



OPINION 6 HONOURING THE LEGACY OF BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

WORLD 9 3 CHILDREN KILLED, 5 INJURED IN UK STABBING

MONEY 10 SENSEX, NIFTY RISE FOR 3RD DAY ON

LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY JULY 31, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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MANU CLINCHES HISTORIC SECOND OLYMPIC MEDAL 11 SPORTS

Wayanad landslides leave trail of deaths, destruction

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Two humongous landslides that struck Mundakkai settlement in Wayanad district in Kerala's northern region in the wee hours of Tuesday claimed 123 lives and destroyed hundreds of houses. Rescue workers said the death toll could be more than what had been found by 6 pm on Tuesday. Torrential rain has been battering the State since Sunday morning, disrupting the normal life. This was officially confirmed by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday evening during the media briefing. He said the death toll could increase as many bodies are buried under the earth and efforts are on to retrieve the bodies despite incessant rain and poor visibility.

"Two landslides struck Mundakkai at 2 am and 4 am respectively. The entire population was asleep and there was no possibility of them knowing the impending disaster. This is one of the biggest natural disasters seen by the State," said the Chief Minister. Vijayan said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah had called him and offered all possible help. "But that would not be sufficient as the State alone cannot undertake the rescue and rehabilitation works on its own," lamented Vijayan. Wayanad district has been categorised as one of the most ecologically sensitive zones in the country by the Madhav Gadgil Committee appointed by the Union Government to study the

ground reality of the ecology of the district. The committee found that deforestation, uncontrolled quarrying and mining in the district have played havoc with the environment, contributing to the frequent landslides. Within hours of the landslides, the Central Government deployed National Disaster Response Force of the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Coast Guard to save the people who were trapped by the flood waters, soil and rocks. In addition to the residents of Mundakkai atop the high ranges, many holiday makers staying in the hundreds of high-end resorts in the region too have been trapped in the landslides. Indian Air Force has deployed two choppers from its Sulur base



Rescue operation underway following landslides triggered by heavy rain at Chooralmala, in Wayanad district, Kerala, on Tuesday

for the rescue mission. According to the Defence PRO, a team of 43 personnel, led by the Second-in-Command from the 122 Infantry Battalion (TA) MADRAS, has been mobilised to aid in the ongoing rescue efforts. The team, comprising a Medical Officer, two Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs), and 40 soldiers, is equipped to provide critical assistance in the affected area. Besides that, the Army's engineering group has reached Wayanad for rescue operations in the landslide-hit areas, the district administration said. Most of the persons who were drowned or got killed in the landslides were labourers and workers staying in the Laayams of tea and coffee plantations in the

district. According to environmentalists, Tuesday's disaster is yet another proof that the State administration has not learnt anything from past mistakes. Wayanad has no representative in Parliament as Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition who was elected from the constituency, gave it up immediately after the 2024 Lok Sabha poll to retain Rae Bareilly. Besides the dead bodies, the rescue teams came across mutilated parts of human bodies which were crushed by huge rocks and stones spewed with force by the landslides. At the time of going to the Press, only less than half of the dead bodies have been identified. Continued on Page 8



Rescue work underway after the Howrah-Mumbai Mail derailed near Badabambo, in Seraikela-Kharsawan district of Jharkhand, early Tuesday. At least two people were killed in the accident, according to officials

