, Teh -Patiala, Distt- Patiala, PIN-147111, State-Punjab has changed name & D.O.B of my father Ranjit Singh (29 Aug 1968) instead of Ranjeet Singh (01 Jan 1973) & my mother Nirmla Devi (23 Apr 1974) instead of Nirmala Devi (01 Jan 1973) vide Affidavit No 94AE659455 dated 25 Jul 2024 for correct documentation.

#### **NOTICE**

PUBLIC NOTICE Bank of Baroda Station Road Sitapu

Branch FOR KIND ATTENTION OF OUR MOST VALUED CUSTOMERS In our endeavor to consolidate and strengthen our services to our customers. Station Road branch of Bank of Baroda/erstwhile Vijaya/Dena Bank presently functioning at Station Road, Opposite Bus Stand, Sitapur 261001 will be shifted to 45, Station Road Opposite Bus Stand, Sitapur and shall function at the said address within one month. It shall function and cater all types of banking business from the said premises. We also wish to inform all the locker holder customers of our Station Road, Opposite Bus Stand, Sitapur that utmost care will be taken while shifting the lockers to the proposed premises. However, if any customer with locker facility desire to take possession of the contents before shifting and redeposit the same after shifting of the lockers to the proposed location, we request you to do so on or before 30 Aug 2024 by contacting the concerned branch officials. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you in this regard and assure you of our best

> Senior Branch Manager Bank of Baroda Station Road, Sitapur

### ₹50 crore released for widening of 4-km road stretch

The first installment of Tinancial assistance, totalling Rs 50 crore, to link a 4-km stretch between Hanuman Sethu temple crossing and Nishatganj flyover was released on Sunday, according to an official com-muniqué from the Urban and Housing Development department. This road is part of the

'Green Corridor' project.
The project will be jointly executed by Lucknow Development Authority and the Public Works Department. Notably, the state government released Rs 1 crore immediately after the development authority forwarded the plan to the department concerned a fortnight ago, along with its estimated cost. This initial amount will be used for basic civil works and other expenses. The road will be widened

to 20 metres from its existing

width of 10 metres and will be constructed using the latest technology and modern equipment.

The aim is to ensure a smooth flow of traffic. Besides widening the road, a rotary intersection is planned near the temple for better traffic regulation. The project is expected to be open to the public by mid-

Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar stated that having the best roads, similar to those in southern states, and controlled traffic flow is essential for attracting private and foreign entrepre in the city.

The state government has decided to release funds to the LDA in installments as a precautionary measure to prevent misappropriation and ensure accountability, addressing past instances where crores of rupees were misused without accountability.

#### Woman forced into flesh trade by husband PNS LUCKNOW

In response to the incident,

DCP (South) Tej Swaroop

ordered an investigation, result-

ing in the suspension of the Banthra inspector, two sub-inspectors, and a constable.

Five accused were arrested,

and efforts were ongoing to identify other unidentified

On Sunday, a video of the incident surfaced, further enraging Hrithik Pandey's supporters. The video showed

more than 20 people beating Hrithik, identifying him with a torch in the dark before brutal-

ly attacking him with sticks. Although the entire sequence

of events was not clearly visible due to the darkness, the sounds of the beating, the

screams of women, and conver-

Supporters of the deceased argued that the video revealed

sations were audible.

VIDEO EVIDENCE SPARKS OUTRAGE

assailants.

A woman accused her husband of forcing her into the flesh trade, harassing her, and engaging in an extramarital affair. She filed a complaint in this regard at the

Ashiyana police station. The complainant alleged that her husband had an affair with another woman and that he coerced her into prostitution and other immoral activities. She further alleged that he threatened to kill her if she

opposed his actions. The woman, distressed by her husband's harassment, said she been seeking help but police had not been supportive. She is currently staying at her parents' house in Ashivana.

According to reports, the woman Khargapur in Gomti Nagar Extension, accused her hus-band of forcing her into pros-titution. She claimed that her husband had been having an affair with a young woman living in Delhi and that he had spent the last five years living with this woman in a rented house in Gomti Nagar

## Woman pilot alleges dowry harassment by husband, in-laws

A woman pilot accused her husband, also a pilot, and in-laws subjecting her to harassment for dowry. The case was registered at Krishna Nagar police station on Sunday. The woman alleged in her complaint that her in-laws demanded a dowry of Rs 1 crore and threatened that her husband would marry another woman if their demand was not met. She alleged that when she protested, she was beaten and thrown out of the

According to the police, the victim, who resides in Krishna Nagar area, filed a formal complaint detailing her ordeal. She stated that she

married Harshvardhan, a resident of Oshiwara, Mumbai, in 2020. Initially, she lived with her in-laws in Mumbai and later moved to Kannur, Kerala, to stay with her husband.

The copmlainant alleged that shortly after the marriage, her husband and in-laws began demanding Rs 1 crore as dowry. When she expressed her inability to meet their demand, they threatened to have Harshvardhan marry another woman. Despite her protests, she was eventually thrown out of the house. She also alleged that her father-inlaw hacked her mobile phone. The police are investigating the case based on the complaint filed by the victim.

Extension. Despite her repeated attempts to reconcile, he refused to return home. The woman has two children

who are currently living with her in-laws. She is unable to support them due to financial difficulties. She also alleged that her husband abuses her parents and brother, and threatens to kill

"He calls me at night after drinking and threatens to kill my parents. He also calls my

friends and speaks nonsense to them," she said. She further alleged that her husband forced her to engage in immoral activities. "When I refused, he put my mobile number on a website featuring explicit content. As a result, I started receiving obscene calls and messages late at night," she claimed. She sais she wanted to report this to police, but her mother-in-

law discouraged her. "Moreover, the family of the woman with whom my husband is currently living also threatened to kill me," she added, alleging. The police are currently investigating the

#### 18-mth-old boy falls into pit, dies

Lucknow (PNS): An 18-monthold boy died after falling into a pit while playing in Ballia district on Sunday afternoon, police said. The incident happened in the Ghuri Baba Tola village under the Sikandarpur police station area, where Avyansh Yadav fell into a pit made for draining dirty water. SO Sikandarpur Dinesh Pathak said that Avyansh's mother Amrita made him sit in the courtyard and got busy in her daily routine. After some time, when Avyansh was not seen in the courtyard, she started searching for him, and found him fallen in the pit. The family rushed the child to the district hospital, where he was declared dead, police said. Meanwhile, a PAC jawan was arrested on Sunday for allegedly raping a married woman at her house in Muzaffarnagar, police said. The accused identified as Pintu. He was posted in Meerut and had come home on leave, SHO Rajendra Prasad said. As per the complainant, Pintu entered her house on Saturday afternoon and raped her. When her husband returned, Pintu managed to flee and left his mobile phone, Prasad said.

## **Retired FCI employee shoots self**

PNS LUCKNOW

A retired Food Corporation of India (FCI) employee allegedly shot himself on Saturday night in Aliganj police station area. The bullet pierced through his neck, causing him to bleed to death. His body was found lying on a chair in his room. Police reached the scene and sent the body for post-mortem examination.

Shankar Mishra (76), a resident Triveni Nagar in Shankarjipuram (Aliganj), was a retired FCI employee. Son Harish informed the police that his father went to his room

after having dinner on

According to reports, Lakshmi

family heard a gunshot from his room and rushed to check, only to find Mishra lying on a chair soaked in blood.

The family was shocked and panicked upon finding him dead in a pool of blood. His licenced gun was found near the body. It is suspected that Lakshmi Shankar Mishra took this extreme step due to being troubled by illness. "He may have shot himself under a bout of depression," the police

No suicide note was recovered from the scene. Family members informed the police about Mishra's illness. Besides his wife, he is survived by two sons. According to the Aligani

Saturday. Around 11 pm, the ACP, the deceased's licenced gun has been collected by the police, and the body has been sent for autopsy. Prabha S

Meanwhile, a nursing student from Prayagraj allegedly ended his life by hanging herself at her maternal grandfather's her maternal grandfather's house in Indiranagar. She had been visiting to help get her father treated. According to family members, the student was distressed over receiving low marks in her examination. The police identified the deceased as Priyanshi Pathak (22) from Naini, Prayagraj. She was pursuing BSc (Nursing) in Prayagraj. A week ago, she had visited her maternal grandfather Lallan Dubey's

house in Sai City, Indiranagar, to assist with her father's medical treatment.

Two days prior, Priyanshi's father returned to Prayagraj after receiving treatment, while she staved with her maternal grandfather. Late at night, Priyanshi was found hanging from a ceiling fan. Her family rushed her to a hospital, where doctors pronounced her dead. Police investigation revealed that Priyanshi committed suicide due to her disappointment over low marks in exams. The family has not made any allegations. No suicide note was found at

the scene. Further action will be based on the autopsy report," the police stated.

#### Govt to blame for suicide by displaced youth: CPI (ML)

Lucknow (PNS): The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) held the Uttar Pradesh government responsible for the suicide of unemployed Aziz, who was recently rehabilitated in Vasant Kunj from Akbar Nagar after the houses were demolished for the Kukrail river revival scheme of the government.

Expressing deep grief over the incident, the CPI (ML) demanded that the government stop the demolition campaign, make arrangements for the livelihood of the displaced families and provide compensation and government job to the family of deceased Aziz. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said in a statement issued on Sunday that the government thought it had fulfilled its duty by giving houses on installments in Vasant Kunj Colony to some families displaced from Akbar Nagar in the name of rehabilitation.

"The state government has shied away from the questions how will the livelihood of poor families be maintained and how will their lives be protected. This responsibility lies with the state, which took away their homes and livelihood.... If attention is not given to improving the economic condition of the affected families, more such incidents may occur in the future," he said.

found in the room of Vasant Kuni house where he had shifted with his family last

#### **CITYBRIEFS**



#### SKD ACADEMY FELICITATES TOPPERS

SKD Academy felicitated topper students of ICSE, ISC, UP Board, and CBSE Board on Sunday. The chief guests were Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh, Minister of State for Transport Daya Shankar Singh, Minister of State for Cooperatives JPS Rathore, former ADGP Manoj Singh, and former president of UPPCS Association Baba Hardev Singh. Swatantra Dev Singh emphasised the role of youth in national empowerment. Chairman SKD Singh and director Manish Singh highlighted the importance of academic excellence. In the ISC Board exams, Shreya (98%) and Tanvi Mishra (97.75%) secured 8th and 9th positions nationally. In ICSE, Avika and Nishkarsh (98.4%) shared the 8th position, while Avantika (98%) was 10th. In the UP Board, Kaushal (96.6%) and Hansh Raj (95.6%) stood 7th in the state and Lucknow, respectively. In CBSE, Aastha (97.8%) topped the school, with Nandini (97.4%) leading in class XII. These students were awarded mobile phones, trolley bags, wrist watches, certificates, and mementos

#### ARTHRITIS, JOIN PAIN AWARENESS

Under the banner of Joint Care Foundation, an awareness program on arthritis and joint pain was organized in Gomti Nagar on Sunday. Guest speaker Dr. Saurav Shukla, a Senior Orthopedic Surgeon, highlighted that arthritis is becoming increasingly common among all age groups. He emphasized the importance of maintaining joint health through exercise, a balanced diet, and correct posture. Dr. Shukla advised early consultation with a doctor at the onset of symptoms to prevent the condition from worsening. The program also covered vitamin deficiencies and better eating habits for the elderly to help avoid arthritis.

## Absconding SHO held in extortion case

Ballia (PTI): A station house officer who went absconding after he was suspended in connection with an extortion case here was arrested from Gorakhpur on Sunday, a senior police officer said.

Panna Lal, who was posted as SHO of Narhi Police Station in Ballia, was wanted in a case pertaining to alleged extortion from truck drivers in the Narhi area on the Uttar Pradesh-Bihar border, he added. With Lal's arrest, 19 persons have been arrested in the case so far, while four are still absconding, according to police. Deputy Inspector General of Police (Azamgarh zone) Vaibhav Krishna told

suspended SHO of Narhi Police Station on Sunday from Gorakhpur." On July 25, Krishna had told reporters that the police have busted an illegal extortion racket being run by police personnel on the UP-Bihar border in this district's Narhi area, with the arrest of two cops and 16 brokers. All the personnel posted in the Korantadih police outpost here and the SHO of Narhi Police Station were suspended in the case, he said. Meanwhile, Superintendent of Police Vikrant Veer told reporters on Sunday that efforts are being made to arrest the remaining accused in this case, who are at large. PTI, "An SOG team from According to police, based on Ballia arrested Panna Lal, the a complaint lodged by

Inspector Sushil Kumar, a case was registered on July 25 against 23 persons including Lal, Korantadih police post Incharge Rajesh Kumar Prabhakar, Head Constable Vishnu Yadav and Constables Balram Singh, Deepak Mishra, Hari Dayal and Satish Gupta under provisions of the BNS (Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita), BNSS (Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita) and Prevention of Corruption Act. Minister Yogi Chief Adityanath took strict action with a "zero tolerance policy" after the revelation of illegal collection of money from vehicles by police personnel on the UP-Bihar border, according to a statement issued on July 25.

The Uttar Pradesh government had then issued an order to transfer the Ballia Superintendent of Police Dev Ranjan Verma and Additional SP Durga Prasad Tiwari, alongwith the suspension of Sadar Deputy SP Shubh Soochit.

A vigilance inquiry of the properties of the three officers was also ordered. A raid was conducted in the area on July 25 and 18 people, including two police personnel, were arrested, officials has said. A suspension order was issued for two personnel, including Lal, they had said. Lal, who went absconding after the suspension order, was finally nabbed from Gorakhpur on Sunday, according to officials.

The body of Aziz, a tailor, was

## **UP** assembly's monsoon session begins today; likely to be stormy

The Samajwadi Party, with new confidence and stature in state politics, is all set to corner the Bharatiya Janata Partyled government in the monsoon session of the Uttar Pradesh legislature commenc-

ing here from Monday. The proceedings are likely to be stormy as this will be the first session of the UP legislature after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in which the SP won 37

Besides the myriad issues like floods, law and order, farmers' issue, the SP will try to corner the government over the reported rumblings in the BJP's state unit and the poor performance of the ruling party in the Lok Sabha elections.

The state government has decided to hold a brief monsoon session with five sittings to carry out pending legislative business. The state cabinet (by circulation) has decided to hold the monsoon session from July 29.

Though after the Delhi visit of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his meetings with the top leadership of the party, the issues plaguing the party are said to have been settled, the focus of the SP will be on Deputy Chief Minister Weeher. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya amid the 'sarkar versus sangathan' (government versus organisation) rift in the

An aggressive opposition is likely to use the opportunity to target the BJP government during the session. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, who has in force. So, such a



Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna, Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana, LoP Mata Prasad Pandey and leaders of other parties participating in the all-party meeting at Vidhan Bhavan in Lucknow on Sunday

resigned as MLA following his election to the Lok Sabha from Kannauj, has already given indications in this regard. He has set the tone and tenor for the opposition's likely aggressive agenda on social media. "Monsoon Offer, bring a hundred, form the government!" stated Yadav in a post in Hindi on X. "This is clear from the unfolding developments that the BJP government has ceased to function in Uttar Pradesh. The statements of BJP leaders speak on the situation in the BIP. If 100 dissatisfied MLAs part ways, the Samajwadi Party will ensure formation of their

Chaudhary. 'SP chief' is confused. This reflects their ego. Whenever the Samajwadi Party gains a few seats, its leaders begin behav-

government,"

spokesman

statement is ridiculous," said Vijay Pathak, MLC and Uttar Pradesh BJP vice-president.

"The BJP government has failed on all fronts and the people have distanced from the party. The prevailing situation in the BJP reflects this," said UP Congress Committee president Ajay Rai.

Besides the floods that have affected several districts of UP, the opposition has given indithe opposition has given murcations about raising issues of people's concern like rising inflation. Both the given ment and opposition have begun preparations for the byelection to 10 assembly seats in the coming months. The bypolls 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

Meanwhile, UP assembly Speaker Satish Mahana, on Sunday, convened an all-party meeting. Leaders of all the parties attended the meeting in which the speaker sought the cooperation of the opposition parties for the smooth conduct of the assembly. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna, seeking the cooperation of the opposition parties, said the government was ready for debate on all issues to be

raised by the opposition.

Mata Prasad Pandey, who took over as leader of opposition on Sunday, also attended the meeting. The speaker also presided over the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee. The committee approved the agenda of the assembly to be taken up during the monsoon

## BJP's internal fights should not dominate the House: Mayawati

said SP

Rajendra

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati targeted the ruling party and said that it would be better if the ongoing tussle and internal fights in the Bharatiya Janata Party does not dominate the House. In a post on X on Sunday, the former chief minister of UP said, "The monsoon session of the UP legislative assembly is starting from tomorrow,in which the government will also present the supplemen-

the same post, "However, this session will also be brief. But, it would be better if the ongoing tussle and internal fighting in the BJP does not dominate the House and works are carried out in the interest of the people and the state."

The BSP chief also said that instead of displacing people in the name of encroachment in the state, the UP government should focus on improving the lives of people suffering from poverty, unemployment, infla-

tary budget." Mayawati said in tion and the deteriorating law and order.

The BSP chief said in a post on X that lakhs of families affected by the devastation of floods in the state were in urgent need of government help and the government's indifferent attitude towards it

was not right.
"Lakhs of families affected by the devastation of floods in UP are in urgent need of government help, towards which the government's indifferent attitude is worrying," she said,

She also suggested, "Instead of displacing people in the name of encroachment, the government should focus on improving the lives of people suffering from poverty, unem-ployment, inflation and deteriorating law and order situ-

According to an information issued on Saturday by UP assembly's Principal Secretary Pradeep Kumar Dubey, the House proceedings will begin on July 29 and will continue till August 2.

### Gangwar expresses gratitude to PM Modi after being appointed as Jharkhand Guv

Bareilly, saying he always received their faith and love.

Gangwar, an eight-time MP of

the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), from the Bareilly Lok

Sabha seat, has been a minis-

ter in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee

and Narendra Modi govern-

ments. While he was not given

a ticket by the BJP in the recently concluded Lok Sabha

elections, Modi and Home

Minister Amit Shah had said

that he would be given a new

Former Union Minister Santosh Gangwar, appointed as Jharkhand Governor, expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he will live up to the new responsibility.

Gangwar was appointed Governor of Jharkhand, replacing CP Radhakrishnan who was moved to the post of governor of Maharashtra, a statement by Rashtrapati Bhavan said on Saturday night.

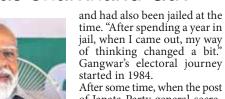
Party workers celebrated at his residence at Bharat Seva Trust here by offering sweets after the announcement.

"I will live up to the new responsibility I have been given," Gangwar, 76, told reporters around late night on Saturday.

Overwhelmed by the new role, Santosh said, "The party has always given me everything without asking for it. Now they have expressed their trust in me by making me the Governor. I am also grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

The Bareilly parliamentary seat was won by BJP's Chhatrapal Gangwar (68) in this year's polls. Gangwar said he entered He also thanked the people of politics in the Emergency years

assignment.



of Janata Party general secretary in the Bareilly district committee was proposed to him, Gangwar said he accept-He lost his first election in 1984

to Congress candidate Abida Begum, wife of former President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, following which he contested the Lok Sabha elections again in 1989 and became an MP for the first time. He won consecutive Lok Sabha

elections from 1989 to 2019, except in 2009, when Praveen Singh Aron of the Congress defeated him.

Gangwar enjoys support from various sections but holds considerable influence in the Kurmi community. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya also congratulated Gangwar on being made the Governor in a post on 'X' and wished him a bright tenure.

### BJP worker shot at

ABJP worker has been allegedly shot at and injured in Chandausi area of the district, with police saying the incident seems to be a fallout of a land dispute.

On Saturday night, police received information about a person who had been shot at and lying injured on Bahjoi Road, Sambhal Superintendent of Police (SP) Kuldeep Singh Gunawat said.

The police reached the spot and rushed Prem Pal (55) from Chandausi to the district hospital from where he was referred to a hospital in Moradabad, the police officer said. According to the Gunawat, Lal, a worker of the BJP's local unit, has injury marks on his shoulder because of the bullet shot from behind. Based on Lal's complaint against three persons -- Dilip, Shyam Lal and Hemant -- an FIR has been registered and the accused have been taken into custody, the SP said. They are being interrogated, the police

The BC (Banking Correspondent) Sakhis (Banking have achieved a major milestone in Uttar Pradesh, earning a commission of Rs 72.31 crore through their services and conducting over 10.58 crore banking transactions so far.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the BC Sakhi scheme in May 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide employment to rural women and make them selfreliant while contributing to the state and country's economies. So far over 37,000 BC Sakhis have facilitated transactions

totalling approximately Rs 27,000 crore under this scheme to facilitate financial services in rural areas.

The scheme's impact is evident, as women have become integral to village society, facilitating financial transactions and services. Villagers now enjoy convenient banking, no longer needing to visit banks to deposit or withdraw money or seek loans.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has set a goal of 'One Gram Panchayat, One BC' to extend the benefits of the BC Sakhi scheme to as many women as possible and to ensure banking facilities in every village. To

achieve this, a widespread campaign is being conducted in each village. More women are

showing a growing interest in becoming BC Sakhis. It is worth mentioning here that in seven rounds, 7,71,967 candidates applied for the BC Sakhis are the seven rounds. Sakhi positions across 57,695 gram panchayats in the state. with 2,91,146 pre-selected standby candidates. To date, 51,000 BC Sakhis have received training and certification from the IIBF (Indian Institute of Banking and Finance).

The scheme is operational in 39,014 gram panchayats, benefiting rural communities. Priyanka Maurya, a BC Sakhi

BC Sakhis achieve milestone from Sultanpur, has been recognised as the state's top performer in the BC Sakhi scheme. She joined the scheme on August 31, 2021, and has since facilitated transactions totalling over Rs 60 crore in 926 out of 929 working days. Through 1,32,393 transactions, Priyanka Maurya earned a commission of Rs 15,84,033. The scheme is gaining popularity among women in rural areas, who feel a sense of pride in participating. It has greatly benefited rural communities by eliminating the need to visit banks to deposit and withdraw money, thus saving time and travel expenses.