Train accident claims 2 lives in Jharkhand

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Two persons were killed and 20 others injured after at least 18 coaches of the Howrah-Mumbai Mail derailed in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharsawan district early on Tuesday. The accident occurred at 3:45 am near Barabambo, around 80 km from Jamshedpur, under the Chakradharpur Division of South Eastern Railway (SER). The railways have announced an enquiry into the train accident, another SER official said. "Two persons were killed and 20 injured as 18 coaches of the Howrah-Mumbai Mail derailed near Barabambo," said West Singhbhum Deputy Commissioner Kuldeep Chaudhary. He added that the "Howrah-Mumbai train hit the stationary goods train". Of these, 16 were passenger coaches, one power car and one pantry car, he added. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren directed officials to expedite relief operations and help the injured people. The railways announced ₹10 lakh ex gratia for kin of each deceased, ₹5 lakh for those with major injuries, ₹1 lakh for those with minor injuries. According to the railway CPRO, rescue and relief operations have been completed. The passengers were sent to their destination by a special train from Chakradharpur at 12.15 pm, an official said. The SER cancelled a few express and passenger trains owing to the accident. These are the 22861 Howrah-Titlagarh-Kantabanji Express, 08015/18019 Kharagpur-Jhargram-Dhanbad Express, 12021/12022 Howrah-Barbil-Howrah Jan Shatabdi Express, 18109 Tatanagar-Titlagarh Express and 18030 Shalimar-LTT Express. Congress took a swipe at Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw after the train derailment in Jharkhand, saying since June the "Fail Minister" has "overseen three accidents" that have cumulatively cost 17 lives but there is "no accountability" in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new India.

UP Govt passes stricter 'love jihad' law

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly on Tuesday passed the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024 that provides for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment, making the law stricter in cases of fraudulent or forced conversion. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna introduced the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in the House on Monday. The move, however, has drawn severe criticism from the Opposition. Earlier the maximum punishment provided for those found guilty of marrying a woman by deceiving and changing her religion was 10 years with a fine of ₹50,000. According to the new provisions, if any minor,



Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna presents a supplementary Budget in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other members during the Monsoon Session of State Legislative Assembly at Vidhan Bhawan, in Lucknow, on Tuesday

disabled or mentally challenged person, woman, or SC-ST individual is converted, the culprit will be punished with life imprisonment and a fine of ₹1 lakh. Similarly, mass religious conversion will also be punishable with life imprisonment and a fine of ₹1 lakh. Receiving funding from

foreign or illegal institutions will be punishable with imprisonment of up to 14 years and a fine of ₹10 lakh. If someone, with the intention of causing religious conversion, threatens any person with harm to their life or property, attacks or uses force, promises marriage,

lures, or trafficking a minor, woman, or person, they will be punished with up to 20 years of imprisonment. The punishment will not be less than one year and can be extended up to life imprisonment (until death). Apart from this, a fine will be imposed for the treatment and rehabilitation of the victim. The Bill also proposes that anyone can register an FIR in conversion cases. Presently, Section 4 of the Act says only a person who has been converted, his/her parents, brother, sister, or any other person who is related to him/her by blood, marriage, or adoption may lodge a first information report about the allegation of such conversion and no one else. Further, the Bill aims to add a new offence of receiving funds from foreign or illegal organisations for unlawful conversion purposes. Offenders will face jail terms ranging between 5 years and 14 years.

It has been proposed that such cases will not be heard by any court below the Sessions Court and along with this, the bail plea will not be considered without giving an opportunity to the public prosecutor. Also, all the crimes under the amended Act have been made non-bailable. The UP Government introduced this Bill in the Assembly on Monday, and it was passed on Tuesday. It will now be sent to the Legislative Council. After approval from the Houses, it will be sent to the Governor and then to the President. The State Government had earlier passed the Prohibition of Religious Conversion Bill, 2021 in the Assembly. This Bill had a provision for punishment ranging from one to 10 years. Through the amendment, the previous bill has been further strengthened in terms of punishment and fines. Continued on Page 8

Anti-cheating Bill also passed; maximum penalty is life term

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly on Tuesday passed a Bill to tackle malpractices in public examinations, with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and fines up to Rs 1 crore on those linked to organised cheating rackets. The Uttar Pradesh Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 has the provision of life sentence and a fine of not less than Rs 50 lakh, which may go up to Rs one crore, for a person, whether in connivance with a solver gang or otherwise, for using unfair means in a public examination. The Bill seeks to tackle and identify the elements taking advantage of the vulnerability of the examination system. The Bill says the crime will be investigated by a DSP or an ACP. The opposition demanded that the Bill be sent to a Select Committee, but the demand was rejected by the House and the Bill was passed by a voice vote. The aims and objectives as stated by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath says, "The injustice done with the youngsters through the malpractice in the public examinations is not less than any national sin and the state government is committed to strongly act against those elements, who are attempting to play with the

Report blames coaching centre for Delhi horror

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Days after three IAS aspirants died in rain-induced flood in the basement of Rau's coaching centre, an enquiry report by the Delhi Chief Secretary on Tuesday highlighted that the institute had completely blocked the drainage system and, unlike other similarly placed properties, had not constructed a barrier wall to prevent water from entering the building. Meanwhile, students continued to protest for the third consecutive day against the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Rau's management. One of the protesting students said ten IAS aspirants have started an indefinite hunger strike demanding compensation of ₹ five crore to the victims' families. In his report to the Delhi Minister Atishi, Naresh Kumar has mentioned that the property users in the area have constructed ramps over the entire width of the plot, thereby blocking the entry of storm water during heavy rain into the existing drainage system for the sake of convenience. "The opening in the shape of the manhole over the drainage system has also been covered with finishing items, thus leaving no scope for cleaning of the drains. They have covered the existing, built up section



Students stage a protest after three civil services aspirants died due to drowning at a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar area, in New Delhi on Tuesday

of drainage system by putting granites, marbles and kota stones," it stated. The report said the road from Shankar Road to Pusa Road is in saucer shape with the lowest point in front of the Rau's (IAS) Coaching Institute, where the incident happened. During peak rain, water accumulates in this stretch of 200 feet and whenever vehicles pass through this stretch there is a huge splash of water which aggravates the situation. "The plinth level of this property is also lower in comparison to the

adjoining properties," it stated. On the day of the incident, the gate of the institute broke down after a SUV car, whose driver has been arrested and sent to 14-day judicial custody, passed through the waterlogged area causing the pressure of water to break down the gate, causing the water to gush into the basement. The report said, "This coaching institute has completely blocked the drainage system and also has not taken additional safeguard to meet such eventualities. The parking access to the institute is directly

exposed to the road and in case of heavy rain water instead of going into the storm water drain enters the parking area." This is unlike the other similarly placed properties that have constructed a barrier wall which ensures that in case of heavy waterlogging in the area, the water may not enter into the parking area and basement. "There was no vigil on the part of security staff as a result water uninterruptedly crossed the parking area and entered into the basement and ultimately taking the precious life of three bright children," it said. Meanwhile, civil services aspirants and locals continued their protest outside Rau's coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar against the MCD and management of Rau's IAS Study Circle. "We will continue our protest against coaching centres which are not following rules and putting the lives of many students like us in danger," a protester Ayush said. He said a few police officers were advising students to go home and prepare for their exams. "We are planning to hold a candle march and start a hunger strike until all our demands are met," he added. Continued on Page 8

FM terms misleading Opp claims of Budget bias

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday approved ₹48.21-lakh crore Budget for 2024-25 of the Union Government. The lower House also approved the Budget of the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir with a voice vote. The Union Budget and Budget for J&K was passed by a voice vote by the Lok Sabha. The relevant appropriation Bills were also passed by the House. Replying to the debate, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the fiscal deficit of the Central Government is proposed to be brought down to 4.9 per cent of the GDP during 2024-25 and further to below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. In her reply to the marathon debate and discussion on the Budget, Sitharaman termed misleading claims by Opposition leaders that if any State is not named in the Budget speech, then it does not get any budgetary allocation. She asserted that no State was being denied money. She recalled that in the past Budgets by the UPA Government also did not mention names of all States in their Budget speech. "I have been picking up on Budget speeches since 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and so on. The Budget of 2004-2005 did