## SP appoints Mata Prasad Pandey as leader of oppn in UP assembly

The Samajwadi Party, in a significant move on Sunday, appointed seven-time MLA Mata Prasad Pandey the leader of opposition (LoP) in the Uttar Pradesh assembly.

Pandey, 82, a Brahmin leader from eastern UP, will replace SP president Akhilesh Yadav, who resigned as MLA from Karhal seat in Mainpuri district after he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Kannauj.

After Akhilesh Yadav's resignation as leader of opposition, it was widely speculated that the SP would choose a leader either from Dalit or Other Backward Classes to bolster its PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) vote bank. By choosing Mata Prasad Pandey, a Brahmin leader, as leader of opposition in the assembly, the SP has given firm indication that it intends to widen its social base and emerge as frontrunner for capturing power in UP in the 2027 assembly elections. SP president Akhilesh Yadav



has appointed Pandey, SP MLA from Itwa in Siddharth Nagar district, as the leader of opposition in the assembly, a party leader disclosed.

At a meeting held earlier at the SP state office here on Sunday, the party MLAs had authorised Akhilesh Yadav to choose the leader of opposition in the assembly. The SP has also appointed Kamal Akhtar, the party MLA from Kanth, as the chief whip and Rakesh Kumar alias RK Verma as the deputy whip in the assembly, a party statement stated.

Manoj Pandey, the SP MLA from Rae Bareli, who was the chief whip earlier, had switched loyalty to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party earlier this year

ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. "Hearty congratulations and best wishes to senior Samajwadi (Party) leader Shri Mata Prasad Pandey ji on being elected as the leader of opposition in the UP Legislative Assembly!" Akhilesh Yadav said in a post in Hindi on X. He said Pandey's rich experience would benefit all SP MLAs, assembly speaker, chief minister and all his ministers and MLAs. Pandey has held the post of Uttar Pradesh Assembly speaker twice - 2004-2007 when Mulayam Singh Yadav was the chief minister and later during the Akhilesh Yadav headed SP government from 2012-2017.

He was first elected as MLA in 1980 and then in 1985 and 1989. He served as health minister between 1990 and 1991 in the then Janata Dal government headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav. He was the labour and employment minister in Mulayam Singh Yadav's government between 2002 and

Wazirganj police station area

about one-and-a-half years ago.

#### CM congratulates Manu Bhaker on winning bronze at Paris Olympics

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, congratulated Manu Bhaker for securing India's first medal at the Paris Olympics 2024. On his official social media account X, Chief Minister Yogi wrote, "Hearty congratulations to renowned shooter Manu Bhaker ji, who made Mother India proud by winning the bronze medal in the 10-metre air pistol event at the Paris Olympics 2024! Her victory is an inspiration for countless vouth. I wish her a golden future. May this sequence of victory continue uninterrupted. Infinite best wishes for a

golden future. Jai Hind!" Manu Bhaker became the first Indian woman shooter to claim an Olympic medal by snaring a bronze in the 10m air pistol event with a score of 221.7 at Chateauroux in France on Sunday, a triumph that opened the country's account in the Paris Games and ended a 12-year wait for its much-hyped shooters. The last time India won shoot ing medals at the Olympics was in 2012 London edition where rapid-fire pistol shooter Vijay Kumar and 10m air rifle marksman Gagan Narang clinched silver and bronze respectively. Narang is the chef de mission of the Paris contingent right now. The 22-year-old Bhaker, who hails from Jhajjar in Haryana, fought hard to get the bronze with a score of 221.7 in Chateauroux. Korea's Kim Yeji claimed the silver with a total of 241.3 while her compatriot Jin Ye Oh bagged the gold with a Games record of 243.2.

#### 2 suspended in Hamirpur bribery case

tolerance policy of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a chakbandi lekhpal and a junior assistant were suspended on Sunday in Hamirpur for involvement in a bribery case.

In addition to their suspension, departmental and disciplinary actions have been recommended against both officials. Both have been attached to the settlement officer, consolidation office, and instructions have been given to lodge an FIR against them. Consolidation Commissioner GS Naveen said that the case came to light when a video of Chakbandi Lekhpal Prakhar Chaudhary and junior assistant Prashant Pandey accepting and giving a bribe went viral on social media. Assistant Consolidation Officer Khalid Anjum conducted an investigation in which both officials were prima facie found guilty. Anjum submitted his report to settlement officer consolidation at Hamirpur, who subsequently suspended the accused, recommending departmental and disciplinary action against them and also attached them to the consolidation office settlement officer. Consolidation officers Vimal Kumar and JK Pushkar have been appointed as investigating officers. Additional Consolidation Commissioner Anurag Patel said that instructions had been given to register an FIR against both the accused.

## **CM Yogi pays tribute to Army jawan killed in J-K**

PTI LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paid tribute to Army jawan Mohit Rathour who was killed in line of duty in Jammu and Kashmir, the UP government said in a statement on Sunday. The UP chief minister announced a financial assistance of Rs 50 lakh to the jawan's family. He also announced a government job to a member of his family and to name a road in the Budaun district, of which the jawan was a resident, after him.

Adityanath expressed his condolences to the family and

said the state government is with them in this hour of grief. The state government will provide all possible help to the family, he said in the statement. Meanwhile, Budaun District Magistrate Nidhi Srivastava said the cremation of Rifleman Mohit Rathour, who lost his life in a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara on Saturday, was held on Sunday with full state honours. Rathour (27) was the only son of his parents. He had joined the Army in 2017. He had lost his mother Kalavati several years ago. He was married to Ruchi Chauhan, a resident of the Karenge village under the

Rathour is survived by his father, three sisters and wife. A soldier was killed and four others, including a captain, were injured as the Indian Army foiled an attack on Saturday by Pakistan's Border Action Team (BAT) in the Kamakari sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, military sources had said. They said a Pakistani intruder was also killed in the exchange of fire, while two managed to return to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) amid the intense gunfight that lasted

## Modi praises Yogi's Bagh Mitra programme in 'Mann Ki Baat'

In the 112th episode of 'Mann Narendra Modi praised Pilibhit's Bagh Mitra Pilibhit's Bagh Mitra Programme on the occasion of World Tiger Day on Sunday. This initiative, launched in 2019 under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, aims to significantly reduce human-wildlife conflict in the area, which was

rampant previously.

In October, 2023, Chief
Minister Yogi introduced the
Pach Mitter come in Pilibhit Bagh Mitra app in Pilibhit. Over 120 individuals, including many young people, elderly citizens and four women, are part of the Bagh Mitra network. They use a WhatsApp group to report sightings of tigers or other wildlife, enabling the Forest department to promptly respond and ensure public safety by tracking the animals' locations.

Manish Singh, the Divisional Forest Officer of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, said, "Pilibhit used to experience frequent incidents of human-wildlife conflict. To address this issue, the Bagh Mitra programme was launched in 2019 under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, aiming to reduce these conflicts effectively. The programme has been quite successful, and in

app during his visit to Pilibhit." e Pilibhit Tiger Reserve. established in 2014, initially had 24 tigers. Conservation and promotion programmes were implemented following state government directives, significantly increasing the tiger population. Notably, 70 per cent of the

world's tigers are found in India, with Uttar Pradesh making a valuable contribution. A tiger census conducted in Pilibhit in 2022 revealed that the tiger population had tripled over eight years, with 72 tigers now residing in the reserve. These positive results reflect the government's dedicated efforts in wildlife conservation and bring hope for the future of tiger population manage-

Divisional Forest Officer Manish Singh explained that the Bagh Mitra programme is a modern and efficient initiative. A WhatsApp group of 120 volunteers from nearby villages, including four women, has been established. To become a Bagh Mitra, volunteers must be over 18 years old. The Forest department trained five villagers from remote areas near the forest to be Bagh Mitra.

Singh stated that if a tiger or any other animal is spotted

October 2023, Chief Minister outside the forest, the Bagh Yogi introduced the Bagh Mitra Mitras are instructed to notify the WhatsApp group and he departmen immediately.

This prompt communication allows the department's offi-cers and staff to respond quickly and deploy a team. Volunteers can also use the Bagh Mitra app to update the group with photos of the animal, helping the department accurately identify the species and determine its location relative to the forest.

A monitoring team is dispatched to ensure public safety if a tiger is near agricultural areas. This programme helps keep the community informed and protected.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the Bagh Mitra Programme dur-ing Sunday's Mann Ki Baat address, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed his gratitude on his official social media account X, stating that the prime minister's special mention of the Bagh Mitra Programme in Pilibhit district will inspire new enthusiasm and energy among all participants.

Chief Minister Yogi also reaffirmed the government's commitment to tiger conservation and promotion under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's lead-

### Yogi govt prepares for 'swachh' Maha Kumbh

The Yogi Adityanath government is in a mission mode, preparing for the Maha Kumbh 2025 in Prayagraj with a commitment to make it a 'swachh' Maha Kumbh.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state government is leaving no stone unturned to make this grand event of Sanatan Dharma, held once every 12 vears, both divine and magnif-

During the Maha Kumbh, lakhs of devotees will gather at the Sangam banks in

addition to ensuring the safe-ty and health of the devotees, the Yogi government is plac-ing special emphasis on clean-liness throughout the event. To achieve this, the state government plans to deploy over 10,000 employees dedicated to maintaining sanitation. Around 1,50,000 temporary community and camp toilets and urinals will be installed across the Kumbh Mela area, with over 300 suction trucks and jet spray cleaning systems in use. Cleanliness will be monitored through QR codes for service level checks.

Prayagraj for a holy dip. In To keep the Kumbh city clean, 120 tipper-hoppers and 40 compactor trucks will be used, all monitored via GPS. Additionally, more than 25,000 liner bag-equipped dustbins will be placed throughout the Mela area, and they will be changed three times daily. For efficient sanitation man-

agement, 10,200 workers will be organised into 850 groups. The Yogi government will also construct a Swachhata Colony for these workers, with their daily wages directly transferred to their bank

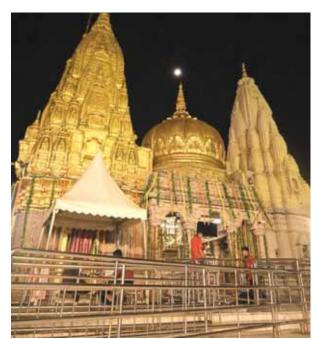
## **Elaborate security at KV Temple** for second Shravan Monday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Elaborate security arrangements have been made to maintain peace in one of the Dwadasa Jyotirlingas Kashi Vishwanath Temple on the eve of the second Monday in the auspicious month of Śhravan. Proper barricades have been made both inside and outside the temple premises. Lakhs of devotees, including saffronclad Kanwariyas, are expected to here for offering prayers, therefore additional security forces have been deployed

In view of the heavy rush, no vehicle will be allowed to move between Godowlia and Maidagin. To maintain law and order, the devotees will be checked at many places through metal detectors. All the activities will also be watched through various CCTV cameras.

Rush of devotees was seen even on Sunday when a large number of them reached here



to offer prayers on the eve of second Monday. A large num-

are expected to come from Prayagraj and other places. ber of saffron-clad Kanwariyas For the convenience of the devotees, at several places big LED screens have been installed to display the activities of garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum).

Besides, heavy rush of devotees

is also expected at Markandey

Mahadev Temple located near

Varanasi-Ghazipur highway

about 25 kilometres from here near the confluence of Ganga and Gomti rivers at Kaithi apart from all famous Shiva including temples. Mahamritunjya Mahadev (Daranagar), Gauri Kedareshwar (Kedar Ghat), Jogeshar Mahadev (Ishwargangi), Omkleshwar Mahadev (Chittanpura), Teel Bhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli), Sarangnath Mahadev (Sarnath) and many others in the city areas. In the outskirts, a heavy rush of devotees will also be seen at all the Shiva temples located on Panchkoshi Marg, including Karmdeshwar Mahadev, Bhim Chandi,

#### Demonstration to be held at Jantar Mantar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

The members of the All India EPS 95 National Agitation Committee (NAC) will organise a grand demon-stration and public meeting at the Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, on July 31 and August 1. At the monthly meeting of the Samiti's Kanpur division held at the Rawatpur Bus Stand on Sunday, national advisor Rajesh Kumar Shukla appealed all to make the proposed agitation a success. It was chaired by the divisional president Ashok Kumar Yadav. State President Om Shanker Tewari informed about the four-point charter of demands awaiting settlement for the last eight years. Anand Awasthi, Sunderlal Pandey, Kripa Shanker Shukla, S Nigam and others addressed the gathering.

## Major halts of Panchkoshi Parikrama Marg inspected

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam inspected the major paraos (halts) of Panchkoshi Parikrama Marg like Kandwa, Bhimchandi and Rameshwar temples and the dharamshalas located there. During the inspection, he directed the departmental officers to immediately fix the arrangements of the floor, toilets, lighting and drinking water system of the dharamshalas, cleanliness of the pond, road, drainage etc.

The DM directed the officials to arrange interlocking on the road sides and remove all the debris lying on the sides of the road. He also instructed not to allow encroachment on the road under any circumstances. He also instructed the officers to plant trees in the vacant places of dharamshalas. The DM said that all the wells around the ponds should be secured by installing double



DM S Rajalingam inspecting Panchkoshi area in Varanasi on Saturday

During the inspection at the nets and gates installed all Bhimchandi, he directed the around repaired and make officers concerned to make arrangements for cleanliness of the dharamshala premises, toilets, electricity arrangements, drinking water, drainage. The DM directed the gram pradhan to ensure proper cleanliness of the dharamshala and its surroundings by deploying the cleaning staff. During the inspection of Gandharva Sagar Tirtha pond, he directed to get

around repaired and make arrangements for drainage wherever water is accumulating on the Panchkoshi Marg so that water does not stagnate on the road. During the inspection, the DM, along with Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, also visited and worshipped at Kardameshwar Mahadev, Maa Bhimchandi Devi and Rameshwar temples.

#### Maha Kumbh: DRM conducts window-trailing inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

**T**n view of the expected huge crowd of devotees in the upcoming Maha Kumbh Mela-2025 to be held in Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj and to provide proper facilities to the visitors coming to the fair, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) Vineet Kumar Srivastava, along with officials concerned, conducted a window-trailing inspection of Banaras-Prayagraj Rambagh railway section on Saturday. He also conducted a thorough inspec-tion of Jhusi and Prayagraj



the DRM thoroughly inspected the passenger reservation centre, unreserved ticket counters, temporary food and water vending stalls, waiting rooms, additional entry and exit routes, permanent and temporary platforms, passenger sheds, RCC benches, foot over bridges, temporary waiting rooms, CCTV surveillance, control Rambagh stations. room for crowd management During the inspection of and passenger facility develop-

ment works under construction for the convenience of fair passengers and gave necessary guidelines to the officials concerned. In a formal chat with the mediapersons he said all arrangements are being made at Prayagraj Rambagh railway station keeping in mind the estimated crowd in the upcoming Kumbh Mela. He said providing safety and maximum comfort facilities to the fair passengers is the priority of the railway administration. For this, construction of additional foot over bridge with ramp at Prayagraj Rambagh, provision of three lifts on platforms, temporary stabling line, determination of platform for running fair specials and all

arrangements are being made as per the need by establishing coordination with the fair authority officials. He said this time EMU racks will be used in Mela Special trains, due to which there will be no problem

Rameshwar Mahadev, Panch

Pandava and Kapildhara.

of reversing the engine. Earlier, at Jhusi station the DRM inspected the passenger waiting rooms, boundary walls, high mast lights, temporary toilets, road for night movement being built in the circulating area of the second entry gate were inspected and gave passenger related guidelines to the officials concerned. After this, he reviewed the progress of the bridge on Ganga river being built between Jhusi-Daraganj in the Railway

Development Office with the Divisional Officers and the officers and engineers of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL). On the occasion Senior Divisional Engineer

(Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan,

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) Pankaj Kesharwani, Senior Divisional Engineer-III Anuj Verma, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Sheikh Rehman, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Rajat Priya, Senior Divisional Security Commissioner S Ramakrishnan, Assistant Divisional Operations

Manager Heera Lal and Public Relations Officer (PRO) Ashok Kumar along with senior officials were also present.

### 33-year-old woman dies as saree gets entangled in fodder cutting machine

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** ■ KANPUR

Awoman was killed after her saree got entangled into a fodder cutting machine in Chaturipur village of Ghatampur police station area on Sunday morning. After sustaining serious injury, she was taken to the Patara (Ghatampur) CHC from where after the first aid, the doctors referred her to the LLR (Hallet) Hospital, Kanpur, where she succumbed to her injury during treatment. Police sent the body for autopsy. Mokal Singh Yadav of Chaturipur village said his wife Sangeeta Singh

(33) was cutting the fodder with the diesel engine fodder cutting machine in front of her house on Sunday morning. After cutting the fodder and switching off the machine, when she was returning home, her saree suddenly got entangled in its strip causing her serious injury and she died during treatment at the LLR Hospital. Crime Inspector, Ghatampur, Khursheed Ahmad said the body had been sent for autopsy. Further action will be initiated on getting autopsy report, he said. Meanwhile a woman who had come to her parents house in Munna Nevada under Sheoli

Kotwali police area of Kanpur Dehat allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself late on Saturday night. On getting information the police probed the issue and sent the body for autopsy. Sripal of Munna Nevada, Sheoli, had married his daughter Anita (22) to Babu Ram of Bairi Basta Colony, Shobhan, Sheoli, on February 14. Anita was upset as she was suffering from dizziness. She had arrived at her maternal home on Monday. Late Saturday night, she hanged herself from the wooden pole on the stairs. Her mother sisters and brother Shiva were were inconsolable.

### Experts outline path to providing better healthcare

Apanel discussion on Healthcare for Developed India@2047' was organised under the joint auspices of the MSME and Startup Forum-Bharat (MSFB) and the Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) on Saturday. Numerous experts outlined the path to providing better healthcare in the next five years. The aim of this panel discussion series is to prepare a future-oriented draft for the healthcare sector by 2029 and to pave the way for a healthy Kashi, UP, and India.

In the discussion, held in the New Lecture Theatre, Prof Ashish Verma on behalf of of IMS-BHU Director Prof SN Sankhwar emphasised on the need for strategic planning and implementation in the healthcare sector. The final goal of the panel discussion is to collect reports from the ground level doctors and stakeholders and forward it to the government. He also noted that this panel discussion is a crucial step towards envisioning a developed and healthy India by 2047 and that it will pave the way for substantial improvements in healthcare over the next five years.

Opening the discussion, leading psychiatrist Dr Venu Gopal Jhanwar highlighted the remarkable parallels between the three trillion neurons in the



Panel discussion on healthcare being held at IMS-BHU in Varanasi on Saturday.

adult brain and the potential for India's three trillion dollar economy. He emphasised that Kashi is an ideal location to advance the vision of a developed India, acknowledging the role of knowledge seekers in this endeavour. Prof Ashish Verma discussed the global paradigm shift in healthcare from minimalist to minimalistic approaches. He emphasised the need for pragmatic concepts from experts to evolve the healthcare system and highlighted MSME's role in bringing stakeholders together to create a comprehensive document for government review. Senior gastroenterologist Dr Hemant Gupta recalled the 2014 concept note initiated under the prime minister's leadership, noting that basic health facilities were previously neglected. Post-Covid changes are underway, he said, calling for system development and decentralisation sim-

ilar to England's model to address issues such as inadequate emergency services at BHU. Prof Yogendra Singh stressed the importance of panel discussions to address healthcare deficiencies, particularly in rural areas. He advocated for decentralisation as a key strategy for improving healthcare by 2047. Medical Superintendent, of Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH), BHU, Prof Kailash Kumar, highlighting the need for priority in mental health, emphasised that both mental and physical health are crucial. He criticised current healthcare facilities as underperforming and advocated for decentralisation, effective resource utilisation and addressing environmental and population control issues. On the occasion former Vice-Chancellor of Ballia University Prof Yogendra Singh, Special Executive Officer of the National Health

Authority, New Delhi, Himanshu Burad, and Prof Dheeraj Kishore, Head of the Medicine Department at IMS-BHU, offered significant proposals regarding the future health scenario of India in

Dr Manoi Kumar Shah, cochair of the subject path programme, welcomed the guests. The programme advisor, Gopal Jhanwar from Deva Institute, delivered the inaugural speech, highlighting the critical need for collaborative efforts to achieve healthcare excellence by 2047. The panel discussion covered various aspects of healthcare development, including modern medical practices, environmental health and efficient healthcare

management. Programme coordinator Dr Anshuman Banerjee proposed

the vote of thanks. The discussion included contributions from Prof Ashok Kumar, Prof Saurabh Singh, Prof Ashish Verma, Dr Siddharth Lakhtotia, Dr Tuhina Banerjee, Dr NK Agarwal, Dr Manushi Srivastava, Dr Arun Kumar Dubey, Dr Priyanka Agarwal, Dr SS Chakravarty, Dr Anurag Singh, Dr PV Rajiv, Dr Vijay Sonkar, Prof Neeraj Sharma, Prof Sanjay Singh, Dr Indranil Basu, Dr Ashok Rai, Sarvesh Pandey, Dr Piyush Hari, Dr Swapnil Patel, Dr Prabhas Kumar Roy and Dr Atul Ratan.

## **Ensure progress in health schemes: DM**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The District Health Committee meeting was held in Vikas Bhawan under the chairmanship of District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam here on Saturday. During it the DM directed all the medical officers in charge to ensure financial progress along with the expected progress in health nes and programmes He said online information

should be uploaded on time, otherwise, if poor progress is found during the review in future, action will be taken against the Community Health Officer (CHO) or personnel concerned. He also gave instructions to the officers to get the prescribed training of medical personnel/ para medical staff done on time. During the meeting, the DM

instructed the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to conduct regular review at his level to ensure financial progress along with physical progress. He also said that necessary action should be taken for filling up the vacant posts of ASHA workers. He gave instructions to ensure expected progress in the family welfare programme under World Population Day, to run family planning programmes more effectively, timely payment of ASHA workers should also be made on time.

The district magistrate said that if any CHO does not fill his positive volume index (PVI) form on the portal every month, then his/her salary for one day in that month should be stopped. He said that payment of PVI should also be ensured every month and the

responsibility for completing the training programmes in all the schemes. According to him, payment of all committed works must be made by July 30 in any case and whatever amount has been allocated to the hospitals in the Rogi Kalyan Samiti, it should be spent in strengthening the hospitals and facilities for the patients should

He said that warning should be given in case of less expenditure in urban CHCs Misirpur, Sarnath and Shivpur. The DM expressed anger on finding less prenatal checkups in PHC Baragaon. During the meeting, District Accounts Manager Jagdish Maurya was directed not to pay salary on 'no work no pay and employees working under National Health Mission, whose work is not sat-

nodal officers should take isfactory, should be given notice. Chief Development Officer

(CDO) Himanshu Nagpal directed all MOICs to distribute six types of medicines for the management of SAM children under VHSND through ANMs and CHOs and Vitamin A syrup should be made available at Anganwadi centres in the next three days. The CDO directed the urban nodal offi cer to stop the salary for less achievement in comparison to the target on Population Stability Fortnight.

CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary and District Programme Manager Santosh Kumar Singh gave detailed information on all progress reports. On the occasion, officials from other departments, including health, WHO and UNICEF representatives were also present.

## 117th Prakatyotsav of Swami Karpatri from July 31

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

The 117th Prakatyotsav of 'Dharmasamrat' Swami Karpatri Ji Maharaj will be held from July 31 to August 14 at his 'Taposthali' Dharma Sangh (Mani Mandir), Durgakund. Various programnes will be organised during this 15-day-long event and the main event will be the very special Karpatra Ratna Samman Samaroh on the day

of Karpatri Prakatyotsav on August 6, while a day before that Karpatri Deepawali will be organised in the evening on August 5 in which 42,705 diyas will be lit this year.

Giving the information while talking to reporters here on Sunday, Dharma Sangh Peethadheeshwar Swami Chaitanya Shankardev Brahmachari Ji Maharaj informed that from 31st July to August 6, the story of Shri Shiv Mahapuran will be narrated by Brajnandan Ji Maharaj of Vrindavan in the Dharma Sangh premises and after which from August 7th to 13 the famous storyteller Sudhiranand Ji Maharaj will narrate the

The fortnight-long event will conclude on August 14 with Shri Gauri Kedareshwar Jalabhishek Yatra. He informed that on August 6. on the day of Prakatya Diwas, an Akhand

story of Shri Ram.

Bhandara will be organised in the Dharma Sangh from the morning itself which will continue uninterrupted till late night. Arrangements for food and prasad have been made for thousands of devotees, he added. General secretary of Dharma Sangh, Pandit Jagjitan Pandey informed that the preparations for the event are in full swing and complete arrangements for food and lodging have been made.

### Sanjay Kapoor elected FIDE India zone president

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a significant development for Indian chess, former All India Chess Federation (AICF) president Dr Sanjay Kapoor of Kanpur has been unanimously elected as FIDE India Zone President (3.7) at the annual meeting of the AICF. The



was made during the annual general meeting (AGM) of AICF held in Dr Sanjay Kapoor Ahmedabad.

Dr Kapoor has been elected as the Zone president for four years. FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich congratulated Dr Sanjay Kapoor for new role as the FIDE India zone president. Dr Kapoor's new role marks a pivotal moment for chess governance in India, entrusting him with the responsibility of overseeing Kapoor's vision includes har-nessing India's vast talent pool

the game's growth and development across the globe.

Speaking on his appointment, Dr Sanjay Kapoor said, "It is an immense honour to be elected as the FIDE India zone president. I am committed to the growth of chess in every corner of our country and ensuring that we produce grandmasters from each and every state."

"My experience with the 44th Chess Olympiad has shown me the incredible potential we have and I am excited to work towards a bright future for chess in India and internationally," he added.

Dr Kapoor has been at the forefront of successfully staging the 44th edition of the Chess Olympiad in India. He was the AICF president when India hosted the 44th edition of the Chess Olympiad. Having worked for the betterment of the game of chess in India,

to produce world-class chess players from every state. Meanwhile, on International Chess Day (July 20) last week, FIDE also launched its Guinness World Record attempt for the most games played online and over-theboard in 24 hours. Over 109 national federations and major online chess platforms took part, with almost 350 events

**SPORTS COMPETITION:** In the 53rd Regional Sports Competition (boys' category) held at Kendriya Vidyalaya IIT Kanpur, the host KV IIT Kanpur team won the 14-yearage-group basketball match against KV JRC Bareilly, securing a place at the national level. In the lawn tennis 14year-age-group matches, Aryan Bharti from KV Lucknow Cantt won the first place, Tejas Singh from KV IFFCO Bareilly second place and Jayesh Chahal from KV IFFCO Bareilly the third place. In the 17-year-agegroup, Akshat Chahal from KV RDSO Lucknow won the first place, Harshvardhan from KV IFFCO Bareilly second place and Pragyan Singh from KV IFFCO Bareilly the third place. In the 19-year-age-group, Kritagya from KV Gomtinagar First Shift won the first place, and Abhinav from KV Gomtinagar first shift won second place. All these players have also been selected to participate at the national level. The principal blessed everyone. BASKETBALL LEAGUE: The team of The Sportz Hub (TSH) is representing the city in the Uttar Pradesh Basketball League being organised in Ghaziabad from July 27 to August 3. The event organised by the UP Basketball Assocation is being hosted by the Nehru World School, Ghaziabad. Six teams participating in the first season of the Basketball League include

Bhartiya Warriors, Ghaziabad; Shubham Smashers, Meerut, Deobhumi Loins, Rampur, The Sports Hub, Kanpur, Aligarh Dribblers, Aligarh, and ASP Fitness, Lucknow. The selection of players for the League was held at the Nehru World School, Ghaziabad, from July 19 to 21 wherein out of 400 players participated from the state, 72 were selected and divided into six teams. In the bid held on Friday, team owners selected players of their choice. The winner team will be awarded cash prize of Rs 1 lakh while the runner-up and third winner will be given Rs 75,000 and Rs 50,000 respectively. Live telecast of all the matches will be available on Youtube. As with the start of IPL in cricket, budding players get ample opportunity, the Basketball League will also be prove to be a milestone in providing a new platform to players and reviving the game.

#### Cash, valuables stolen outs of criminals in Unnao and

ash and valuables worth Lakhs of rupees were stolen from a house in Hanuman Nagar under Sadar Kotwali police area of Unnao. The incident came to light after the landlord returned home on Sunday. Field unit and Kotwali police carried out investigation. Police with the help of surveillance team launched raids to nail the thieves. Purshottam Singh of Hanuman Nagar said he lives with his wife in Lucknow. His mother lives on the second floor in Hanuman Nagar house. On returning home on Sunday, he found the locks of almirah broken and cash worth ₹7 lakh, jewellery and a costly watch, all worth around ₹ 2.50 lakh, missing. Kotwali incharge Pramod Kumar Mishra and field unit team rushed to the spot and carried out investigation. Police have raided the possible hide-

Kanpur and quizzed many suspects. Circle Officer (CO) City Sonam Singh said on the basis of complaint, a probe is on. TRIBUTE PAID: The Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar, and Kanpur Girls Inter College together paid tribute to the martyrs on Kargil Day. A large num-ber of NCC cadets participated in speeches, singing, parade and candle march. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Dr Akanksha Shukla,

and three PI staff. PIPPING CEREMONY: ACP Mahesh Kumar and his wife ACP Archana Singh of the Kanpur

Dr Poonam, Dr. Shailja Rawat

Police Commissionerate have been promoted to the post of ADCP. A pipping ceremony was organised at the Commissionerate's camp office in presence of the City Police Commissioner Akhil Kumar, ACP (Crime & HQs) Vipin Kumar Mishra

and ACP (Law & Order) Harish Chander on Saturday. State general secretary of UP Yuwa Udyog Vyapar Mandal Sant Mishra, state general secretary of Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal Gyanesh Mishra, state secretary Roshan Gupta, Anurag Sahu, Sachin Trivedi, Abdul Wahid Malloo, President of Kanpur Udyog Vyapar Mandal Sunil Bajaj, Virat Gupta, Pradip Gupta and state general secretary of FITA Vyapar Mandal Umang Agarwal also extended their greetings to them. **CONSTRUCTION:** The con-

struction of the Double Pulia Metro Station is underway as part of the Rawatpur-Double Pulia underground section of Corridor-2 (CSA to Barra-8) of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project. Currently, work is focused on the Diaphragm Wall (D-wall) for the station. Since April a diversion plan has been in effect with the approval of the Traffic Police, Kanpur Nagar.

## **BJP** top brass, CMs deliberate on governance



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Chief Ministers of BJP- ■ ruled states made presentations on various development schemes going on in their states as the party's top brass, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, held deliberations with them over governance issues for a second consecutive day on Sunday.

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah and J P Nadda, who is also the National President of the party, were part of the meeting. The two-day 'mukhyamantri parishad' began on Saturday.

In his remarks, Modi emphasised the need to ensure saturation coverage of welfare schemes going on in the BJPruled states, saying they should be seen as an example of good governance.

efforts of the BJP-run Governments to help different sections of society, especially the poor."Our Party is working tirelessly to further good governance and fulfil the aspirations of the people," PM shared on social media.

The "mukhyamantri parishad" organised by the BJP at regular intervals is aimed at reviewing key schemes in States, following the best governance practices and the delivery of Central Government welfare initiatives.

Chief ministers Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Bhajanlal Sharma (Rajasthan) and Mohan Charan Majhi (Odisha) were among the leaders who attended the meeting. The Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh,

He, sources said, noted the Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Haryana, Manipur and Chhattisgarh were also part of the delibera-

> The leaders at times also take stock of the political situation. The meeting comes in the wake of the presentation of the Union Budget, with the opposition targeting the Government for allegedly ignoring other states at the expense of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

It is also the first meeting following the Lok Sabha polls in which the BJP's performance was underwhelming as the party lost its majority in the Lower House of Parliament. Party leaders, though, added that governance issues are at the centre of the discussions at the meeting. The last such meeting was held in February.

**D**rime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that Khadi Gramodyog's business has crossed ₹ 1.5 lakh crore for the first time and asserted that the rising sales of Khadi and handloom were creating new job opportunities in large

In his Mann Ki Baat monthly radio broadcast, Modi said many people who would not be using Khadi products ear-lier now wear them with great

"The Khadi Gramodyog's business has crossed ₹ 1.5 lakh crore for the first time. Do you know how much sales of Khadi have gone up '400 per

The rising sales of Khadi and handloom are creating new job opportunities in large numbers," he said. Mostly women are associated

with this industry so they are benefitting the most, he

"You must be having different types of clothes and till now if you have not bought khadi clothes then start buying them," Modi said.

With the start of the Paris Olympics, the prime minister said the games give our athletes a chance to hoist the national flag at the interna-tional level. He urged people to encourage them and 'Cheer for Bharat'.

During the broadcast, he also interacted with Indian stu-



dents who performed very well in the recently held Mathematics olympiad. "A few days

Olympics took place in the world of mathe-

matics also: the International Mathematics Olympiad. Indian students have performed very well in this Olympiad. Our team won four gold medals and one silver medal," Modi said.

The prime minister also hailed the inclusion of the Moidams' in Assam in the UNESCO world heritage list and said it is a matter of immense joy for every Indian. He also recalled unveiling the tallest statue of the great Ahom warrior Lachit Borphukan, a symbol of indomitable courage and

#### Locals' efforts to save tigers lauded ARCHANA JYOTI "In India, Tigers have been an

Khadi creating jobs, says Modi

 $F^{
m rom\ Rajasthan's\ 'Kulhadi}_{
m Band\ Panchayat'\ in}$ Ranthambore tiger reserve to Maharashtra's eco-tourism initiatives by tribals in Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and Andhra Pradesh's diligent 'Chenchu' tribe to 'Baagh Mitr Karykram' in Pilibhit', various communities across India are playing crucial role in safeguarding India's big cats. India has 70 percent of the global tiger population. On the eve

Mann Ki Baat World Tiger observed on Monday,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday in his 'Maan Ki Baat' made special mention of these local initiatives, stating that "all of them play a crucial role in protecting the country's magnificent crea-

India is seeing positive impacts from these community-driven efforts, he said, adding that they are not only inspiring but also crucial for the preservation of our rich wildlife heritage.

"Let us applaud and support these exemplary initiatives," the Prime Minister said.

integral part of our culture. We all have grown up listening to stories of incidents related to tigers. In the villages around forests, everyone knows how to live in harmony with the tiger. In our country, there are many villages where there is no con-



tigers. But where such a situation arises, unprecedented efforts are being made for the protection of tigers there as well.Modi praised the "Kulhadi Band Panchayat" in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve for its pledge that they will not go to the forest with axes and will not cut trees. Due to this one decision, the forests here are becoming green once again, and a better environment is being created for the tigers, he

The Prime Minister also mothers.

noted the strides made by the Gond and Mana tribes in Maharashtra, whose reduced forest dependency has supported the tiger population's growth in Tadoba.In Andhra Pradesh,

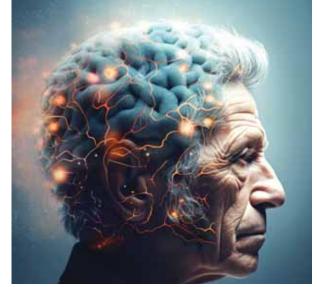
'You will also be surprised at the efforts of the 'Chenchu' tribe living on the Nallamalai

hills in Andhra Pradesh. As Tiger Trackers, they have gathered every bit of information on the movement of wild animals in the forest. Along with that, they also keep monitoring illegal activ-

ities in the area. "Similarly, the 'Chenchu' tribe's role as Tiger Trackers is crucial for monitoring wildlife and preventing illegal activities while the 'Baagh Mitr Karykram' in Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, exemplifies another successful community initiative by training locals as 'Tiger Friends' to mitigate human-tiger conflicts," Modi said.

These efforts are not isolated. "Many such efforts are underway in different parts of the country.

He also exhorted the countrymen to participate in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, which recently saw the planting of over 2 lakh saplings in Indore, promoting environment and honoring



## High fat in belly or arms linked to higher risk of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's

**ARCHANA JYOTI** ■ NEW DELHI

 $I^{
m f}$  you have high levels of body fat, particularly in the belly or arms, it's important to be aware that this may increase your risk of developing neurological progressive conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases (PD). Research suggests that excess fat in these areas can have adverse effects on neurological health, potentially contributing to the development

The study's findings are particularly significant for India, where the combination of increasing life expectancy, younger age of disease onset, and a growing population with obesity creates a unique set of challenges.

of these conditions.

Effective preventive measures and healthcare strategies tailored to the Indian context are essential for mitigating the impact of these neurodegenerative conditions, according to the experts here.

Conversely, as per the study, individuals who exhibited high levels of muscle strength were less likely to develop these neurodegenerative diseases. This suggests that greater muscle strength might offer protective benefits against the onset of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, according to a study published in Neurology, the medical journal of the American

Academy of Neurology. Managing fat levels through lifestyle changes and medical interventions might be crucial in reducing disease risk, said the study involving 412,691 people with an average age of 56 who were followed for an

average of nine years. At the beginning of the study, researchers assessed participants' body composition alone.

through measurements of waist and hip circumference, grip strength, bone density, and fat and lean mass.

Over the study period, 8,224 individuals developed neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's, other forms of dementia, and Parkinson's disease.

The findings revealed that male participants with high levels of belly fat developed neurodegenerative diseases at a rate of 3.38 per 1,000 person-years, compared to 1.82 cases per 1,000 person-years in those with lower levels of belly fat.

Female participants with high levels of belly fat had rates of 2.55 per 1,000 person-years, versus 1.39 for those with lower levels.

After adjusting for factors such as high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol consumption, and diabetes, the researchers found that individuals with high levels of belly fat were 13 per cent more likely to develop these diseases compared to those with lower levels, the study adding that those with high muscle strength were 26 per cent less likely to develop the diseases than those with low levels of strength.Study author Huan Song of Sichuan University in Chengdu, China said, "the study highlights the potential to lessen people's risk of developing these diseases by improving their body composition.

Targeted interventions to reduce trunk and arm fat, combined with efforts to promote healthy muscle development, may offer more effective protection against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's than general weight control

## Centre mulls making floodplain zoning law must for States to get funds

the Secretary emphasised the

importance of flood plain zon-

ing for comprehensive flood

management and minimising flood damage," the official

added."The Ministry of Jal

Shakti has been persistently

urging States to take action.

However, the progress remains

limited to a few States. Water

management, including flood

management, is a State Subject

under the Constitution. States

need to take proactive mea-

sures in this regard," another

The legislation provided guide-

lines for flood zoning authorities, surveys, delineation of

flood plain areas, notification

of flood plain limits, restric-

tions on flood plain use, and

provisions for compensation

and removal of obstructions.

Despite these comprehensive

guidelines, many States are yet

to take significant steps towards

official said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With only four States complying despite repeated templating making it mandatory for States to enact floodplain zoning legislation if they want to access central flood management funds, officials have said.

The four States that have enacted such legislations are: Rajasthan, ?Manipur, Uttarakhand, and the erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir.

A senior official said the Ministry of Jal Shakti has been in continuous communication with State Governments, urg-Plain Zoning Act and demarcate flood zones, Recently, the Central Water Commission updated the Model Act, and the Ministry plans to initiate another round of consultations with States, the official

The official said the Ministry has proposed making the enactment of the Flood Plain Zoning Act a prerequisite for States to access funds under the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP). We are going for a Cabinet approval for the next phase of the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme.

For that, now the condition for any State to access resources under the FMBAP will be that the state must have enacted the Flood Plain Zoning Act.

So, you will not get money if you have not enacted the Flood Plain Zoning Act," the official said. The official said the Ministry has made several other efforts to address these



legislation and enforcement, "In May 2022, the Secretary of the official said. the Department of Water The official said even the States

Resources, River Development that have enforced the law are yet to fully implement it. & Ganga Rejuvenation wrote to zoning legislation in 1978, but them to enact appropriate legthe demarcation of flood zones In a meeting in January 2023, is yet to be done.

Rajasthan also enacted legislation in the state; however, enforcement thereof is yet to be done," the official said.

Uttarakhand is one state which has enacted the law as well as undertaken some groundwork by demarcating different segments where development will take place only in regulated matter or will not take place at

"So, this way they have done. Uttarakhand is the only state. Then, based on some an NGT (National Green Tribunal) order, even Uttar Pradesh has done some demarcation on the flood plains," the official said. Some States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have informed about difficulties in implementation of such a law due to large-flood affected areas and other States have yet not taken any action for enactment of a legislation, the official said.

### Cong accuses Centre of bias in flood relief funds allocation

PNS NEW DELHI

ongress on Sunday uccused the Central Government of practising "double standards" in allocating funds to flood-afflicted States, alleging that it was exacting "revenge" on the peo-ple of Himachal Pradesh for not voting for the BJP in the Assembly elections.

Congress General Secretary (In-charge, Communications) Iairam Ramesh said, 'Yesterday, the self-anointed non-biological Prime Minister but when it comes to the said that Viksit Bharat depends Congress-governed Himachal on Viksit states. Wow, such a profundity.

If only he put the taxpayer's money where his mouth is!" "After the disastrous floods of 2023, the Government of Himachal Pradesh repeatedly demanded that the Union Government declare the floods a National calamity'? a plea which Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman repeatedly rejected," Ramesh said in

a post on X. "Now, in her Budget Speech, when allocating funds for irrigation and flood mitigation, the Finance Minister has provided a vivid illustration of the double standards at work in the non-biological PM's Government," he claimed. 'Relevant extracts from this section for each flood-afflict-

state: Bihar: 'Government'|will provide financial support for projects with estimated cost of ₹ 11,500 crores'. Assam: 'We will provide assistance to Assam for flood management and related projects.' Uttarakhand:

'We will provide assistance to the state.' Sikkim: 'Our Government will provide assistance to the state.' Himachal Pradesh: 'Our Government will provide assistance to the state' through multilateral development assistance," he said.

Basically, what the finance minister has said is that BJPruled states will get financial assistance in the form of grants Pradesh, the assistance will be 'arranged through multilateral development assistance", i.E., loans that it will have to

repay, Ramesh said. Himachal Pradesh, which is historically a fiscally challenged state due to its remote geography and challenging terrain, will be burdened with more loans, he said.

This is nothing but revenge on the people who did not vote for the BJP in Assembly elections, Ramesh said. In his address to the ninth

Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog on Saturday, Modi observed that the vision of Viksit Bharat can be realised through Viksit States, and that the aspiration of Viksit Bharat should reach the grassroot level i.E to each district, block,

and village.
"For this, each state and district should create a vision for 2047 so as to realise Viksit Bharat @ 2047," he had said.



Bhojpuri PNS NEW DELHI

 $B_{\text{MP Ravi Kishan has intro-}}^{\text{hojpuri superstar and BJP}}$ duced a Private Member Bill in Lok Sabha to include Bhojpuri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution so that it can be accorded the status of an official language. Kishan, who introduced The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024, on Friday, said he wants to underline that the Bhojpuri language is not about crass songs but has a rich cultural history and literature which needs to be promoted.

"So many people speak and understand this language. It is our mother tongue.

I wanted to promote this language as a film industry is also being run in this language and lakhs are getting employment. The music industry is also very big," the BJP MP from Gorakhpur said. This Bill is about promoting Bhojpuri literature which is very rich, he said."People will take the language seriously. The language is not about crass songs. The language is so rich, it also has literature," Kishan said. The literature of Bhojpuri needs to be popularised, the actor-cumpolitician said. "I want to pay back to my community. This language is my identity.'

In its statement of objects and reasons, the bill notes that the Bhojpuri language which originated in the Gangetic plains of India is a very old and rich language having its origin in the Sanskrit language.

Bhojpuri is the mother tongue of a large number of people residing in Uttar Pradesh, Western Bihar, Jharkhand and some parts of Madhya Pradesh as well as in several other countries, it further notes.

In Mauritius, this language is spoken by a large number of people and it is estimated that around 140 million people speak Bhojpuri, the bill's note on objective states. The bill notes that Bhojpuri films are very popular in the country and abroad and have a deep impact on the Hindi film industry.