India to be third largest economy within five years, says Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining that India is a beacon of growth and stability in a world facing high inflation and low growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday the country is firmly on the path to becoming the world's third-biggest economy within next five years. Making this assertion, he said global investors are eyeing India as an investment destination and exhorted the domestic industry to seize the golden opportunity to be part of the journey of 'Viksit Bharat'. Addressing a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) post-Budget

conference on 'Journey Towards Viksit Bharat', Modi said wealth creators are the main driving force of the country's growth story at a time when India's policies, commitment, determination, decisions and investments are becoming the basis of global progress. "Today, the whole world is looking at India and you (industry). Policies of the Government and commitment and investment are becoming foundation of global development. Investors across the world are keen to come to India. World leaders are filled with positivity for India. This is the golden chance for the Indian industry and we should not lose

this opportunity," Modi said. Pointing towards the growing interest in India among global investors, the Prime Minister informed the industry about his call in the recent NITI Aayog meeting to State Chief Ministers for creating investor-friendly charters, bringing clarity in investment policies and creating a conducive atmosphere for investment. With high growth and low inflation, he said, India is a beacon of growth and stability in a world which is facing high inflation and low growth and other geopolitical challenges. India is growing at 8 per cent and the day is not far when the country will become the third-largest



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during CII post-Budget conference in New Delhi

economy globally from the current fifth position, he said. The Prime Minister exuded confidence that this feat of becoming the third-largest economy will be achieved in his ongoing third term. The Modi Government does not lack political will and will take all decisions keeping in mind 'nation first approach', he said. "The Commitment of 'Nation First' is reflected in the 5 trillion dollar economy goal, saturation approach, emphasis on Zero Effect-Zero Defect and pledge of AatmNirbhar Bharat or Viksit Bharat," he said. The domestic industry, he said, should compete with the

Government to make India a developed nation by 2047 and also make it a global player in sunrise sectors. He also recalled various measures announced in the Budget, especially for promoting the MSME sector which creates crores of jobs. The Prime Minister said the government is highly focused on skill development and employment keeping in mind Industry 4.0 standards. India is home to 1.40 lakh startups employing lakhs of youth, and more than 8 crore people have started new business with the help of Mudra Yojana, Startup India and Standup India schemes. Continued on Page 8

Govt allocates over ₹175 cr for disaster relief

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an effort to support those affected by various disasters, the Uttar Pradesh government has allocated over Rs 175 crore from the State Disaster Relief Fund based on district requests. Of this total, Rs 120 crore have already been released for relief work, including aid for flood-affected individuals, families, and agricultural grants. Recently, an additional sum of Rs 36 crore was disbursed, with the largest portion of Rs 30 crore allocated to Lakhimpur Kheri. Relief Commissioner GS Naveen stated, "The state government is committed to providing all possible assistance to those affected by natural disasters. The chief minister is personally monitoring the affected areas and issuing necessary instructions to officials. This proactive approach has significantly reduced the loss of life and property from disasters over the past seven years." Naveen further explained that for the financial year 2024-25, the government has set aside Rs 175 crore for various disaster relief efforts. Of this sum, Rs 36

THE CHIEF MINISTER IS PERSONALLY MONITORING THE AFFECTED AREAS AND ISSUING NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFICIALS

crore have been released to six districts —Kasganj, Meerut, Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri, Kanpur Nagar, and Mathura — for relief efforts, including aid to flood-affected individuals and families, agricultural grants, and other necessary support. The largest allocation, Rs 30 crore, was granted to Lakhimpur Kheri. Other allocations include Rs 4 crore for Pilibhit, Rs 1.25 crore for Kasganj, Rs 1 crore for Kanpur Nagar, Rs 50 lakh for Meerut, and Rs 77,392 for Mathura. Additionally, Rs 54 lakh have been allocated for victims of bull and Nilgai attacks, with Rs 30 lakh designated for Fatehpur and Rs 24 lakh for Pilibhit. Moreover, Rs 65 lakh have been allocated to Balrampur, Gorakhpur, and Pilibhit to address damage from unseasonal heavy rains and excessive rainfall. Of this amount, Pilibhit received Rs 50 lakh, Gorakhpur received Rs 10 lakh, and Balrampur received Rs 5 lakh.