## Conclave to advance development of world's largest museum

PNS NEW DELHI

ome next-week and curators, muse-Uum administrators, and domain experts from across the world will congregate at a three-day conclave from August 1-3 in the national Capital with an aim to advance the development of the proposed 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum' which is set to be the

largest museum in the world. The conclave will be held at the Bharat Mandapam, currently the venue for the 46th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, being held for the first time in India. 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum' will span 154,000 square metres across the North and South Blocks in Delhi. It will feature eight thematic segments covering over

5,000 years of Indian history. Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, will address

the gathering.
"The event will provide a platform for states to present their collections and contribute to the museum's narrative, reflecting India's rich cultural heritage. It will include master classes and work-



shops led by both Indian and international experts on topics like museum architecture, conservation practices, collections management, and curation," said an official from the Union Culture Ministry. Attendees will benefit from hands-on training and networking opportunities aimed at enhancing skills in museum management and administration. The Ministry of Culture will also provide information on avail-

able funding schemes to support statelevel museum development, including the updated Museum Grant Scheme and the Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science, the official added. This conclave is set to play a crucial role in shaping the future of India's museum landscape and ensuring that the 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum' meets global best practices in showcasing India's rich cultural heritage.

"This three-day gathering aims to foster collaboration among state museums and the central government in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for the 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum' that aims to exemplify global best practices," the official said. To foster a comprehensive under-

standing of India's artefact wealth for the 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum', the states have been invited to provide detailed insights into their respective state's collections at the forthcoming state conclave," he said.

Master classes will also be held with experts from India and abroad spanning various topics such as the architecture and materiality of the North and South Block, global best practices in conservation, fine arts handling, collections management, curation and museum management, the official said.

Additionally, the Ministry will present an overview of available funding schemes, including the recently updated Museum Grant Scheme and the Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science, to support state-level museum development initiatives.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION—

### **Enough is enough**

The tragic deaths of three students in basement flooding is a repeat story of administrative apathy and negligence

The incident is both tragic and surreal. It is difficult to comprehend that three students could lose their lives in a coaching centre operated in a basement that gets flooded. In a heartbreaking incident that has once again spotlighted the glaring deficiencies in urban infrastructure and governance, three civil service aspirants tragically lost their lives due to flooding in a basement. This avoidable disaster raises serious questions about official apathy, the flouting of safety norms, and the recurring nature of such incidents. On a fateful evening, heavy rains lashed the city, overwhelming the already inadequate drainage systems. The basement, where the students were studying, was rapidly filled with water. Despite desperate attempts to escape, the rising water levels led to the tragic drowning of the three young lives. The basement, meant for commercial storage, was illegally converted into a coaching centre. With no proper ventilation, emergency exits, or drainage systems, it became a death trap during the downpour. This



incident underscores a stark reality faced by many urban dwellers who are forced to live in substandard and unsafe accommodations due to high real estate costs and inadequate housing policies.

The deaths of these students could have been prevented had there been stricter enforcement of building codes and timely maintenance of drainage systems. However, the incident has laid bare the apathy of the authorities responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens. Residents in the area had repeatedly complained about the poor drainage and the illegal conversion of basements into living spaces. Despite these warnings, no significant action was taken. The inac-

tion of municipal authorities and the lack of accountability have resulted in yet another tragedy. After the death of three students, it is time for the crocodile tears to flood on the social media. A big section of political class would rather do nothing but just be concerned about such incidents. Indeed it is the nexus between the local politicians, bureaucrats and business owners of dubious credentials to indulge in flouting the norms and make a fast buck. They do not mind playing with the lives of innocent people. The incident is not an isolated one, similar incidents have happened in the past. This is part of a disturbing pattern where safety norms are routinely flouted by the powerful. Illegal constructions, unauthorized conversions, and poor maintenance of infrastructure are rampant in many urban areas including the capital city. Builders and landlords often bypass regulations, compromising the safety of residents for profit. Such incidents are alarmingly frequent, each time highlighting the same issues of poor infrastructure, negligence, and lack of accountability. Despite the public outcry and media attention that follows each tragedy, there seems to be little systemic change. Again, a customary enquiry would be instituted which would give its report when the incident is all but forgotten from the public memory and we as a nation wait for another one to happen.



Kanwariyas' carry Ganga water during their pilgrimage in the holy month of 'Shravan', in Haridwa

## Honour the unsung heroes of operation Pawan



#### The lack of public commemoration for the 1,171 soldiers killed in action during Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka highlights a troubling apathy

ndia's future path to greatness shall be marked with supreme sacrifices by its warriors who if confined to the dustbin of state apathy, as reflected by the Government disinclination towards public commemoration of supreme sacrifice by 1171 Indian soldiers KIA during Operation 'Pawan' in Sri Lanka, may adversely impact the national will during inevitable future military confrontations. To recall Operation 'Pawan,' the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operation in Sri Lanka, was the largest joint services military operation conducted by India, in the 1971 War. It led to establishment

Headquarters IPKF, a Corps-size tri-service organisation with nearly 100,000 troops from the three services under its command. Had the proposed Maritime Theatre Command been in existence, Operation 'Pawan' would have come under its ambit.

The intensity of this 32-monthlong 'politico-military peace keeping' operation, undertaken from 29th of July 1987 to 24th of March 1990, is best gauged from the gallantry awards won and casualties suffered by this force. 1172 Indian soldiers were Killed In Action (KIA), and more than 3500 soldiers suffered grievous injuries. The IPKF was awarded Param Vir Chakra, 6 Maha Vir Chakras, 98 Vir Chakras and scores of other gallantry awards. The ghost of the political failure to see through to the end of its first geopolitical foray in near abroad continues to impact Indian policy establishment even in the present times.

As of now, against the backdrop of a sustained Chinese presence in Sri Lanka, India is struggling to adopt a coherent strategy to deal with the continued intransigence by the Sri Lanka Government to implement the political solution of devolution to the Tamils enshrined in the Indian Sri Lanka Agreement into the picture because it (ISLA) of 29th of July 1987 India is bound to invite hostility from the dominant geopolitical forces in its neighbourhood.

This will mandate it to be prepared for Out-of-area military operations to secure its economic and geopolitical interests. India's

future path to greatness therefore shall be marked with supreme sacrifices by its warriors who if confined to the dustbin of state apathy, as reflected by the Government disinclination towards public commemoration of supreme sacrifice by 1171 Indian soldiers KIA in Sri Lanka, may adversely impact the national will during the inevitable future military confrontations. The Government is very vocal in pronouncing its nationalist credentials but sluggish in putting money into building

deterrent capabilities. Last week's defence budget was a green signal for China to race even further ahead under the illusion there will be no war. Still, policy pronouncements are not enough unless backed by a revitalised and reorganised military competent to safeguard its economic interests, all aspirational talk is mere rhetoric. Building National War Memorials is one thing; honouring the fallen braves appropriately is quite another matter regardless of the outcome because victory or defeat on the battlefield is never complete unless it is surrendered as in 1971

This is where the IPKF comes was not permitted to complete its military mission. Its contribution to the preservation of Sri Lanka's territorial integrity is fully acknowledged; in Colombo especially. New Delhi must honour its sacri-



AGAINST THE INJUSTICE OF THE **GOVERNMENT** AND THE ARMED **FORCES** NOT OFFICIALLY COMMEMORATING THE IPKF **OPERATIONS** AT THE NWM AS IS DONE FOR

KARGIL WARS

the valour of the fallen brave. The political parameters of the ISLA had been achieved by the IPKF by December 1988. The ethnic Sri Lanka Tamil predominant Northern and Eastern Provinces were amalgamated into a unitary Northeastern Province, general elections to the North East Provincial Council were successfully conducted, with a duly elected EPRLF-led government sworn in. Had the IPKF stay been extended to tame the LTTE, the military mission could have created conditions for implementing a political solution short of

Elam. This would have secured national interest, but the new Indian government should not have endorsed the new Sri Lankan government's demand to withdraw IPKF from the island in August 1989. Ascribing the failure of ISLA to IPKF, which was just a corollary to ISLA, is unfair. The failures lay in the diplomatic and government policy, which the establishment wishes to cover up by laying the blame at the doorstep of its

The ISLA had weak foundathe ISLA was not thought sive influence to oversee the implementation of the (The writer won Sena Medal is

against its ethnic Tamil minority, impacting Indian policy towards Sri Lanka even in the present.

The provision of weapons and allied support by R&AW to the LTTE even when militarily engaged against IPKF, and the availability of physical infrastructure support to LTTE in Tamil Nadu, was against national interests. Similar primacy to political interests can be sensed by the refusal of the Indian state to commemorate KIA of Operation 'Pawan'. There is angst against the injustice of the government and the armed forces not officially commemorating the IPKF operations at the NWM as is done for the 1971 and Kargil wars. Graves of some of the Indian soldiers killed during Operation 'Pawan' are still in Sri Lanka. It is hard to understand the dichotomy of the Indian leadership, both political and military, paying public tributes at the IPKF war memorial in Colombo, in the heart of Sri Lanka, but failing to honour those KIA during Operation 'Pawan,' at the NWM at New Delhi. The IPKF war veterans are ever hopeful that the Govt will tions. The contingency of Sri realise the injustice and con-Lanka and LTTE reneging on sent to a befitting annual national homage to 1171 of its through. The withdrawal of IPKF left India without decisupreme sacrifice during 'Operation Pawan'.

promised political package by an Operation 'Pawan' veteran; Sri Lanka to remove the dis- he is strategic thinker, and criminatory state practices author; views are personal)

## How generative Al is transforming the workplace-



#### The rapid advancements in generative AI are revolutionising the workplace, reshaping job roles, and redefining the future of work

utomation has been at the core of human evolution since the beginning of time. Humans have always sought out ways to make their jobs faster and easier. From physical labour to mechanized tools and now artificial intelligence, the unprecedented rate at which this sector has evolved has been transformative. With every upgrade, the next set of expectations is demanded immediately. This leads us to the conclusion that the future of work is NOT in the future; It is NOW!

This continuous evolution is significantly impacting the workplace, redefining the nature of work, the role of workers, and the environment in which they operate. As we navigate this transformation, HR and business leaders must understand the implications of AI on the future of work. As I reflect on the developments in the field of AI and its impact on the future of work, I see the following 6 implications that every HR and Business leader must know: Job Transformation Over **Displacement:** There is a widespread concern that AI will lead to massive job loss-



advancements tend to transform rather than displace jobs. AI is no different. It will change how we work, introducing new methods and enhancing collaboration between humans and machines. According to a report by SHRM and The Burning Glass Institute on Artificial Generative Intelligence and the Workforce, the impact of Gen AI will be less about automation and more about augmenting workers' productivity and effectiveness. According to a Global Report by Thomson Reuters, 77% of professionals believe AI will significantly impact their work within the next five

The 'War for Talent' Will Be **Fought on Newer Terrains:** The traditional paradigms of skills and talent acquisition

are evolving rapidly. AugmentationAI's potential is Organizations must look best realized when combined beyond conventional talent pools to find the right candi-

Competitive Edge through Generative AI: A growing number of organizations are already incorporating generative AI into their HR processes, and many are exploring its potential in other functions.

organizations have already introduced the use of Generative AI in their HR processes, and many organizations are exploring possible

Human Creativity: The Ultimate DifferentiatorAs generative AI becomes more accessible, human creativity and ingenuity will become even more valuable. While AI can process data and provide insights, it is human attributes such as creativity, empathy, and strategic thinking that will set organizations apart. The ability to connect disparate ideas and develop innovative solutions beyond AI's capabilities will be crucial. Human ingenuity will be the key differentiator in a world where AI is a common

tool.The case for Reverse

with human intelligence (HI). This synergy enables more effective and differentiated applications of AI, resulting in higher return on investments. By leveraging the strengths of both AI and HI, organizations can achieve superior outcomes and drive innovation. Investing in Leadership Development: As generative AI enhances operational efficiencies, the focus on developing leadership talent will become increasingly important. Leadership development will require targeted investments to ensure they are equipped to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing environment. Organizations must prioritize investments in both technology and human capability development to remain com-

Organizations must stay agile, continuously adapting to the changes brought about by AI. The foresight to navigate these changes will be the key to sustaining growth and achieving long-term success.

(The writer is CEO SHRM India, APAPC and MENA; views are personal)

#### PM MODI'S WARNING TO PAKISTAN Madam — This refers to the report "Modi

fices on 29 July as a tribute to

warns Pak on terrorism," The Pioneer, Jul 27. PM Narendra Modi, while addressing the 25th Kargil Diwas celebrations, has warned Pakistan against continuing its futile policy breeding and sponsoring cross-border terror. Both the message and the timing were perfect. PM Modi has given voice to the frustrations of most Indians, and was echoing the viewpoint of the entire Indian polity and the Parliament by expressing the national consensus that Kashmir belongs to India. No policy of terror or initiation of war-like action will ever deter India was his clear pronouncement. He also reflected our national resolve strongly that India would not think twice about doing all it takes to protect its territory and people. Nevertheless, as Mr Modi rightly said, Pakistan has not learnt its lessons. It continues to wage war in the garb of terrorism and proxy wars. And it still continues to be a sanctuary for anti-India terrorists, if the recent surge in attacks in Jammu is any indication.

Indian leaders have time and again sought to mend relations with Pakistan and have made genuine overtures for peace. But each time we have received only deceit and backstabbing in return. In the last 25 years, the differential between India and Pakistan in terms of economic prosperity and global reputation has sharply widened. But Pakistan has still not grown out of its desire to be hyphenated with India and is, in the process, only harming its own people. N Sadhasiva Reddy Bengaluru

**EMPOWERING MINERAL RICH STATES** 

Madam — Due to historic verdict on mining royalty and taxes now the state government is empowered to levy taxes on mining companies and due to this reason concerning States will be hugely benefited and the financial state of these States will be improved. and it is due to a landmark judgment on July 25, a nine-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court which upheld the right of States to levy taxes on mining activities, recognizing that 'royalty ' and

#### The historic rise of women leaders



f Kamala Harris wins, she will become the first woman President of the USA. ▲ If Donald Trump wins, he will become the second president to serve non-consecutive terms (45th and 47th), following Grover Cleveland, who was the 22nd and 24th president. Franklin D. Roosevelt is the only U.S. president to have served three terms. Whether anyone will surpass that record remains a long-term puzzle. All eyes will be on

'taxation' are different recognizing both as eparate. In the case of Mineral Area Development Authority vs Steel Authority of India, the nine-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court gave this decision in an 8:1 split. Eight judges including Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud voted in favor of this decision while Justice B V Nagarathana disagreed. The decision, pending for more than 25 years, finally clarifies that States can levy additional taxes on mining activities and land used for such

The decision is a significant development in empowering States to generate more revenue, which can be used to meet local needs and mitigate the adverse effects of mining. The distinction between royalties and taxes was at the centre of the court's decision. Royalties are payments made by mining leaseholders to the lessee on the basis of a specific agreement as stipulated under Section 9 of the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDRA). These payments are made in exchange for the right to extract minerals and are thus seen as compensation for the

November 5th, 2024, ballot day in the USA. As of July 27, 2024, 29 nations around the world have women as heads of state or government (Presidents or

The history of women heads of state and government is fascinating. The world's first woman president was María Estela 'Isabel' Perón of Argentina (1974 to 1976). The first elected woman Prime Minister was Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka in 1960, who served three terms. In the 1970s, three women Prime Ministers—Bandaranaike (Sri Lanka), Indira Gandhi (India), and Golda Meir (Israel)—were known as the "Iron Ladies Trio." Later, Margaret Thatcher, the "Iron Lady No. 4," became the Prime Minister

P V Madhu Nivriti | Secundarabad

use of land and resources. Taxes, on the other hand, are more commonly imposed by governments and used to fund public services and infrastructure.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

#### **MODI'S OLIVE BRANCH TO RSS**

Madam — In the lead-up to its 100th year, Narendra Modi just gave a birthday gift to the RSS. Amidst speculations of a deepening rift between the RSS and the Modi-Shah-controlled BJP, the NDA government withdrew the order dated 1966 that prohibits government employees from participating in RSS activities.

Is this an olive branch, considering the inexplicable statement made by J P Nadda, almost declaring independence from the RSS in the middle of the Lok Sabha elections? This comes on top of several grants and appointments going to people and organisations belonging to or close to the

C K Ramanathan | Mumbai

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### **FIRST COLUMN**

### A PATH TO **PERSONAL LIBERATION**

With unwavering determination and faith, one can conquer even the most persistent habits



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI** 

Te are what we repeatedly do, said Aristotle... If we have a look at the dictionary meaning of habit, then it says 'something that you do often and regularly, sometimes without knowing that you are doing it:' To define it simply, habits can be described as involuntary actions. They are a kind of 'automatic behaviour' as it were, for one does not do them after much thought. There is no doubt in it that almost everyone in this world has one or other bad habit. Don't we all have? Like, many people have the bad habit of smoking. But, if you tell them that it is a bad habit, some of them will bring in a little bit of philosophy and some would try to support it with medical opinion also.

They will say, "Smoking is very exhilarating. It is good for my brain because it brings me concentration." Others will say, "Smoking keeps my bowels free." Others still will confess that it is a bad habit that they find hard to give up. Little do most people realise that it is a bad habit that pollutes their physical system and the atmosphere and causes diseases like cancer. Similarly, some people have the habit of talking too much. They just can't keep quiet even for a couple of minutes.

Little do these people realise that much breath and energy is wasted on useless talk.

This could usefully be spent in silent meditation. But the problem is that he who talks and talks is, today, considered as a smart, clever and wise person, and a person who talks less is thought to be lacking in general knowledge or to be deficient in the art of conversation! Such examples of bad habits can be multiplied, but, what we need to understand from these examples is that, in most cases, people do not realise that it is a bad or a harmful habit and where this truth is realised, there isn't the strong desire to get freed from its grip and that is why some people philosophically say; This habit of mine will die only when I die.

So what is the solution to get over one's bad habits? Is it practically possible? Yes! With a little effort and attention, it is indeed possible. To start with one needs great enthusiasm which is very essential for leaving bad habits. There is a well-known proverb in English: "Well-begun is half done'. So, after realising that the habit which you have decided to give up is



really bad, you should put up a brave and enthusiastic fight against this evil. From the very outset, call forth all your latent energies not only to cut its root and branch but also to destroy its seed, for if the seed remains, the tree is likely to grow up again. When a house is on fire, how promptly and energetically the inmates react? At that time, they are fully concentrated and they use all the means to extinguish the fire.

Put your resolve into action immediately. Secondly, remove the words 'impossible', 'difficult, 'I cannot' etc. from your mind. These are the expressions of a weakling or a timid person. Cheer yourself up. Realize the truth that the evil habit is your own creation, you have given birth to it and nourished it to bring its growth and now you should not say with a weak will that it is difficult to control it.

Always remember! habits are not your original nature; they are your second nature. You have acquired them and you say that you cannot give them up? You are their Master and you believe yourself to be their slave? 'Faith, it has been rightly said, "can move mountains and this your habit is only a molehill. Therefore, rise and take up the bow of endeavour and become an instrument to the Divine to shoot this devil—your bad habit for, God is with you as He always is on the side of the virtuous. But, remember! A mere wish or desire to eradicate evil is not enough. You must have pure and strong will besides a definite aim and purpose. Wish or desire is a small, temporary ripple in the lake of mind but Will is the power that executes the desire to fulfilment. There is nothing impossible for a man of strong willpower to achieve. So let's make a resolve that we will liberate ourselves in the true sense.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and a popular columnist views are personal)

# Budget is pro-growth but stability concern remains -



Major expenditure items may go out of control, raising concerns about the budget's feasibility; moreover, the Government's gross tax revenue target of Rs 38.40 lakh crore is overly ambitious



n top of a GDP (gross domestic product) growth of 8 per cent plus for three consecutive years, the Union Budget for FY 2024-25 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23, 2024, has all the ingredients to sustain the momentum during the current year as well. For the current year, she has proposed capital expenditure at Rs 1111,111 crore, which is 17 per cent higher than the revised estimate (RE) for FY 2023-24.In her Budget for 2019-20, she had laid a roadmap for catapulting the Indian economy to US\$5 trillion by 2024-25. In sync with this target, she had projected an investment requirement of over Rs 100 lakh crore to build the infrastructure over five

Out of this, 39 per cent or Rs 39,00,000 crore was to come from the Centre and states each and the balance was Rs 22,00,000 crore from the private sector. The Centre's capital spend during the previous four years was 2020-21: Rs 439,000 crore; 2021-22: Rs 554 000 crore: 2022-23: Rs 750,000 crore; 2023-24: Rs 1000,961 crore. This adds up to Rs 2700,000 crore. Add to this Rs 1111,111 crore for 2024-25, the total over five years comes to Rs 3800,000 crore which is more or less close to the amount the Centre intended to contribute. The Central government has also been helping the states to boost their capital spend. During 2022-23, it provided them with 50year Rs 100,000 crore interest-free loans. During 2023-24, such transfers were Rs 130,000 crore. For the current year, the To promote investment in the private sec-

transfers are kept at Rs 150,000 crore. tor, the Centre has reduced the corporate tax rate to 15 per cent for new manufacturing enterprises and 22 per cent for existing enterprises. In this year's budget, the corporate tax rate on foreign firms has been reduced from extant 40 per cent to 35 per cent. With this and assuming that private consumption/demand remains strong (a relief of around Rs 17,500/- in personal income tax or PIT resulting from the change in tax slabs under the New IT regime and increase in a standard deduction by Rs 25,000/- will give some boost) besides exports getting a leg up, courtesy

3840,000 **CRORE IS** OVER-AMBITIOUS AND THE BUDGET **ASSUMES** RECEIPTS OF RS progresses. 50,000 CRORE DISINVESTMENT OF GOVERNMENT SHARES IN PSUS, A PROGRAM IT HAS DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE.

THE GROSS TAX

TARGET OF RS

REVENUE

**EVEN MAJOR EXPENDITURE** ITEMS COULD **GET OUT OF** CONTROL

rebound in the US economy, India could achieve growth even higher than 6.5 – 7 per cent projected in the Economic Survey for 2023-24. But, there is a flip side to it. This has to do with the fiscal deficit or FD (excess of total expenditure over total receipts). Sitharaman has set it at 4.9 per cent of the GDP which is 0.2 per cent less than a target of 5.1 per cent fixed in the interim budget. This has been made possible due to a mammoth dividend transfer of Rs 210,000 crore by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the Central Government from its operations during the FY 2023-24 which is Rs 130,000 crore higher than the provision of Rs 80,000 crore made in the interim budget. It won't be easy to achieve the 4.9 per cent target during the current year. This is because the gross tax revenue (GTR) target of Rs 3840,000 crore is over-ambitious and the hudget assumes receipts of Rs 50,000 crore from disinvestment of government shares in PSUs, a program it has decided not to pursue. Even major expenditure items could get out of control as the year

For instance, the 'fertilizer subsidy' is budgeted at Rs 164,000 crore during 2024-25. This is based on the assumption that the declining trend in the international price of fertilizers and raw materials used in their production seen during 2023-24 continues during the current year as well. It takes a small disruption in the global supply chain (given the current highly uncertain geo-political situation, this is quite likely), for this assumption to go haywire. That apart, to go down from 4.9 per cent to 4.5 per cent next year set by the FM ner 2021-22 budget (this by itself is far more generous than FD of 3 per cent that was to be achieved in 2020-21 as per the amendment to the FRBM Act, 2018) can be daunting, all the more when the

RBI is unlikely to repeat its bonan- cerning EPFO in the first 4 years za/gift to the Center. During an interactive with the press, Sitharaman alluded to the Centre's plan to design fiscal trajectory in a manner such that from FY 2026-27 onward, its debt to GDP ratio starts declining. Sans target setting, this may not instil confidence.

Yet, she won't set the target as these are often missed. The Center's debt-to-GDP ratio is currently around 57 per cent against the 40 per cent mandated for 2024-25 under the FRBM Amendment Act (2018).

Meanwhile, to address the concerns on employment, MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) and agriculture, the budget has proposed several initiatives. For MSMEs, it proposes a new credit guarantee scheme to facilitate term loans to enable them to purchase requiring collateral or third-party guarantees (a self-financing guarantee fund is mooted that could provide each applicant with guarantee coverage of up to Rs 100 crore); increase in the limit of Mudra (Micro Units Development Refinance Agency, a subsidiary of SIDBI) loans to Rs 2000,000 for those who have repaid previous loans; expanding SIDBI branches to provide the much-needed access to credit and additional support for further growth.

The initiatives on employment all aligned to the EPFO (Employees Provident Fund Organization) enrollments include Scheme A: a one-month wage payout of up to Rs. 15,000 per month (payable in three instalments) to first-timers in the workforce, with all formal sectors with an eligibility limit of a salary of Rs 100,000 per month. Scheme B: meant for creating 'additional' jobs in the manufacturing sector linked to first-time employees; it includes an incentive to employees and employers con-

of employment.

These schemes are expected to benefit 240 lakh youth. Scheme C meant support to employers to enable them to give additional employment in all sectors for those earning up to Rs 100,000 per month. The government will reimburse employers up to Rs. 3000 per month for two years towards EPFO contribution for each additional employee. This Scheme will benefit 50 lakh persons. To make the youth employable, Sitharaman has announced a new centrally spon-sored scheme for skilling in collaboration with States and industry. 2000,000 youth will be skilled over five years under this scheme. One thousand industrial training institutes (ITIs) will be upgraded in the hub and spoke arrangement, with course content aligned to the machinery and equipment without skill needs of the industry. In agriculture, the measures include initiating 10 million farmers into natural farming in the next two years; releasing 109 climate-resilient new seed varieties across 32 field and horticulture crops in the next 100 days; Jan Samarth-based Kisan Credit Card in five States to give a boost to shrimp farming and export; launch a national cooperation policy; digital public infrastructure (DPI) to create a registry of 60 million farmers with the details of their land over the next three years; developing large-scale vegetable clusters closer to major consumption centres; promoting FPOs, cooperatives and start-ups for vegetable supply chains; pursuing the mission for pulses and oilseeds production etc. All the above announcements sound like the proverbial 'Many a slip between the cup and the lip. For instance, on employment, Sitharaman clarified 'the' government can only nudge private firms.

(The writer is a policya nanalyst;

### Flying towards sustainability: The aviation industry's tryst with carbon neutrality

Through technological innovation and green solutions like adoption of sustainable aviation fuel, the aviation sector is becoming environment friendly

he global aviation industry is undeniably . a significant contributor to carbon emissions, accounting for about 2.5 -3.0% of the world's carbon output. Recognising this impact, initiatives like IATA's "Fly Net Zero" are crucial steps towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Airlines are actively pursuing various strategies to reduce their environmental footprint, with fleet modernization being a cornerstone. One key pillar of the industry's sustainability strategy is investment in a modern, fuelefficient fleet. Jazeera Airways, for instance, has invested in the Airbus A320 neo aircraft, known for its 20% reduction in fuel con- programs allow passengers to sumption and emissions. The mitigate the environmental



airline was also the first to order over 2000 of the world's lightest aircraft seats from Expliseat. These seats will contribute to a weight saving of 1.2 metric tons per aircraft resulting in enhanced fuel efficiency and reduced emissions per flight.Beyond fleet upgrades, airlines are implementing carbon offsetting programs as part of their sustainability efforts. These impact of their air travel by investing in projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere. Jazeera Airways' carbon offsetting initiatives specifically support projects in renewable energy and reforestation, allowing passengers to contribute to environmental conservation efforts directly linked to their flights.

Technological innovation also plays a pivotal role in enhancing operational efficiency and passenger experience. Airlines are increasingly adopting digital solutions such as paperless ticketing, digital baggage tracking, and personalized sustainable travel options. These technologies not only streamline operations but also minimize waste and carbon emissions associated with traditional paperbased processes. Addressing plastic waste is another important aspect of the industry's sustainability efforts. Airlines are replacing single-use plastics with biodegradable alternatives and exploring sustainable options like Palmade products made from palm leaves. Energy efficiency is another critical focus area for airlines, extending to both aircraft operations and airport infrastructure. State-of-the-art airport terminals are designed with sustainability in mind, incorporating energy-efficient lighting, climate control systems, and renewable energy sources. The airline industry is active-

ly leading the way towards a more sustainable future for air



environmentally responsible practices that extend beyond its operations. The adoption of CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) marks a substantial advancement in its commitment to mitigating environmental impact and combat-

travel, setting a precedent for ing climate change. CORSIA ensures that international aviation contributes to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while continuing to support global connectivity and economic growth. Additionally, the development and adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and the utilization of

advanced software solutions like those offered by NAVBLUE are critical milestones in the airline industry's efforts to achieve net-zero emissions and address climate

change. Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 requires collaboration among airlines, governments, and passengers. Through ongoing innovation, investment in sustainable technologies like SAF, reduction of plastic waste, and improvements in operational efficiency, the aviation industry is actively leading the way towards a more environmentally friendly future for air travel. These efforts not only aim to reduce the industry's carbon footprint but also set a precedent for sustainable practices

that can inspire broader global initiatives beyond aviation.

Aviation industry today is dedicated to collaborating closely with partners, passengers, and communities to foster a greener and more sustainable future for air travel. This commitment drives us to innovate and implement initiatives that reduce our environmental footprint, promote sustainable practices, and contribute positively to the global effort against climate

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(The writer is regional manager South Asia - Jazeera Airways; views are personal)

# from Japan, Modi urged

Legendary freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose's Chandra grandnephew Kumar Bose on Sunday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bring back the "mortal remains of Netaji" from Japan's Renkoji temple by August 18.
He also said a final statement

should come from the central government on the matter so that "false narratives" about Netaji are laid to rest.

Stating that the NDA-led government took initiative to declassify files related to the freedom fighter, Bose said after the release of all the "10 inquiries - national and international", it is evident that "Netaji perished on August 18, 1945" in an air crash in Taiwan.

"It is therefore imperative that a final statement is made from the Government of India so that false narratives about the liberator of India are laid to rest," Bose wrote in a letter to Modi on Sunday.

"My humble appeal to you is to bring back the mortal remains of Netaji from Renkoji to India by August 18, 2024," he said.

In an interview to PTI Videos, Bose, also a former vice president of the West Bengal BJP, said the declassification process has exposed secret files and conclusively establish that Netaji died in this air crash on August 18, 1945".

He said that Netaji wanted to return to India after Independence, but could not as he died in the air crash. "It is highly insulting that

Netaii's remains have been kept at the Renkoji temple," Bose said.



"We have been writing to the prime minister for the last three-and-a-half years, that in order to honour the liberator of India, his remains must touch Indian soil," he

Bose maintained that Netaji's daughter Anita Bose Pfaff wants to perform his last rites as per the Hindu tradition. "I think the Government of

India must respond. If they feel that these remains are not of Netaji, then maintenance should not be provided to keep those at Renkoji. A statement is expected from the prime minister regarding this," he said in the interview. Bose said a few years ago, his family members had visited the Kenkoji temple and met the high priest there, who stated that Netaji fought for the freedom of India and as such, his remains should be taken to India.

Netaji's grandnephew said the icon's remains should be brought to Delhi and a memorial built to pay homage to the leader.

"It is very unfortunate that no response has come from the government or the prime minister," Bose said.

In his letter to Modi, Bose said the circumstances of Netaii's death from an air crash while leaving Taiwan in a Japanese military aircraft in the aftermath of Japan's surrender in August 1945, perhaps with a plan to make his way to the Soviet Union to

continue the struggle, was seen by many as just another ruse to escape his enemies. He claimed that his brother Sarat Chandra Bose and widow Emilie, however, did not have any definite knowledge of Netaji being alive after August 18, 1945. There is no doubt of the genuine disbelief among some that Netaji perished in the manner described in a host of contemporary

sources, said Bose. "After all, here was a man who had once given the slip to the British and undertook an arduous trek from Calcutta through north India to Afghanistan, eventually reaching Berlin by air through Moscow. Only a few years later in the midst of a raging world war, he survived an even more perilous voyage by submarine from Germany to South East Asia. How could such a man die!" he said in the letter.

accounts from multiple

"The... Justice Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry 2005 finding that Netaji did not die in the said air crash was found to be based on fundamental errors and the Government of India thus rejected it," Bose said.

Maintaining that an array of "unscrupulous persons" found plenty of scope and opportunities for exploitation over the issue, he said from around the mid-1960's began the phenomenon of the reappearance of Netaji.

## Bring back Netaji's remains | Valmiki scam: Is it Nyay to siphon SC/ST money, asks FM

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Nirmala Sitharaman lashed out at Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asking him whether it was 'Nyay' (justice) to siphon off money belonging to the tribal Valmiki community.

Referring to the Rs 187 crore scam in the Karnataka

Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribe Corporation including the illegal transfer of Rs 88 crore, Sitharaman, speaking to reporters at the BJP office here, accused Siddaramaiah of concealing facts and trying to pass the blame on to the central government because bank officials of a nationalised bank were involved. On Siddaramaiah's charge that the union finance minister should be held accountable because involved, banks were Sitharaman said, "He can say

that because he is used to talking like this... That's so irresponsive. You have your minister resigned. You have your people saying that the money has been siphoned into private accounts." The minister said that action has already been taken as a first step against the conniving bank officials and further action will be taken against

"No protection will be offered to them for sure." She, however, sought to know, "A minister had to resign under whose oversight? Attempt to deny, attempt to shift blame, or to say that no scandal has taken place. It's SC/ST money. Whose money was taken away Valmiki community's. Is there no sense of outrage?" 'They (Congress) talk about during (justice) 'Nvav election campaign. Is this for SC/ST



communities?" Sitharaman said. During the Lok Sabha election, the Congress had the slogan 'Ab Hoga Nyay' to do justice for downtrodden communities and to enact policies for their upliftment. Stating that the bank is already on the job of taking action against the erring officials, the FM asked Siddaramaiah how the minister involved in the scam

and the chief minister who

holds finance portfolio did

not stop the bank from illegally transferring money. "You denied the whole thing, your minister did not even

And regarding the money which has gone into the private accounts, you go to the assembly to say it's not Rs 180 crore or Rs 140 crore, it's only some Rs 80 crore. You are concealing it, sir.

This is the outrageous thing that is happening particularly with the SC/ST money," the FM said. Rs 187.33 crore of the Valmiki Corporation kept in different accounts, including Rs 40 crore in the government treasury, is said to have been diverted towards the Union Bank of India's MG Road branch in the scam. Of the Rs 187.33 crore, Rs 88.63 crore was illegally transferred to at least 217 bank accounts in Telangana including that of 18 firms. Former Karnataka

minister B Nagendra, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate, is in judicial custody in connection with the case. The scam came to light after the Accounts Superintendent of Valmiki C o r p o r a t i o n Chandrasekharan P died by suicide.

In his suicide note, he explained in detail how the money was transferred and what role the corporation and the bank officials had played in the scam. The opposition BIP has accused the ruling Congress of being involved in the scam. It has alleged that the transfer of money could not have happened without the knowledge of Siddaramaiah, who heads the

finance ministry. The chief minister has rubbished the allegation and said he had no information

### Judges should use a 'sense of robust common sense' in bail petitions: CJI

**PTI** ■ BENGALURU

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Sunday said the trial judges prefer playing safe by not granting bail on important issues of crime when it is looked at with a degree of suspicion.

The Chief Justice underlined the need for a 'sense of robust common sense' to look at the nitty-gritty of each case.
"People who should be getting

bail in the trial courts and not getting it there, as a result of which, they have to invariably move the high courts. People who should be getting bail in the high courts will not necessarily get it, as a result of which, they have to move to the Supreme Court. This delay compounds the problem of those who are facing arbitrary arrests," Justice Chandrachud

He was replying to a question at the end of a keynote address during the '11th Annual Conference of the Berkeley Centre on Comparative and Equality Anti-Discrimination. The question

was on the arbitrary arrests. The questioner said we seem to live in a society where one acts first and seeks forgiveness later. This has become particularly true for public authorities acting in a politically motivated manner by detaining activists, academics, journalists and even politicians, including the chief ministers of opposition parties,

According to him, all of these actions are taken with deep trust in the face of justice coming very slowly.

In reply, Justice Chandrachud said the Supreme Court has been constantly trying to convey that part of the reason for it is that there is an inherent distrust in the institutions within the country.

"I think it's important that we learn to trust people who may be in a hierarchical legal system, like much below, which are the trial courts. We have to encourage trial courts to be more receptive to the need for accommodating concerns of people who are seeking liberty," the CII said.

"Unfortunately, the problem today is this, that we look at any grant of relief by trial judges with a degree of suspicion. That means that the trial judges increasingly are playing it safe, not granting bail on important issues of serious crimes," he explained.

According to the CJI, judges have to look at the nitty grittles and see the fine prints of each

"You (judges) have to have a sense of robust common sense. Now, unless we, therefore, separate the grains from the chaff in criminal jurisprudence, it's very unlikely that we will have just solutions and to allow for décision makers to separate the grain from the chaff, it's important that we also place a great deal of trust," Justice Chandrachud noted.

#### Toddler dies after falling into pit in UP

PTI ■ BALLIA (UP)

In a tragic incident, an 18-month-old boy died after falling into a pit while playing here on Sunday afternoon, police said.

According to the police, the incident happened in the Ghuri Baba Tola village under the Sikandarpur police station area, where Avyansh Yadav fell into a pit made for draining dirty water.

SO Sikandarpur Dinesh Pathak said that Avyansh's mother Amrita made him sit in the courtyard and got busy in her daily routine. After some time, when Avyansh was not seen in the courtyard, she started searching for him, and found him fallen in the pit.

## Prohibition of Child Marriage Act applies to all Indian citizens: HC

PTI ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has ruled that the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 is applicable to every citizen of this country irrespective of irrespective of religion, his or her religion as every whether a person is Hindu, Indian is a citizen first and Muslim, Christian, Parsi then becomes a member of a etc., Act 2006 is applicable to religion.

a recent order on a petition child to quash a case registered in children their basic human 2012 in Palakkad against a child marriage, said education, health and irrespective of religion, protection from exploitation whether a person is Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi etc., the Act is applicable to all. The petitioners, mortality, maternal including the father of the mortality and sexually then minor girl, contended before the court that being a Muslim she enjoys the religious right to marry after attaining puberty, i.E., at the age of 15. "A person should be a citizen of India first,

and thereafter only his religion comes. Religion is secondary and citizenship should come first. Therefore, I am of the considered opinion that, all," the court said in its July 15 order. It observed that marriages deny rights, including the right to and early marriages and pregnancy can lead to health problems such as infant transmitted infections. "Child marriage often forces girls to drop out of school, limiting their education and future opportunities.

Child brides are more vulnerable to domestic



marriage can perpetuate poverty and limit economic opportunities for individuals and communities. "Child marriage can lead to emotional and psychological trauma, including depression and anxiety to the children.

Child marriage can lead to social isolation and disconnection from the family and community. Moreover, child marriage is a violation of international human rights law and conventions as well," the

court said in its 37-page order. An Integrated Child Development Scheme Officer (ICDS Officer) had lodged a complaint to the Vadakkencherry police about a child marriage that took place on December 30, 2012. The court said it was sad to hear that even after the enactment of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act decades ago, there are allegations of Child Marriage in Kerala. "The saddest thing is that the petitioners herein are trying to justify the alleged child marriage stating that as per Mohammedan Law, a Muslim girl enjoys a religious right to marry after attaining puberty irrespective of age, even though the Prohibition of puberty Child Marriage Act apply to all the citizens of India

without and beyond India,"

study, travel and enjoy their life according to their wishes and when they attained maturity, let them decide about their marriage. "In the modern society, there cannot be any compulsion for marriage.

"Majority of the girls are exposing perpetrators and interested in studies. Let their actions," the order them study and let them enjoy their life, of course with the blessings of their parents. When they attain majority and decided that a partner is necessary in their life, let it happen at the appropriate stage so that child marriage can be eradicated from the society," the court said.

It also suggested that the print and the visual media can play a significant role in raising awareness and prohibiting child marriages. 'It is the duty of the print

The high court urged the and visual media to publish society to let the children articles highlighting the evils of child marriage, sharing stories of survivors and victims, creating awareness about the loss and consequences of child marriage, promoting education

empowerment of girls and read. The court also noted that the complaint against the child marriage was filed by a person from the Muslim community itself. "The same will show that

every citizen of this country is aware of the evil of child marriage irrespective of their religion," it said. However, the court asked the petitioners to approach the appropriate court on their contention that the date of birth of the child was wrongly mentioned in the concerned school register.

### Bihar Govt directs officials to expedite land transfer for AIIMS Darbhanga

**I** nod for the construction of AIIMS in Bihar's Darbhanga district, the state government concerned to complete the process of transfer and hand over the identified land on an urgent basis. Senior officials of all concerned departments have been asked to complete all required work, including transfer and hand over of the identified land to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, for construction of Darbhanga AIIMS on an urgent basis, Bihar Health minister, Mangal Pandey told PTI on Sunday. "The Centre has given its approval for the construction of Darbhanga AIIMS. It's a great

wo days after the Centre's

gift by the Centre to Bihar. We thank PM Narendra Modi Ji and Union Health Minister J P Nadda Ji, for giving the nod for the construction of Darbhanga AIIMS. Under the leadership of our PM and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the work of improving medical facilities in the state has progressed at a rapid pace and it will continue

further... ", said Pandey.
"The state health department received a letter from the Centre on July 25 in this regard. Darbhanga AIIMS will be the second in the state after Patna AIIMS. This will lead to a massive expansion of Darbhanga town and its surrounding districts and will also create a lot of employment opportunities", said the state health minister.

#### Two arrested...

Vardhan said, "We have protesting against the death registered an FIR at of the aspirants while Rajinder Nagar Police sloganeering 'We want Station under sections 105 (culpable homicide), 106(1) (death of any person by doing any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide), 115(2) (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 290 the police authorities. (negligent conduct with DCP stated that since respect to pulling down, repairing or constructing buildings) and 35 of the blocked by students who Bharativa Nyava Sanhita (BNS) and launched an

coaching centre, engaging with them management of the constructively to remain building, those who manage the drainage system and the people whose role will come up in the investigation," he that it was important to

added. The bodies of two female students and a male student metro station in noon and housed a library where were retrieved from the stated, "Today around several students were basement during the rescue operation.

deceased were The identified as 25 year old Shreya Yadav of Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, 25 year many hospitals in the old Tanya Soni from vicinity.
Telangana and 24 year old They were repeatedly said. According to reports, Nevin was also a research Since they refused to clear officer said.

From Page 1 scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) M Harsha Students were also scholar at Iawaharlal Nehru iustice'.

While they at first staged their demonstration near the Rau coaching centre, later the protestors went to Karol Bagh metro station that were later removed by

yesterday evening the road in Old Rajender Nagar was are protesting the incident of flooding of basement. investigation." "We understand their "This FIR is against the sentiments and thus are peaceful in their protest," he said.

A senior police officer said remove the students who started protesting near the "Today around 2:30pm, some students blocked both carriageways of Pusa Road near Karol Bagh Metro Station, which is an arterial road with

ear old They were repeatedly from requested to not block the Nevin Delvin from requested to not block the Ernakulam in Kerala, police main road by DCP Central as well as DM Central.

the main road even after an hour, they were removed from there, considering the massive inconvenience and nearby hospitals."

Teams from the local police, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Delhi Fire Service (DFS) were part of the rescue operation, which went on till the early morning of Sunday and was ended after seven hours of rescue efforts.

According to the DFS, a call about waterlogging was received from Rau's IAS Study Circle at around 7 pm on Saturday and that that there was a possibility that some people were trapped.
A fire department official said that a total of five tenders were rushed to the site. The basement was full of water when they arrived. Preliminary investigation suggests that the basement present. Water suddenly started flooding basement.

Ropes were used to evacuate the trapped students, officials said. The furniture in the coaching centre started floating when it was flooded and this created obstruction in the rescue operation, a police

### NTA announces CUET-UG...

the judge said.

From Page 1 Initially, the CUET-UG results were scheduled to be declared on June 30, but the NTA delayed it, as it was grappling with allegations of paper leak allegations in the NEET-UG, UGC-NET and the CSIR-UGC-NET exams.

Over 13.4 lakh candidates registered for the test for admission to undergraduate courses in 261 central, state, deemed and private universities this year. In the first edition of the exam in 2022, the test was plagued by technical glitches.