NOTICE

समझ सिटी माण्डेसरी स्कूल स्टेशन रोड ब्रान्च लखनऊ में शपथी सयेद महमूद हुसैन आयु लगभग 63 वर्ष पुत्र सयेद मुनाता हुसैन निवासी - स्टडी होम एपार्टमेंट-501, 5वां फ्लोर, के. रामाराव मार्ग नजर बाग लखनऊ - 226001, घोषित करता हूँ कि मेरी पुत्री रीनाद महमूद के प्रवेश पत्र फार्म पर बुद्धिमान शपथी का नाम सयेद मोहमूद हुसैन (Syed Mohammad Husain) लिख गया था जो गलत है। शपथी का सही नाम सयेद महमूद हुसैन है। सभी दस्तावेजों में यही नाम अंकित है जो सही है।

NOTICE

This is to inform that Original sale deeds (chain deeds), which were duly registered in the office of Sub-Registrar Lucknow bearing document no. 3858, dated 24/06/2005, document no. 7108, dated 18/12/2000 & document no. 3311, dated 30/05/2005, regarding the property shukhand nos. 12 & 12A, Situated at Village Takrohi, Ward Shahabad Bhagat Singh, District Lucknow were lost with my client namely Sri Gya Prasad S/O Late Sri Bhullu & Smt. Rampati W/O Gya Prasad on 25/07/2024. If any person has found, claim or objection over it, kindly inform within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice and after the completion of above time period, no claim of any kind will be considered. **B.N. Tripathi** Advocate, Res: C-15, Nehru Vihar, Kalyanpur, Lucknow, Mob: 9336127853

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Krishn Chandra To Krishna Chandra Soni S/o Ramesh Chandra Soni R/o Modi Temple, Mardan Naka, Banda U.P.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Tanya to Tanya Verma for all future purpose. Tanya Verma D/o Hari Kishan Verma R/O 4/177, Purana Kanpur, Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

I declare my name in Passport Gita Srivastava is wrong. That the my Right Name is GITA SHRIVASTAV. In future my name is called GITA SHRIVASTAV. Res. 614/C40 Preeti Nagar Dudauli Marg Lucknow. UP 226021

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Akansha Manwar change to Akansha Sharma, now I should be known by this name, Akansha Sharma wife Avdesh Sharma daughter Vinod Kumar Manwar, resident Shivpuri Colony Agra

NOTICE

I HAVLDAR. BENEESH KS S/O P KARUNAKARAN ARMY NO -4007075Y UNIT -4 DOGRA R/o-Vill-Vellarada Post -Kudappanmoodu, Tehsil - Neyyattinkara Distt-Thiruvananthapuram Kerala - 695505. In My Service Record My Mother's Name has been written by mistake as SOBHY G and date of birth is 24-8-1960 whereas her real name is SOBHI G and correct date of birth is 31-8-1955 This should be recorded.

Stone pelting at RSS shakha sparks communal tension

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Communal tension prevailed in Chinhat when a group of youths allegedly pelted stones at an RSS shakha. The attack was reportedly carried out by a group of youths led by an accused identified as Saquib. According to the shakha sanchalak, who lodged the complaint, the group threatened violence and tried to intimidate the participants of the RSS shakha.

The incident occurred around 6 pm on July 27, during the RSS shakha session held at Chhohariya Mata Mandir. Saquib and his companions allegedly threw stones at the building, targeting the volunteers and causing damage. Saquib also threatened to prevent the shakha from operating in the future. The complainant reported that after the attack, Saquib and his group fled the scene. The police have registered a case and are investigating the matter.

Meanwhile, violence erupted over a road construction dispute in Indiranagar. Shalabh Kumar, a computer operator working at the office of the ACS (Home) was attacked by a group of individuals led by a local resident named Saligram. Kumar had constructed a brick road in front of his house and set up bamboo barricades to prevent unauthorised access.

Saligram, who had previously protested the barricading, once again objected to the construction. Kumar reported the issue to the police, who allowed him to proceed with the road construction. Despite this, Saligram and his sons — Mukesh, Subhash, Sandeep, Vishal, and Deepak — attacked Kumar and his family.