### Library running illegally in...

From Page 1

directed the Commissioner the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to take strict action against coaching centres across the national capital that are running commercial activities in basements. The three-storey coaching

centre had its building plan approved by the concerned MCD department in 2021. The coaching centre received a No Objection Certificate (NOC) earlier this month, in which clearance was given for the three-storeyed building, a stilt parking space beneath the building and a basement, which was supposed to be used as a storage area. The NOC mentions that the basement shall be used strictly as per building bye-laws. "In the building completion certificate of the institute, it

is clearly written that it can Following the tragedy, Delhi only be used for parking and Mayor Shelly Oberoi has storage in the basement. It storage in the basement. It means that the library was running illegally in the basement," an MCD official said.

The certificate issued on 9 July 2024 says, Certified that the building of Coaching center Located at Ground, 1?, 2?d && 3?\* floor Plot No. 11B, Bara Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi. in the building comprised of Basement (Storage) Stilt (Parking) Ground + 3 upper floor have complied with the fire prevention and fire safety requirements in accordance with Rule 33 of the Delhi Fire Service Rule, 2010 and verified by the team of officers concerned of this department on 01/07/2024 in the presence of Sh. Ashok Narang and found that the said building is fit for occupancy class "Educational Coaching Centre".

### Capital shock over IAS...

From Page 1 Shubham, a student of the

coaching institute said that they had complained to MCD in June about the persistent waterlogging issue in the low lying area. However nothing changed since then and an hour of rain took the lives of young minds that had cleared their prelims and were preparing for their mains paper. Local residents and students also lament about the inaction of MCD in solving the drainage situation and state how the coaching centre owners and the civic authorities are hand in gloves over the illegal operation of libraries in the basement with only one exit and entry door.

A resident who lives opposite to the coaching centre recounted how days ago, water was filled in the area and entered their house. "I slipped because of the water and then broke my hand. You can see the fracture. We have met the local councilor and MLA but of no return.

use. You see the locality filled with sludge and garbage even after yesterday's incident," he said, adding that nothing will change until the sewer is fixed. Sonam, who has lived in the area for more than 25 years, stated how there has been no cleaning of drainage since 15 vears.

Moreover, students said how almost all coaching centres have their library in basements. Ankit, who studies in the building next to the coaching centre, recounted how the students were studying in level 2 basement and water from the drainage was filled upto 12 to 13 feet. He also flagged how there is a police booth right outside the building and yet no one is ever present. "Authorities came about two hours later. If there was someone present in the booth, actions could have been taken at the earliest," he said, adding that he filed an RTI in March about the same issue and got no replies in

#### **Govt clarifies...**

From Page 1

The Ministry said the Income Tax department through a 2004 notification has specified that the tax clearance certificate may be required to be obtained by persons domiciled in India only in certain circumstances.

These include - where the person is involved in serious financial irregularities and his presence is necessary in the investigation of cases under the Income-tax Act or the Wealthtax Act and it is likely that a tax demand will be raised against him, or where the person has direct tax arrears exceeding Rs 10 lakh outstanding against him, which have not been stayed by any authority.

The I-T department said that a person can be asked to obtain a tax clearance certificate only after recording the reasons for the same and after taking approval from the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income-tax or Chief Commissioner of Income-tax.

#### Row after students seek auditorium...

Colleges and schools should not be made part of their plans to carve out separate country," said Kevin Peter, founder, CASA in a statement released on Sunday. He pointed out that there are three big mosques in the vicinity of the college and the students are advised to make use of the facility. "College and school timings in the State are so planned that the Islamic students could offer prayers every day without causing any inconvenience to others," said Kevin.
Big time political parties like the CPI (M) and the Congress are yet to react to the unrest among

the student community. What is at stake is principal Fr Kuriakose's unique selling proposition to the students: "Welcome to Nirmala for an inspiring journey to the future".

## Strike in Israeli-controlled Golan Heights kills at least 12

Arocket strike on Saturday at a soccer field killed at least 12 children and teens, Israeli authorities said, in the deadliest strike on an Israeli target along the country's northern border since the fighting between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah began. It raised fears of a broader regional war. Israel blamed Hezbollah for the strike in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights, but Hezbollah rushed to deny any role. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Hezbollah "will pay a heavy price for this attack, one that it has not paid so far". The Israeli military's chief spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, called it the deadliest attack on Israeli civilians since the Hamas attack on October 7 that sparked the war in Gaza. He said 20 others were wounded. "There is no doubt that Hezbollah has crossed all the red lines here, and the



A boy walks past bicycles left next to the area that was hit by a rocket on a soccer field in the Druze town of Majdal Shams, in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, Saturday, July 27, 2024. A rocket strike Saturday at a soccer field killed at least 11 children and teens, Israeli authorities said, in the deadliest strike on an Israeli target along the country's northern border since the fighting between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah began. It raised fears of a broader regional war.

response will reflect that," Israeli Foreign Minister Israel

"We are nearing the moment

Katz told Israeli Channel 12. in which we face an all-out

Hezbollah chief spokesman Mohammed Afif told The Associated Press that the group "categorically denies carrying out an attack" on the town of Majdal Shams. It is unusual for Hezbollah to deny an attack. The office of Netanyahu, who

was on a visit to the United States, said he would cut short his trip by several hours, without specifying when he would return. It said he will convene the security Cabinet after arriving. Far-right members of Netanyahu's government called for a harsh response against Hezbollah. But an all-out war with a militant group with far superior firepower to Hamas would be trying for Israel's military after nearly 10 months of

fighting in Gaza. Footage aired on Israeli Channel 12 showed a large blast in one of the valleys in the Druze town of Majdal Shams, in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed in 1981. Some Druze have Israeli citizenship. Many

still have sympathies for Syria and rejected Israeli annexation, but their ties with Israeli society have grown over the years.

Video showed paramedics rushing stretchers off the soccer field toward waiting ambu-

Ha'il Mahmoud, a resident, told Channel 12 that children were playing soccer when the rocket hit the field. He said a siren was heard seconds before the rocket hit, but there was no time to take shelter. Jihan Sfadi, the principal of an

elementary school, told Channel 12 that five students were among the dead: "The situation here is very difficult. Parents are crying, people are screaming outside. No one can digest what has happened." Israel's military said its analysis showed that the rocket was launched from an area north of the village of Chebaa in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli military said early Sunday that it struck targets deep inside Lebanon as well as in southern Lebanon. There were no reports of casualties and the strikes were no more intense than what has become routine over the past 10 months.

The strike at the soccer field, just before sunset, followed earlier cross-border violence on Saturday, when Hezbollah said three of its fighters were killed, without specifying where. Israel's military said its air force targeted a Hezbollah arms depot in the border village of Kfar Kila, adding that militants were inside at the

Hezbollah said its fighters carried out 10 different attacks using rockets and explosive drones against Israeli military posts, the last of which targeted the army command of the Haramoun Brigade in Maaleh Golani with Katyusha rockets. In a separaté statement, Hezbollah said it hit the same army post with a short-range Falaq rocket. It said the attacks were in response to Israeli airstrikes on villages in south-

#### Landslide in **China kills** 15, injures 6

**Beijing (PTI):** A landslide caused by heavy rains from a tropical storm hit a house in central China's Hunan on Sunday, killing 15 people and injuring six others. The provincial emergency command centre said the landslide hit Yuelin village in Hengyang city at about 8 am.

It washed away part of a residential house, burying 18 peo-

Fifteen people were killed and six others injured in the landslide, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The landslide was reportedly caused by flash flooding on a mountain. The injured have been taken to hospital.

Over 300 rescuers have been dispatched and rescue efforts have concluded, the report

of extreme weather, with flash floods in the north and south-

China has suffered a summer

## US-Japan security talks focus on bolstering military cooperation

**AP** ■ TOKYO

apanese and US defence chiefs and top diplomats agreed to further bolster their military cooperation by upgrading the command and control of US forces in the East Asian country and strengthening American-licensed missile production there, describing the rising threat from China as "the greatest strategic challenge". US Forces Japan headquartered in Yokota in the western suburbs of Tokyo, tasked with managing their bases, has no commanding authority. Instead, instructions come from the US Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii. The plans will give the USFJ greater capability while still reporting to INDOPACOM. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin joined their Japanese counterparts, Yoko Kamikawa and Minoru Kihara, at the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee in Tokyo, known as "2+2" securitv talks where they reaffirmed their bilateral alliance following President Joe Biden's withdraw-

al from the November presiden-

We are standing at a historic turning point as the rulesbased, free and open international order is shaken to the core," Kamikawa said. "Now is a critical phase when our decision today determines our future.

Austin, in his opening remarks, said China is "engaging in coercive behaviour, trying to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, around Taiwan and throughout the region", adding that North Korea's nuclear program and its deepening cooperation with Russia "threaten regional and global security". In the joint statement issued after the talks, the ministers said China's foreign policy "seeks to reshape the international order for its own benefit at the expense of others" and that "such behaviour is a serious concern to the alliance and the entire international community and represents the greatest strategic challenge in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond". China has been at odds with many countries in the Asia-Pacific for years because of its sweeping maritime claims

over the crucial South China Sea. It also claims self-governing Taiwan as its territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. In March, Beijing announced a 7.2 per cent increase in its defense budget, already the world's second-highest behind the United States, marking a massive mil-

The ministers said the US command reorganisation, set for March to be in line with Japan's own command updating, aimed "to facilitate deeper interoper-ability and cooperation on joint bilateral operations in peacetime and during contingencies" and enhance intelligence coordination, surveillance, reconnaissance and cybersecurity.

itary expansion.

Japan has long suffered from cybersecurity threats that Washington believes are of grave concern. Lately, Japan's space agency revealed it suffered a series of cyberattacks, and though sensitive information related to space and defence was not affected, it has triggered worry and pushed the agency to pursue preventative measures. The ministers in a joint statement reaffirmed the US commitment to "extended deterrence", which includes atomic weapons — a shift from Japan's earlier reluctance to openly discuss the sensitive issue, as the world's only country to have suffered atomic attacks, amid nuclear threats from Russia and

Japan has been accelerating its military buildup and has increased joint operations with the US as well as South Korea while trying to strengthen its largely domestic defense indus-

Tokyo has significantly eased its arms export restrictions and in December accommodated a US request for shipment of surfaceto-air PAC-3 missile interceptors produced in Japan under an American license to replenish US inventories, which have decreased due to its support for Ukraine.

The ministers said they will pursue efforts to expand Japanese production of PAC-3 interceptors for export to the United States, as well as co-production of Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles to meet "critical demand" for such systems to be ready when needed "to deter aggression".

## Ultra-liberal Kamala Harris will deliver crime, chaos, mayhem and death to US: Trump

**PTI** ■ WASHINGTON

ramala Harris will deliver Kamala manna mayhem, and crime, chaos, mayhem, and death to the US, Donald Trump has said, intensifying his attacks on his Democratic rival as the 2024 presidential election campaign entered a critical final 100 day stretch.

Vice President Harris, 59, is the new presidential candidate of the Democratic party after incumbent President Joe Biden, 81, withdrew from the race. Trump, a former US president and the 2024 Republican presidential candidate, painted his new chief rival, Harris, as worse than President Biden at a rally in Minnesota on Saturday along with his running mate Senator J D Vance.

"Ultra-liberal Kamala Harris will deliver crime, chaos, mayhem, and death to our country. I will restore law and order, justice in America," Trump, 78, said.Trump said on his very first day back in the White House, that he would terminate every single open border policy of the Biden-Harris Administration.

"And we will seal the border

#### 'Biden's exit from 2024 race was a coup'

Washington (PTI) Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has said incumbent US President Joe Biden was forced to exit the presidential race, describing it a "coup" by the

Democratic Party.
The former president's remarks came during an election rally in Minnesota on Saturday. "This was really a coup of and by the Democrats. This was a

coup of a man that had 14 million votes. He wanted to run. They wouldn't let him run. They treated him horribly. They said to him, we can do it the nice way, or we can do it the hard way. To Joe, he's president," Trump claimed.

This was a coup with the presidency, he said. "They threatened him with the 25th Amendment. They said, Joe, we're going to threaten you with the 25th Amendment. You're cognitively and physically a mess. And if you don't get out, we're going to take you out

with the 25th Amendment," Trump, 78, alleged. The 25th Amendment of the US Constitution was passed by Congress to determine the presidential succession after the assassination of former President John F Kennedy.

It also gives power to the vice president as well as the Cabinet to remove a president from office if they are deemed phys-

ically incapable.
"And he said, I'll go. And then
the fake news said, oh, he was so brave. He was so brave. No, he was forced to leave," Trump claimed.

Biden, 81, on July 20 announced his decision to withdraw from the 2024 presidential elections and endorsed Kamala Harris as Democratic Presidential nominee.

This followed a series of fastmoving developments after his disastrous debate performance in Atlanta on June 27 and a failed assassination attempt on American history."

and we will stop the horrible invasion into our country.... No person in American politics has been more of an open border zealot than Border Czar Harris," he said.

He slammed Harris' political record, saying that she "destroyed San Francisco" as county district attorney. "Kamala Harris was the original Marxist district attorney. She destroyed San Francisco and she will destroy our country," he alleged.

"This November, the American people are going to reject Kamala Harris's crazy liberal extremism in a massive landslide... We're not going to let her turn the United States into communist San Francisco," he said. "Harris is so extreme and unhinged that she has even declared the terms 'illegal alien' and 'radical Islamic terrorism' to be forbidden and unacceptable," he alleged. Describing her as a 'radical left lunatic" Trump alleged that Harris is "the most incompetent, unpopular, and far-left vice president in American history, probably the most far-left person in

## UK is 'broke and broken', new govt says

**AP** ■ LONDON

Britain's new left-leaning government said Sunday that the nation is "broke and broken," blaming the situation on its predecessors ahead of a major speech on the state of the public finances that is widely expected to lay the groundwork for higher taxes. In a sweeping assessment three weeks after taking power, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office professed shock at the situation they inherited after 14 years of Conservative Party rule, while releasing a department-bydepartment analysis of the perceived failures of the previous government.

The critique comes a day before Treasury chief Rachel Reeves is expected to outline a 20-billion-pound (\$26 billion) shortfall in public finances during a speech to the House of Commons.

'We will not shy away from being honest with the public about the reality of what we Labour pledged during the have inherited," Pat campaign that it wouldn't McFadden, a senior member raise taxes on "working peo-



of the new Cabinet, said in a statement. "We are calling time on the false promises that British people have had to put up with and we will do what it takes to fix Britain." Starmer's Labour Party won a landslide election victory earlier this month following a campaign in which critics accused both major parties of a "conspiracy of silence" over the scale of the financial challenges facing the next government.

ple," saying its policies would deliver faster economic growth and generate the additional revenue needed by the government. Conservatives, meanwhile, promised further tax cuts in the autumn if they were

returned to office.

As proof that the previous government wasn't honest about the challenges facing the country, Starmer's office pointed to recent comments from former Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt confirming that he wouldn't have been able to cut taxes this year if the Conservatives had been returned to power. Those comments came in an interview with the BBC in which Hunt also accused Labour of exaggerating the situation to

they've won the election.
"The reason we're getting all this spin about this terrible economic inheritance is because Labour wants to raise taxes," Hunt said on July 21. "If they wanted to raise taxes, all the numbers were crystal clear before the election...They

justify raising taxes now that

should have levelled with the British public." The govern-ment on Sunday released an overview of the spending assessment Reeves commissioned shortly after taking office. She will deliver the complete report to Parliament on Monday. Those findings led the new government to accuse the Conservatives of making significant funding

where the money would come It argued that the military had been "hollowed out" at a time of increasing global threats and the National Health Service was "broken", with some 7.6 million people waiting for care.

commitments for this finan-

cial year "without knowing

And despite billions spent to house migrants and combat the criminal gangs ferrying migrants across the English Channel on dangerous inflat-able boats, the number of people making the crossing is still rising, Starmer's office said. Some 15,832 people have crossed the Channel on small boats already this year, 9%

more than during the same period in 2023. "The assess-ment will show that Britain is broke and broken - revealing the mess that populist politics has made of the economy and public services," Downing Street said in a statement.

The quandary the government finds itself in should be no surprise, said Paul Johnson, the director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, an independent think tank focused on Britain's economic policies.

At the start of the election campaign, the institute said that the UK was in a "parlous fiscal position" and the new government would have to either raise taxes, cut spending or relax the rules on public borrowing.

"For a party to enter office and then declare that things are worse than expected' would be fundamentally dishonest," the IFS said on May 25. "The next government does not need to enter office to open the books. Those books are transparently published and available for all to inspect."

## Cooler weather aids firefighters in battling blaze larger than LA Forest Ranch (AP): Thousands of firefighters battling a wildfire in Northern California received to be the following the firefighters are expected to be the firefighters are expected to be

some help from the weather hours after it exploded in size, scorching an area greater than the size of Los Angeles.

The blaze was one of several tearing through the western United States and Canada, fuelled by wind and heat.

Cooler temperatures and an increase in humidity could help slow the Park Fire, the largest this year in California. Its intensity and dramatic spread led fire officials to make unwelcome comparisons to the monstrous Camp Fire, which burned out of control in nearby Paradise in 2018, killing 85 people and torching 11,000 homes.

Paradise again was near the danger zone on Saturday. The entire town was under an evacuation warning, one of several communities in Butte County. Evacuation orders were also issued in Plumas, Tehama and Shasta counties. An evacuation warning calls for people to pre-pare to leave and await instruccooler than average through the middle of next week, but "that doesn't mean that fires that are existing will go away", said Marc Chenard, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Centre in College Park, Maryland.

As of Saturday night, the Park Fire had scorched 547 square miles (1,416 square kilometers) and destroyed 134 structures since igniting Wednesday, when authorities said a man pushed a burning car into a gully in Chico and then fled. It was 10 per cent contained and moving to the north and east near Chico.

The fire is larger than the city of Los Angeles, which covers about 469 square miles (1,214 square kilometers), and now ranks seventh on the list of the state's top 10 largest wildfires by acreage, Cal Fire said in a social

media post. Nearly 2,500 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by 16

New British Sikh MP wants to strengthen

helicopters and numerous air

Jeremy Pierce, a Cal Fire operations section chief, said firefighters were taking advantage of the cooler weather while it lasts: "We're having great success today." Susan Singleton and her husband packed their SUV with clothes, some food and their seven dogs and rushed to evacuate their home this week in Cohasset, a town of about 400 northeast of Chico. They have since learned that their house burned down.

"Everything else we had burned up, but getting them out, getting us out, was my priority, Singleton said on Saturday, standing outside her SUV as her dogs rested. They have all been sleeping in the car outside a Red Cross shelter at a church that does not allow animals, and Singleton, 59, said the next thing is to find a place for her pets to stretch out.
"We've got to have a place to

land and stop doing this, because this is what's stressing

### 7 killed in Congo's music concert stampede

Seven people were killed and many others were injured during a stampede at a music concert in Congo's capital Saturday, authorities said. The stampede occurred at the 80,000-capacity Stade des Martyrs stadium in the heart of Kinshasa where Mike Kalambayi, a popular Congolese gospel singer, was performing, Kinshasa Gov. Daniel Bumba said.State television RTNC said seven people were killed in the chaos and some of those injured were admitted to intensive

Authorities did not comment on what caused the stampede, saying an investigation into the incident was



underway. However, the company that organised the when "the security services

An estimated 30,000 people attended the concert, which featured several other musicians and pastors, the management company Maajabu Gospel said in a statement. Videos that appeared to be from the scene and broadcast of the event showed large crowds gathered outside the stadium in front of barricades as they waited to enter. Inside, people could be seen rushing to the centre stage. Congo has witnessed such stampedes in past years, often blamed on poor crowd control measures such as excessive use of force. Eleven people died in a similar crush at the same stadium last October during a music

tried to neutralise some troublemakers."

#### Labour Party's connection with India **PTI** ■ LONDON India earlier this week as a

Teevun Sandher, one of Britain's newest members of Parliament elected in the Labour Party's landslide general election victory earlier this month, is determined to restore trust in politics and strengthen his party's connection with India and its diaspora communities. The British Sikh first-time MP was elected from Loughborough in the East Midlands region of England, considered a bellwether constituency which has reflected the national result in UK general elections

symbol of the high level of priority the incoming government places on the relationship as it gets on with the job of "delivering change". From a personal perspective, I am a part of the Indian diaspora so I see it as a natural connection, for the Labour Party and the incoming Labour govern-ment," he told PTI in an interview at the Parliament complex in London this week."It is a hugely important strategic partnership for us, which is why David has gone out there to stress that it is an incredibly important partnership for over the years. He referenced the visit of UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy to us in the region and globally. India is the world's largest democracy, there is a trade

deal in the works as well. It is about ensuring that we achieve a lot together for the mutual benefit of both nations," he said.Sandher, in his mid-30s, was born in the eastern England town of Luton to parents who migrated from Punjab and regularly travels back to the region with his family. While these India visits will now face a few more protocol hurdles given his new parliamentary role, his work with voluntary organisations such as Labour Indians keeps him closely connected to the country of his heritage."I think Labour Indians has helped inform policy, helped me personally as well. I'm incredibly proud of what we've

achieving even more in the weeks, months and years to come," he said of his party's diaspora outreach."I am really proud of my Indian roots and really proud of the way our contribution is reflected and recognised in this country. We watch football and then go for a curry, that is the country we live in and it says a lot about our culture," he noted.As an economist and political strategist who also spent some time as a teacher in classrooms with disadvantaged children in Somaliland, Sandher feels he has been training all his life for this new challenge in the House of

achieved and look forward to

## Making exaggerated, bogus claims to get refunds punishable offence: I-T Department

INCOME TAX

The I-T Department has asked income tax return filers to not make bogus claims for expenses, underreport their earnings or exaggerate deductions as this is a punishable offence and causes a delay in issuance of refunds.

The ITR filing season for assessment year 2024-25 will end on July 31 for all categories of taxpayers whose accounts are not supposed to be audited.

According to the Income Tax
Department and its
administrative body Central
Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), over five crore ITRs have been filed, as of July 26. In a recent public communication, the Income Tax Department asked taxpayers to file their returns correctly to get timely refunds. "Refund claims are subject to verification checks, which may cause delays. Accurate filing of ITR leads to quicker processing of refunds. Any discrepancies in the claims made will prompt a request for a revised return (to be filed by the taxpayer),"

to not claim these benefits. "incorrect" Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) amounts, not "under-report" their income or "exaggerate" deductions or submit claims for "bogus"

The department informed the taxpayers that their claims should be "correct and accurate.

expenses.

"Filing a false or bogus claim is a punishable offence," the public communication said. Taxpayers can claim a variety of deductions and exemptions to lower their tax liability under the old ITR filing regime while those opting for the new regime will get a lower tax rate but cannot avail

asked about the recent Budget proposal of withholding the refund being extended up to 60 days, from the existing thirty days, from the date on which such assessment or reassessment is made.

He said such cases "would not very substantial in numbers

"This is basically in those cases where there is already a demand in the case of the same assessee or the demand is likely to arise," Agrawal

Suppose, he said, the refund has been generated but the assessment proceeding is going on and it is felt that there is a demand that is likely to come.

"The provisions are that once the assessment is completed, then an assessee gets 30 days to pay the demand. So, demand gets due 30 days after the assessment and therefore, to adjust the refund, that 30day period has to be there, and therefore, this timeline. "It is just rationalising that effectively. But then those refunds would be not very substantial in number, they would be very minuscule. It is only enablement," the head of the direct taxes body said.

#### PSU banks may get another 2-year extension to comply with MPS norms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Public sector banks are expected to get another two-year extension to comply with Sebi's minimum public shareholding (MPS) norms, a top Government official has

Out of 12 public sector banks (PSBs), five are yet to comply with MPS norms and the government's holding is beyond 75 per cent.

As per the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), all listed companies must maintain an MPS of 25 per cent.

However, the regulator gave special forbearance to stateowned banks till August 2024 to meet the requirement of 25 per cent MPS.

We have written to the Department of Economic Affairs for the extension," Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi told PTI in an interview.

extension is given and hopefully it should come sooner than later. Five banks have minimum

Generally, he said, a two-year

public shareholding of less than 25 per cent.

government Delhi-based Currently, holding in Delhi-based Punjab & Sind Bank is 98.25 in per cent. It is followed by Chennai-based Indian

Overseas Bank at 96.38 per cent, UCO Bank 95.39 per cent, Central Bank of India 93.08 per cent, Bank of Maharashtra at 86.46 per

It is expected that the government holding in Bank of Maharashtra could come below 75 per cent during the current fiscal, he said.

However, Joshi said, the banks' will take decision on share sale through Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) or other route depending on capital absorption needs.

Depending on market conditions, each of these banks will take a call in the best interest of shareholders, he added.

Asked about the Budget announcement of the financial sector vision and strategy document, Joshi said it will be anchored by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and released during the current fiscal.

The strategy we have for Vision 2047 will be covered in this document. For example, how many banks will be needed for a Viksit Bharat, and how many global banks like SBI and ICICI Bank will be required by 2047.
"We need a strategy to

modernise regulations and regulators in anticipation of changes where banks will not only be banking companies also informationtechnology companies," he

The Department has done some work while legislation is another big area being reviewed, he said, adding, the document would completed during the current financial year.

Upward revisions in India's

GDP forecast by the IMF and

ADB, and a slowdown in China work in India's favour,

A key trend in FPIs and domestic institutional

investors' (DII) investment in

equity over the last 30 months

is that whenever FPIs were

consistent sellers, DIIs were

The large inflow of money

into domestic mutual funds

and the growing influence of

investors

investors compared to their

foreign counterparts, VK Viiavakumar, Chief

Investment Strategist, Geojit

Apart from equities, FPIs invested Rs 19,223 crore in

the debt market during the

period under review. This has

87,847 crore this year so far.

pushed the debt tally to Rs

With the inclusion in the

international bond indices,

foreign flows are expected to

come into the Indian bond

market. This is likely to push G-Sec yields lower, Bajaj

Financial Services, said.

have

domestic

consistent buyers.

strengthened

he added.

WTO accepts India, Taipei's request on ICT import duty dispute ruling

The WTO's dispute settlement body has accepted a request from India and Chinese Taipei not to adopt the ruling against New Delhi's import duties on certain information and technology products till October-end, as both sides are engaged in resolving the matter mutually, an official

The issue came up during a meeting of the dispute settlement body (DSB) in Geneva on July 26.

"The DSB agreed to the latest requests from Chinese Taipei and India," the Geneva-based official said.

At the July 26 meeting, India and Chinese Taipei once again requested additional time from the DSB to consider the adoption of the consider the adoption of the panel rulings in the case initiated by Chinese Taipei regarding India's tariffs on certain high-tech goods.

The two sides had asked that the DSB further delay

consideration of the panel reports until October 28, 2024, to help facilitate the resolution of the disputes. The dispute body had earlier

agreed to four previous such requests from India and Chinese Taipei to delay consideration of the reports. As per the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the panel's ruling will have to be adopted by the DSB for implementation within 60 days of the release of the order. However, countries can mutually request the body to delay the adoption of the ruling.

In its report, a dispute panel of the WTO on April 17, 2023, said import duties imposed by India on certain information and technology products violate global trading norms.

The ruling followed a case filed by the EU, Japan and Taiwan against these duties in WTO.

In May 2019, Chinese Taipei filed a case against India in the WTO over the import duties imposed on certain electronic goods, including telephones for cellular networks; machines for reception, conversion and transmission or regeneration of voice, images or other data; and parts of telephone sets. India has stated that these

ICT products are part of WTO's Information Technology Products (ITA-2) agreement, and New Delhi is not a part of this pact. India is a part of ITA-1, signed in 1997, which did not have any obligation to eliminate customs duties on these products.

#### the "pending action and worklist section" tab. It cautioned ITR filing DLF-GIC JV firm DCCDL's office rental income rises in April-June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $R_{
m arm}^{
m ealty}$  firm DLF's rental arm DCCDL has posted an 11 per cent annual increase in office rental income to Rs 942 crore during the first quarter of this fiscal on better demand for its premium

workspace.
DLF Cyber City Developers
Ltd (DCCDL) is a joint
venture between DLF and
Singapore sovereign wealth

DLF holds a 66.67 per cent stake, while the GIC has a per cent stake in DCCDL.

According to the latest presentation, DCCDL's rental income from office buildings rose to Rs 942 DLF said it is unlocking the crore during the April-June development potential and period of the current fiscal also modernising existing om Rs 851 crore in the yearago period.

The rental income from retail real estate space grew 9 per feet with oc cent to Rs 210 crore in the 93 per cent. first quarter of this fiscal from Rs 192 crore a year ago.



growth through organic growth developments".

'Significant increase in retail presence; portfolio to grow to 2 times in the next 4-5 years," it added.

On the financial performance front, DCCDL's revenue has On the commercial real estate segment, DLF said it has achieved "double-digit rental" June period of 2024-25 from Business).

Rs 3,954 crore at Rs 390/share

will be done subsequently after obtaining all regulatory approvals," said a statement from the company.

Earlier, in June, UltraTech acquired 23 per cent shares of

acquired 23 per cent shares of

ICL. It had acquired Damani-group's stake in India Cements Ltd (ICL) through

two block deals, estimated at

"The proposed transaction is,

therefore, an endeavour to extend the company's

footprint and presence in the

competitive and fast-growing Southern market in the

fragmented,

around Rs 1,900 crore.

associates.

Rs 1,411 crore in the year-ago period.

Chairman

Agrawal had recently told PTI

during a post-Budget review

that more than 66 per cent of

ITR filings this time were

under the new regime which

is being promoted by the government to make the

direct tax system better and

The communication stated

that in case due refunds are

delayed, taxpayers should

check their e-filing account to

see if the I-T department has sent them any message in this

context and if yes, then it should be responded through

simpler.

Its profit after tax increased 20 per cent to Rs 470 crore from Rs 391 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.
"We continue to have a

positive outlook on the rental business and are accelerating our capex commitments to further strengthen our rental portfolio and deliver healthy

growth," DLF said. DLF is India's largest real estate developer in terms of market capitalisation.

In the past seven decades, DLF has developed more than 178 real estate projects comprising more than 349 million square feet of area. DLF Group has 220 million square feet of development potential across residential d commercial segments. At present, DCCDL has a portfolio of 42 million square business of the development feet with occupancy levels at and sale of residential properties (the Development Business) and

development and leasing of

#### PTI ■ NEW DELHI Foreign investors injected over Rs 33,600 crore into Indian equities so far this month on the expectation of continued policy reforms, sustained economic growth and a better-than-expected earnings season. However, they pulled out over Rs 7,200 crore from equities in the last three trading

sessions (July 24-26) after the government hiked taxes on Futures and Options trades (F&O) and capital gains from equity investments in the

Budget. Market experts believe that Indian equity is well-positioned for the year to attract foreign investments. However, there may be some monthly volatility due to short-term news.

'Indian equity marl bond market are favourably placed for the year. This should attract foreign flows into the country. There could be some volatility in the flows on a month-on-month basis due to short-term news flows," Nimesh Chandan, CIO of Bajaj Finserv AMC,



FPIs invest ₹33,600 cr in equities in July amid

continued policy reforms, good earnings season

According to the data with depositories, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have made a net inflow of Rs 33,688 crore in equities this month (till July 26).

This came following an inflow of Rs 26,565 crore in equities in June, driven by political stability and the sharp rebound in markets. Before that, FPIs withdrew Rs 25,586 crore in May on poll jitters and over Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns one tweak in India's tax treaty in April on concerns over a

Economically, India stands on a strong footing. Moreover, the better-thanexpected earnings season so far has improved corporate India's balance sheet that would help in building investor confidence.

"Furthermore, there growing anticipation of an interest rate cut by the US September," Reserve Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director Manager Research at

Morningstar

### Finserv AMC's Chandan said. Bill for NFIR at advanced stage, likely to be introduced

The Bill for setting up a National Financial Information Registry (NFIR) is in the advanced stage of preparation, and it may be introduced in the next session of Parliament, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth has said.

"It is at an advanced stage. It is in the closing stages of interministerial consultation. We will finalise the Bill soon," he told PTI in a post-budget interview.

However, he said, it cannot be introduced in the ongoing session of Parliament but may

be in the next session. The objective is to build a public infrastructure for credit-related information, and the right information can

be made available by the NFIR to lending agencies. A National Financial Information Registry will serve as the central repository of financial and ancillary

information. This will facilitate the efficient flow of credit, promote financial inclusion, and foster

financial inclusion, and foster financial stability.

The passage of the Bill will enable in setting up of a registry and thus help in consolidating all financial information and facilitating financial inclusion, and take the Indian economy onto a the Indian economy onto a faster growth trajectory. The

Budget 2023-24 proposed setting up of NFIR as a central repository of



financial information to facilitate the efficient flow of credit, promote financial inclusion and foster financial stability in the country.

Talking about growth projection in the Budget, Seth said it has assumed a reasonable nominal GDP growth rate of 10.5 per cent, as a higher assumption could have led to a larger fiscal deficit.

"As far as the current year is concerned, fiscal prudence places the demand on us that we are realistic or a bit conservative in assuming what the potential revenues may be while at the same time providing adequate provisions for productive priorities of the government. That is what this Budget does," he said. Compared to the interim Budget, he said, there is a higher provision of about Rs 90,000 crore, including for newer schemes. In that context, he said, "10.5 per cent, we feel, is a reasonable estimate of

nominal growth in the

economy.

## Ultra'lech to acquire additional 32.72% stake in India Cements

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading cement Lmanufacturer UltraTech will acquire an additional 32.72 per cent stake in India Cements Ltd from the promoters of the South-based company for Rs 3,954 crore. The board of the Aditya Birla firm on Sunday approved the proposal to acquire the promoters' 32.72 per cent stake at Rs 390 per share, UltraTech said in a regulatory filing on Sunday.
It has entered into three share

purchase agreements to acquire 32.72 per cent of the equity share capital of ICL from the promoter family led by Srinivasan N and Gurunath, along with the

holding entities.

After the completion of the Rs 3,954 crore deal, UltraTech's stake in India Cements Ltd (ICL) will reach over 55 per cent, mandating it to go for an open offer as per the Sebi regulations.
The board UltraTech has also

approved an "open offer for up to 8.05 crore equity shares representing 26 per cent of the equity share capital of the target, at a price of Rs 390 per equity share from the public shareholders of Target", the

filing said. The price offered by UltraTech is 4.1 per cent higher than the ICL shares' closing price of Rs 374.60 last



The Engineer's Choice

"Post signing of SPA and obtaining regulatory approvals, UltraTech will pay presence," said UltraTech. This primary acquisition is subject to the receipt of applicable statutory and regulatory approvals from the Competition Commission of India and others. for buying 32.72 per cent stake in India Cements from the promoters & their "This will trigger a mandatory open offer at Rs 390/ share. The Open Offer

Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said India Cements opportunity is an exciting one as it enables UltraTech to serve the Southern markets more effectively and also accelerates our path to over

accelerates our pain.
200 MTPA capacity.

Cement's investments over the years, both organic and inorganic, have been designed to propel India to become a building solutions champion globally. Every investment in a core sector like cement accelerates economic activity and drives

progress."
These investments have also

facilitated India's nationwide infrastructure powering the growing need for housing, roads, and other vital infrastructure. This, in turn, has had a tremendous impact on the lives and aspirations of of the lives and aspirations of people," he added. ICL has a total group capacity of 16 MTPA, including 1.5 MTPA from its subsidiary

Trinetra Cement Ltd. While UltraTech has a consolidated capacity of 152.7 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of grey

cement. It has 24 integrated manufacturing units, 33 grinding units, one clinkerisation unit and 8 bulk

packaging terminals.
Its capacity, over the past two decades, "has grown 11x, far outpacing the industry growth of 4x", according to an earlier statement by the company.

"It took 36 years for the cement business of Aditya Birla Group to get to a capacity of 100 MTPA. And UltraTech has subsequently added the next 50 mtpa in less than 5 years with an investment of around Rs 32,000 crore," it added.

In the last AGM in 2023, Birla had set a target for 200 MTPA, aiming to become one of the largest cement companies in the world.
UltraTech Cement Limited is the cement flagship company of the Aditya Birla Group.

### Removal of angel tax for startups to help attract investors: Goyal



**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

ommerce Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday said that removal of angel tax, which was introduced in 2012 by the UPA government, for all classes of investors will help startups investments. attract

He also said that the customs duty reduction customs duty reduction for gold and silver from 15 per cent to 6 per cent will not only help small artisans but also promote the country's gems and jewellery exports.

"The Budget 2024-25 has removed the angel tax and through it, we will be able to attract investors into the

to attract investors into the country," he said here at a post-budget interaction

with the industry.
Further Goyal informed that the budget has announced the setting up

of 12 industrial townships in the country.

He said that one of these

will be in Maharashtra and

it will help create jobs and a strong ecosystem for the industry and trade.

The budget has also announced steps to p r o m o t e

diamond trade. India is a world leader in the diamond cutting and polishing industry, which employs a large number of skilled workers.

The budget has announced that India would provide for safe harbour rates for foreign mining companies selling raw diamonds in the country.
Angel tax (income tax at

30 per cent rate) was imposed on funding raised by unlisted companies, or startups, if their valuation exceeded the company's fair market value.

# in next session: DEA

## India set for double-digit medal haul at Paris Olympics, says Nita Ambani

fter the highs of Tokyo Olympics where India secured their best ever medal haul, the country is poised to get medals in double digits in Paris, sports administrator and IOC athletes are girls. All for member Nita Ambani has

Talking to PTI in an exclusive interaction on the sidelines of the opening of 'India House' at La Villette, she also said the day India hosts the Olympics

Minister Narendra Modi had announced India's bold intent to bid for the 2036 Olympics, pledging to spare no effort to fulfil the dream of 1.4 billion

women power and all for our young boys and girls, we are rooting and cheering for them. I hope we can see double digits in medals for the first time. Go India go, make India proud," Nita said. day after the Paris In October last year, Prime Olympics began with a



glimmering opening ceremony that had the attention of the world, the India House, the first-ever country house at the Olympics, had a star-studded opening ceremony attended by BCCI secretary Jay Shah and IOC officials and

"India has arrived. It is time that the flame that was first lit in Athens must light the sky in our ancient land -Bharat. The day is not far when India will host the Olympic Games. Let this be our collective resolve at the

administrators.

opening of the India House," she added.

"For the first time, India has its own house at the Paris 2024 Olympics. It's a place where we are going to honour our athletes, celebrate their achievements, and wish them

We will celebrate our heritage and our culture, with many of our artisans present and cultural programs scheduled. This is going to be a home away from home for our athletes.

her mind, she said: "When I

Olympics, and then Tokyo, we didn't have an India House.

"I just felt that India, with its 1.4 billion people, needed a house of its own. So that's when I started thinking about having an Indian House at the Olympics for our athletes and everyone to see what the spirit of India really is.

"Envisioned as a symbol of India's Olympic aspiration, we hope that it becomes a home away from home for our athletes where we honour Asked how this idea come to them and salute their achievements," she added.

## Ramita qualifies for women's 10m air rifle final at Olympics



PTI ■ CHATEAUROUX

India's Ramita Jindal gave a strong display of Astrong display of marksmanship to qualify for the women's 10m air rifle final in fifth place even as eight till the sixth and final Elavenil Valarivan series but she rallied succumbed to pressure to miss out despite being among the contenders, finishing 10th at the Olympic

Games here on Sunday. Ramita, the Hangzhou Games bronze medallist in the event, But a poor last series of 103.8 aggregated 631.5 to become saw the 24-year-old former

the second shooter from the country after pistol exponent Manu Bhaker to secure a berth in the final, while Elavenil scored 630.7. Ramita had a sluggish start and was not among the topsuperbly to book a berth in the final while stalwart Elavenil, who had finished 16th at the Tokyo Olympics three years back, held on to the fifth position for much of the qualification round.

mighty tumble from fifth to 10th slot and miss the eight-

shooter final. Ramita, who had scored 636.4 points, 0.1 more than the world record during the Olympic Selection Trials in New Delhi and Bhopal, was patchy initially, shooting a below-par 104.6 in the opening series before she shot 106.1 in the next round. Another ordinary 104.9 was followed by two successive 105.3 and a 105.7 which fetched her a dream entry into the final.

South Korea's Ban Hyojin smashed the Qualification Olympic Record (QOR) with a superb score of 634.5, eclipsing the previous mark of 632.9 set by Norway's Jeanette Hegg in Tokyo

Elavenil, who had struggled following the Tokyo Games and could not enter the squad for the Hangzhou Asian Games last year, kept averaging a score of 10.5 throughout the guilfine throughout the qualifying round as she shot superb series of 105.8, 106.1, 104.4, 105.3, 105.3 but a rank poor final series of 103.8 saw her

## Sindhu opens campaign with dominant win over Fathimath

 $T^{\text{wo-time Olympic medallist}}_{\text{Indian shuttler PV Sindhu}}$ began her Paris Olympics campaign with a resounding straight games win over Maldives' Fathimath Abdul Razzaq in the women's singles group stage match, here on Sunday.

The gulf of class between the two players was evident as Sindhu, who is vying for a third Olympic medal, took just 29 minutes to dispatch her lower-

ranked opponent 21-9 21-6 in the Group M fixture.
"It was a good start, I am happy. I was able to get used to the court and the atmental to the court and the atmental to the court and the atmental to the start of the court and the atmosphere. It has been a long time, coming back after three years, it's a very special one. 2016 (Olympics) was different and 2020 (2021) was completely different. It is a sort of mixture of both," said Sindhu about her Olympic

journey.
"I am enjoying and looking to the second match."

After a couple of unforced errors, Sindhu was quick to assess the condition and took control of the proceedings, racing to a 11-4 lead. The world No 111 Fathimath

was no match against the became a one-sided contest former world champion who finished the first game in a mere 13 minutes.

The second game followed a similar manner with Sindhu claiming the first four points in the blink of an eye to take an early lead.

However, Razzaq capitalised on Sindhu's error to bridge the gap to make it 3-4. But it

once again as the Indian increased the gap to 10-3.

In the end, Sindhu had as many as 14 match points but the world No 13 needed only one to seal the tie. The 10th seeded Indian, who

won the silver medal in the Rio Games in 2016 and a bronze in the last edition in Tokyo, will and it's going on very well. also. I tried to be positive, take on World No 75 Kristin Everything is coming together. also. I tried to be positive, myself calm and do yoga."

Kuuba of Estonia in her second group match on Wednesday. Sindhu has been mentored by

the legendary Prakash Padukone in the past few months, and she said the association has been beneficial

"I have been with Prakash sir for more than six months now

We have to know each other very well to work together," she

"Prakash sir is a legend, he is very experienced and he will come and tell me what is required, what I need to

change." Asked about the aspects of her game which has improved since she started working with Padukone, she said, "Overall, it has not changed the way I feel but there have been add-ons.

"When after I got injured It was getting difficult to move well on court and it was at times getting hard to get the momentum back. We worked on that, we worked on strokes, not just on net and defence but on overall game. You need to be at your 100 per cent in every big tournament or on every stroke."

She said mental strength is very important for players, especially during a big event like the Olympics.

"It is very important to be mentally strong. You at times don't know what is happening, everything gone from you. We worked on the mental things also. I tried to be positive, keep

## US women's Olympic basketball team fine-tunes its defense ahead of first game

**AP** PARIS

One of the challenges that the U.S. Women's basketball team faces at the Paris Olympics with limited practice time is getting everyone on the same page defensively. There's no doubt that all 12

players on the roster can score at will, but it takes time to build the chemistry and trust necessary to be a great defensive team. For now, it's a work in progress,

with the first test coming Monday against Japan. "We spent a little more time on

it," U.S. Coach Cheryl Reeve said before practice Sunday. "Each team that you play poses a different challenge. Certainly Japan, you know plays different than the rest of the group. We have to tweak our scheme a little bit."

Japan plays a style with all five players on the perimeter, which negates a little bit of the Americans' interior advantage. That means that players like Brittney Griner, A'ja Wilson and Breanna Stewart may have to guard more on the outside with no true post player for the Japanese team.

"I know I may have to play



outside more defensively and I'm ready for it," Griner said. The two teams met for the gold medal in the Tokyo Games and the Americans came away with 90-75 victory. Griner finished with 30 points, making 14 of her 18 shots. It was the most points ever by a U.S. Player in a gold medal game, surpassing the 29 by Lisa Leslie in 1996.

While the Americans have been able to outscore their opponents easily during the 55-game Olympic winning streak that dates to the 1992 Barcelona Games, being able to stop the opponent certainly

The U.S. Gave up an average of 68.7 points at the Tokyo Games, the most since the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, when the streak of seven straight gold medals started.

There is a wealth of talented defenders on the U.S. Team. It just takes a little bit of time to get used to playing with one another and the defensive plan that Reeve has installed. The

that Reeve has installed. The U.S. Had only about 14 hours of practice time together before the Olympic opener. "I think the biggest thing was taking away our schemes that we may have with our (WNBA) teams where we just know how to guard people and just trust the process," two-time WNBA defensive player of the year A'ja Wilson said. "Sometimes we're just so used to schemes and this player wants to get here versus overseas is like literally just play everyone honest."

Wilson said the biggest thing is trust and that just takes time. "The more we play alongside each other, the better," she added. "I think we're slowly starting to trust each other and getting an understanding of just knowing we have to have layers and we're starting

### **Olympics pre-race triathlon** event in Seine River cancelled over water quality concerns

**AP** ■ PARIS

oncerns over the water uquality of Paris' Seine River have continued into the 2024 Olympics, with a pre-race triathlon event there canceled Sunday.

Organizers said they nixed the

swimming leg of the triathlon familiarization scheduled for Sunday morning after a meeting about water quality among authorities tasked with carrying out water quality tests. That included representatives of World Triathlon, as well as city and regional authorities. Swimming in the Seine has been banned for over a century in big part due to poor water quality. Organizers have invest-ed \$1.5 billion to prepare the Seine for these Games, and the government has said the river would be clean enough to hold events, including the swimming portion of the triathlon

and the marathon swimming event. Daily water quality tests in early June indicated unsafe levels of E. Coli bacteria, followed by recent improvements. Parisian Mayor Anne Hidalgo took a famous dip in the river less than two weeks before Olympic events were set to start, fulfilling a promise to show that the long-polluted waterway was clean enough to



host swimming competitions. Heavy rain during the opening ceremony revived concerns over whether the long-polluted waterway will be clean enough to host swimming competitions, since water quality is deeply linked with the weather in the French capital. Since 2015, organizers have invested heavily to prepare the Seine for the Olympics and to ensure Parisians have a cleaner river after the Games. The plan included constructing a giant underground water storage basin in central Paris, renovating sewer infrastructure and upgrading wastewater treatment plants.

Triathleletes have expressed hope that the waters would be clean enough for them to swim

"Hopefully we get to swim, bike and run because I don't swim this much to just run and bike," Spanish triathlete Alberto Gonzalez said.

#### **Australian cyclist undergoes abdominal** surgery after fall during Olympic time trial

Australian cyclist Lucas Plapp underwent rv overnigh at a Paris hospital following a hard crash on rain-slicked roads during the Olympic time trial on Saturday, the Australian team said.

AusCycling, Australia's Australias cycling governing body, confirmed the procedure early Sunday. No other details were available.

Plapp was among the last riders to start on the 32.4kilometer (20-mile) course and was laying down a medal-worthy ride at the first time check, trailing then-leader and eventual bronze medalist Wout van Aert by just two seconds. But when Plapp reached a technical portion of the course, his bike slid out from under him and he crashed hard onto the

pavement. The crash was not shown on the race broadcast, but AusCycling said Plapp was conscious and moving afterward. He was lifted into the team vehicle and taken to the hospital for precautionary scans, and later he required the abdominal procedure.
"Plapp slid under a barrier

fence shortly after passing the first checkpoint approximately 14 kilometers into the 32-kilometer course,"

AusCycling said. "His parents



and an Australian team doctor were at the hospital with him."

with him."
The 23-year-old Plapp, who won bronze at the Tokyo Games as part of the Australian pursuit team, is the reigning national time trial and road race champion. He was supposed to ride alongside Simon Clarke in support of teammate Michael Matthews in the Olympic road race next Saturday.

Remco Evenepoel won the time trial, giving Belgium two riders on the podium, while Filippo Ganna of Italy finished second. But both the women's and men's races were marred by a series of crashes on a course made treacherous by the rain.

Among those who fell was American rider Dygert, the reigning time trial world champion, who remounted her bike and rallied to finish third behind gold medalist Grace Brown of Australia and Henderson of Britain.

"If we were in Britain, these (conditions) would be absolutely perfect. The roads are better to take corners on. When we're in Spain, France or Italy, I feel like it's a little more icy," said Dygert, who still plans to compete in the road race and team pursuit this Olympics. "But for sure it definitely plays a factor into

### Small town comes to life for Olympics but with fair share of organisational hurdles

PTI ■ CHATEAUROUX (FRANCE),

Norway shooting coach Tore Brovold, the silver medallist at the 2008 Olympics, is being forced to stay away from skeet shooters in the national team as there are not enough rooms available at the Athletes' Village here.

Chateauroux, a quiet town in central France with a population of less than 50,000, is hosting all the shooting events of the Paris Olympics. It is a two-and-ahalf hour train ride from the bustling French capital, leaving 340 Olympians pretty much cut off from the Games

After completing the 270km long journey from Paris, one would struggle to commute within Chateauroux due to limited public transport, which is free for everyone. For athletes, coaches, officials

and media staying outside the Village, the only way to commute between the Games' venues is via the transport provided by the Organising Committee.

These Games have been a disaster on the transport front. I went to the bus stop near the train station last night but this morning they changed the timings and the athletes had to go ahead with



the training in my absence," Brovold, who has also worked with Indian shotgun shooters,

told PTI. Due to limited availability of rooms, he had a choice to make: either stay at the Games' Village at the expense of a shooter or stay at a hotel outside. Keeping in mind the best interest of the team, he

"I have also come to know that the organisers are offering accommodation to visiting

chose the latter.

teams outside the village as they are short on rooms," said the 54-year-old.

Emin Jafarov, the deputy chef de mission of the Azerbaijan

contingent, too is staying in a hotel due to shortage of rooms.

"I am in staying in a hotel as there are not enough rooms at the Village and the athletes need it more than me," said

lafarov. A majority of Great Britian's shooting squad is staying outside the Athletes' Village by choice as that ensures them the food of their

choice. "It just works better for us. The hotel staff takes care of our individual requirements and we can also go out to eat in different places," said a support staff from Team GB on condition of anonymity.

The 21-member Indian team too is going out to eat everyday as the shooters are not getting the food of their choice.

"If you want food like home, then it is not possible. The shooters have been going out for meals and that is totally fine," said a coach with the Indian team.

On Sunday, a team doctor associated with the Portugal team arrived here due to a transport delay.
"It has only been a day so far.
I can tell you more about the

challenges we are facing here after three four days," the doctor said without wanting to be named.

# Suryakumar is a bowlers' captain, says Axar Patel

ndia all-rounder Axar Patel says new T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav is a bowlers' captain who allows them the freedom to execute their plans.

The spin all-rounder also said that the team will look to maximise its batting combinations in the ongoing series against Sri Lanka.

Suryakumar and India made a winning start to the threematch series here on Saturday when they crushed hosts Sri Lanka by 43 runs in a high scoring opening T20I.
"I played in the last Australia

series with Surya bhai (as captain). I know that he is a bowlers' captain. He gives you free hand (in a way) that you decide first," Axar said at the post-match press conference on Saturday.

"Whenever you get hit, he comes and says that it was a good ball. He keeps giving you inputs. As a player, there is a good bond with him."

Axar recalled the experience of playing under Survakumar in the five-match T20I series against Australia in India late last year which the hosts won

"As a captain, I have also played with him in the last (against matches Australia) and when I was playing today, I didn't feel



much change," he said. "In the first three overs when we were going for runs, he was telling me that we can do this or do that and how we can take a wicket. There is no problem if a four or six goes in it. As a bowler, you get confidence from that if the captain is backing you and telling you that you can do

Axar said India's batting lineup in the opening T20I which did not feature Rishabh Pant at the top was formulated with the idea that the team maximises its left and righthand options.

In the last assignment, the T20 World Cup which India won, Pant batted at No 3

whereas on Saturday skipper Suryakumar came out at the coveted spot and the wicketkeeper-batter dropped down to No 4.

"Our team has four lefties and four righties. If there is a leftright combination (in the middle), it becomes very hard for the bowlers to maintain line and lengths consistently especially with rotations with singles."

"Now if there are four lefties, how can you use them? If you have that chance (to ensure) that there are no two lefties or two righties (in the middle) at the same time.

"If you have that chance, if

Swiatek, Alcaraz and Djokovic start Olympics with win at French Open's site

changing the batting order as per the bowling options that the opposition has got," he added. The spinner said the message from India's new staff under head coach Gautam Gambhir has been that the team will not experience a major overhaul

in the way it operated.
While fielding coach T Dilip
has continued in his role,
Abhishek Nayar, Sairaj
Bahutule and Dutchman Ryan ten Doeschate are now a part of Gambhir's support staff for this tour of Sri Lanka as positions will be finalised after the tour ends.

"I have been playing for 10 years. I have played with different coaches and captains. I don't think a lot will change in the team," he

"When we were talking in the team meeting, they also said the same thing that the coach and captain keep changing but the team remains the same and the 11 or 15 players who stay, they have to do it," he said.

"They have told us that we will play the way we have been playing. Obviously, the coach and his input can be different. The thinking can be different, they keep telling you here and there. But there you have those players in is not much change in the batting, then why not use team's atmosphere," he added.



#### **USA Cricket fulfils critical** requirement, appoints **Jonathan as CEO**

PTI ■ NEW YORK

USA Cricket has fulfilled one of the two critical requirements to avoid being disqualified as an ICČ Associate nations appointing Jonathan Atkieson as its chief executive officer effective August 1.

The USAC was 'put on notice' by the ICC earlier this month for breaching two norms. While not having a CEO was one, the other was USAC not

fulfilling the governance norms which are set by the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). As per the norm, it is

necessary for every sport governing body to earn the National Governing Body (NGB) status which is needed for all sports added in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

The International Olympic Committee during its 141st Session and Executive Board meeting in Mumbai last year had given its nod for the inclusion of cricket in the Los Angeles Games. "USA Cricket has announced

the appointment of Johnathan

Atkeison as its new CEO, effective August 1st, 2024," the USAC said on its website. Atkeison most recently served as the Chief Operating Officer of USA Rugby. He joins USA Cricket with over 15 years of national governing body experience.

"I'm honoured to join the team at USA Cricket. It's an incredible time for the sport here in the United States with the historic performance of the men's national team in the recent T20 World Cup, the completion of the second season of Major League Cricket, and the first opportunity to showcase cricket in the Olympics here on home soil during the LA28 games," Atkinson said.

Our goal is to build a worldclass organisation to capitalise on that momentum, and firmly establish cricket's position in the American sporting landscape," he added.

Atkieson is credited for leading USA Rugby through a financial restructuring in 2020 followed by 'a four-year period of rapid growth and development'.



### US stays alive with 4-1 win over New Zealand in men's soccer

**AP** ■ MARSEILLE (FRANCE) Morocco this time.

Diordje Mihailovic converted a penalty as the United States pounced early in a 4-1 victory over New Zealand to stave off possible elimination at the Olympics.

Mihailovic calmly hit the penalty in the eighth minute after Nathan Harriel was brought down in the box by Matthew Garbett.

Four minutes later, senior Walker plaver Zimmerman, a defender, made it 2-0 when he poked in a goal in a scramble in front of the net following a free kick.

Gianluca Busio scored on a rebound at the half-hour mark and celebrated by dancing with teammate Kevin Paredes. Busio later left the game with what appeared to be a hamstring injury, but he said it was just a precaution.

Paxton Aaronson added a fourth goal for the United States in the 58th and New Zealand avoided the shutout with Jesse Randall's late goal.

New Zealand's 2-1 opening victory over Guinea had put the team in a strong position to advance. The OlvWhites, as they are known, started the day second in the group to

France. The United States is set to play Guinea in its final group match Tuesday in Ńew Saint-Etienne. Zealand plays France in

Marseille. Mitrovic said he's not scoreboard watching. New Zealand advanced to the quarterfinals of the Tokyo Games three years

Ukraine 2, Morocco 1There was no reprieve for

Mihailovic violence that marred the end of its 2-1 win over Argentina in the Olympic men's soccer tournament. Morocco conceded late again against Ukraine on Saturday - and this time the goal stood.

On Wednesday, Morocco fans rushed the field and threw bottles in protest when Cristian Medina appeared to score an equalizer in the 16th minute of stoppage time for Argentina - causing the game to be suspended for around two hours. That goal was later disallowed by VAR for offside.

But there was no sign of a repeat of those scenes when Ihor Krasnopir scored in the eighth minute of stoppage time to seal a 2-1 win for 10-man Ukraine at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard. Morocco looked like it was

edging closer to the quarterfinals after Soufiane Rahimi's 64th-minute penalty leveled the game at 1-1. The forward, who took his total to three goals for the Paris Games, won the spot kick when he was fouled by Volodymyr Saliuk. Saliuk was sent off

for the offense. Ukraine had taken the lead in the 22nd through Dmytro Kryskiv.

Ukraine's late win left all four teams in Group B tied on three points after Argentina shook off defeat to Morocco by beating Iraq 3-1.

Argentina 3, Iraq 1While Iraq threatened to pull off another surprise when Aymen Hussein leveled the game 1-1 in first-half stoppage time, goals from Luciano Gondou and Ignacio Fernandez sealed victory for Argentina.

what's going to happen," Nadal said Saturday. "I don't Iga Swiatek and Carlos Alcaraz got the Paris know if I'm going to play or

Olympics tennis competition In Saturday's last match, started with first-round victories under closed roofs at Angelique Kerber defeated Naomi Osaka 7-5, 6-3 in a Roland Garros, the site of their French Open titles less contest between two women who have been ranked No. 1 than two months ago. and own multiple Grand Slam Novak Djokovic also won in titles. Kerber has said she will and own multiple Grand Slam straight sets as he, like Swiatek and Alcaraz, opened retire after representing Germany at these Games; a bid for a first Olympic gold medal. Djokovic's second-Osaka was hoping for a deeper run than her thirdround opponent could be longtime rival Rafael Nadal, round exit at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago who was scheduled to play his after lighting the cauldron opening singles match Sunday - but said he isn't sure whether he will remain in that during the opening ceremony in her native Japan. Nadal, the Spaniard

and owns two Summer Games golds, was a surprise torch carrier during the rainsoaked opening ceremony along the Seine River on Friday night. He won his doubles opener alongside Alcaraz on Saturday night. Nadal has not made entirely clear whether or not these Summer Games will be the final event of his career. He is 38 and has been dealing with injuries for much of the past two seasons. Nadal and Alcaraz never had played doubles together, but they got past the sixth-seeded Argentine duo of Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni



major championships in Paris and grabbed the last four to beat Romania's

and Wimbledon champ Alcaraz defeated Lebanon's Hady Habib 6-3, 6-1. Serbia's Djokovic, who is

seeded No. 1 in the men's field after Jannik Sinner pulled out with tonsillitis, needed less than an hour for a 6-0, 6-1 win against Australia's Matthew Ebden - a doubles player participating in a tour-level singles match for the first time in two years. Ebden got into the singles bracket because he was in Paris to play doubles and thus available when 16th-ranked Holger Rune of Denmark withdrew with an injured wrist.

event. a record 14 of his 22 Grand The No. 1-ranked Swiatek Irina-Camelia Begu 6-2, 7-5, he was already down 6-0, 4-0 "Tomorrow, I don't know Slam titles at the French Open claimed four of her five career while reigning French Open - and he celebrated by pulling

the front of his yellow shirt over his head and baring his chest to roars from the flagdotted crowd. The last time Djokovic was in

Paris, early last month, he needed surgery for a torn meniscus in his right knee after getting injured during the French Open. He managed to not only play at Wimbledon but also reach the final before losing to Alcaraz. "I do feel more ready now than I was before Wimbledon and I really do feel better prepared," Djokovic said Saturday. "Olympics, from the beginning of the year, was one of the highest goals and objectives and priorities for this year. So let's see how it

## Australia takes early lead against US On Day 1 of swimming

**AP** ■ PARIS

ustralia took the lead in its Aswimming showdown against the United States at the Paris Olympics by claiming two of three gold medals on the first full day of competition.

Ariarne Titmus turned one of the most anticipated races of the Games into a blowout when she left Katie Ledecky in her wake at La Defense Arena. Titmus led from start to finish in the 400-meter freestyle Saturday night.

The Australian star known as "The Terminator" handed Ledecky a second straight Olympic defeat in an event the American won at Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Titmus faced her stiffest

challenge from 17-year-old Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh, but she won comfortably as McIntosh claimed the silver. Ledecky settled for bronze.

Titmus swept the 200 and 400 free in Tokyo, and she is going for the same double in Paris. Ledecky is going for a double in the 800 and 1,500. Australia then made it 2 for 2

against the Americans in the women's 4x100 freestyle relay, claiming its fourth straight Olympic title in that event. The quartet of Mollie O'Callaghan, Shayna Jack, Emma McKeon and Meg Harris set an Olympic record with a winning time of 3

minutes, 28.92 seconds. The Americans - Kate Douglass, Gretchen Walsh, Torri Huske and Simone Manuel - rallied to take silver.

China took bronze. The U.S. Finally got its first gold in the men's 4x100 freestyle relay. The Americans were anchored by Caeleb Dressel, who won the eighth gold medal of his career.

Australia took the silver.

CHINA TAKES FIRST

GOLD OF GAMES

The first gold medal of the Paris Olympics went to China when Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao beat South Korea's Keum Jihyeon and Park Hajun in the final of the 10-meter air rifle mixed team event Saturday morning. Shortly before that, Kazakhstan's Alexandra Le and Islam Satpayev became the first medalists of the games when they beat Germany's Anna Janssen and Maximilian Ulbrich 17-5 for the bronze. FRANCE'S FIRST MEDALS

Luka Mkheidze and Shirine Boukli won France's first two medals of the Olympics when Mkheidze claimed silver and Boukli earned bronze in judo. Mkheidze lost 1-0 to Ýeldos Smetov of Kazakhstan in the final of the men's 60-kilogram division - a disappointing result for the raucous crowd at Champ-de-Mars Arena. About 30 minutes before Mkheidze's loss, Boukli claimed France's first medal of its home Olympics with a victory over Spain's Laura Martinez in a bronze-medal match.

Paris will have plenty of chances to cheer on its vaunted judo team, which has a competitor in all 14 weight classes in these Olympics. France is one of the world's top iudo nations.



TENNIS CONTROVERSY

Novak Djokovic was perplexed by the Olympics rules after his 6-0, 6-1 rout in less than an hour against an overmatched Matthew Ebden, a 36-year-old doubles player from Australia who hadn't competed in a tour-level, main-draw singles match since June 2022. Djokovic felt other singles

players deserved a spot at the Olympics instead of Ebden. Ebden was in Paris to compete in men's doubles, where he's been as high as No. 1 and currently is No. 3 and has won two major championships. That made him available for the singles competition when 16th-ranked Holger Rune of Denmark pulled out because of a wrist injury.

Ebden was not the first doubles player asked to fill in, but he was the first to say yes. He hadn't even practiced singles in about two years until playing a tiebreaker in training on Friday. In other tennis action, Rafael

best chances to bring (a) medal back home." Nadal's first match in singles, against Hungary's Marton Fucsovics, is scheduled for Sunday. Also, Angelique Kerber

eliminated Naomi Osaka 7-5, 6-3 in the first round in a matchup between former No. 1-ranked players with multiple Grand Slam titles.

will compete in singles, saying after he paired with

Carlos Alcaraz to win their

first-round doubles match

Saturday night that he wants to "make the smartest

decision possible to have the

RAIN DISRUPTIONS

Rain continued from the opening ceremony through the first full day of competition caused and several postponements and delays at the Paris Olympics.

Men's street skateboarding was supposed to start Saturday but was pushed to Monday because of the showers. The Nadal is not sure whether he start of play in the scheduled

tennis matches on the 10 smaller courts at Roland Garros was delayed because of rain, but action started as scheduled in the two main stadiums that have retractable roofs.

The rain could threaten the water quality for swimming in the Seine when the triathlon begins Tuesday with the men's event at the Alexander III bridge next to Grand Palais.

10-TIME OLYMPIAN

Georgian shooter Nino Salukvadze made history as the first woman to compete at 10 Olympic Games in a career which began representing the Soviet Union. She has competed at every Summer Olympics since 1988, when she won gold as a 19-year-old

Soviet prodigy. She set her latest record when she stepped into the shooting range for qualification in the women's 10-meter air pistol. Salukvadze placed 38th and 10-meter air didn't advance to Sunday's eight-shooter final. She gets another shot at a medal Friday in qualification for the 25-meter pistol event.

In a career spanning five decades, the 55-year-old has competed on three different Olympic teams: the Soviet Union in 1988, then the Unified Team which was organized for ex-Soviet athletes in Barcelona in 1992 after the Soviet Union collapsed.

She has represented her home country of Georgia following its independence for the last eight Olympics.

#### **Boxer Preeti beats** Vietnam's Vo Thi Kim Anh to enter pre-quarterfinals

**PTI** ■ PARIS

Indian boxer Preeti Pawar picked up an unanimous decision win against Vietnam's Vo Thi Kim Anh to enter the women's 54kg category pre-quarterfinals at the Paris Olympics.

The Asian Games bronze medallist, competing in her maiden Olympic Games, opened the proceedings for India in the boxing arena as she won her first round by a 5-0 margin on Saturday night. The 20-year-old from

Haryana, who had been hospitalised for a a few days ahead of the Games due to illness, was unimpressive in the first round as her Vietnamese dictated the proceedings. But the Indian made amends

in the next two rounds, attacking and landing clear blows on her opponent. "Happy that we started on a winning note! Despite falling

ill before the Games, Preeti not only recovered but fought brilliantly and showed exceptional courage," Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh said.

Preeti will face second seed and world championships silver-medallist Marcela Yeni Arias of Colombia in the round of 16 clash on Tuesday.

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