During the attack, Kumar sustained serious injuries, including a head fracture, and was admitted to a hospital. Saligram's family members, including his wife Janaki Devi and daughters-in-law, also engaged in the violence. An FIR has been filed against the accused, and the Indira Nagar police are investigating the case.

INSPECTOR ACCUSED OF MISCONDUCT

An inspector posted at a police station in Lucknow has been accused of misconduct and inappropriate behaviour towards female police officers. According to a complaint filed with senior officers, including the JPC (Crime), the inspector allegedly covered the CCTV camera in his office and engaged in inappropriate behaviour towards the women officers. The inspector allegedly sent messages and made WhatsApp calls to female officers at odd hours, exerting undue pressure on them. Those who complied with his demands were given favourable duty assignments, while those who resisted faced difficulties. A photo showing the inspector's cap hanging over the CCTV camera went viral on social media, further raising concerns about his conduct. The police spokesperson confirmed that the allegations were being investigated by an officer of ACP rank. The outcome of the investigation will determine the further course of action. Meanwhile, Rohit Sethiya, a resident of Gomti Nagar has accused his former acquaintance, Rohit Narang, and Narang's wife Reema Narang of duping him of 1.5 kg of gold ornaments, valued at approximately Rs 1.2 crore. According

to Sethiya, the Narangs visited him in March 2019 and sought financial help, claiming they had suffered significant business losses and were in dire financial straits. The Narangs requested Sethiya's assistance, initially asking for cash. When Sethiya was unable to provide the funds, they asked for his gold ornaments. Sethiya agreed to this arrangement, hoping to help his former friends in their time of need. However, when Sethiya later requested the return of the gold ornaments, the Narangs' responses were evasive. Eventually, Sethiya travelled to Haryana to meet the Narangs' son Parth in an attempt to retrieve the gold. During this visit, Parth allegedly reacted angrily, threatening Sethiya and pushing him out of the house. Sethiya was informed that the Narangs were planning to move to Canada. A formal complaint has been filed with the police, who are investigating the matter.

In another incident, a man was duped of Rs 50,000 by a trickster in Gudamba police station area on Tuesday. The victim, Laeeg Ahmed of Sector-J in the area, said he got a call from an unidentified caller who told him that his son had been arrested by police in Saudi Arab.

"The caller told me that my son had been arrested in Saudi Arab in a rape case. I was scared hearing this. He then made me to hear the cry of a man. My son works in Saudi Arab. I tried to contact him but his phone was found switched off. I wanted to save my son and so I paid the money to the caller through online payment method," he said.

Students stage protest over Delhi coaching incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha National Committee paid tribute to the deceased students from Rao IAS Coaching in Delhi at the Ambedkar statue on Lucknow University campus. National vice-president of Samajwadi Chhatra Mahendra Yadav, expressed shock over the deaths of three UPSC aspirants due to waterlogging at the coaching centre in Delhi's old Rajendra Nagar. He highlighted that this tragic incident had not only devastated the families involved but also instilled fear among other students and cast uncertainty over their future.

Yadav noted that Samajwadi Party national president Akhilesh Yadav took immediate action by raising the issue in Lok Sabha during Zero Hour. Yadav demanded that the government provide a compensation of Rs one crore to each deceased student's family and called for stringent action against those responsible for the incident. The condolence meeting was attended by several students.



NSUI members scuffle with police personnel in Lucknow

Meanwhile, NSUI members from Lucknow University protested, demanding action against illegal coaching institutes and those accountable for the students' deaths. The protest led to a scuffle with the police, resulting in the arrest of the protesters, who were later sent to Eco Garden. Vishal Singh from NSUI stated that their demands included the immediate closure of coaching institutes and libraries operating in basements, fines for their owners, a financial support of Rs 10 lakh for the victims' families, and the implementation of a proper drainage plan in coaching areas to prevent future issues.

ed that their demands included the immediate closure of coaching institutes and libraries operating in basements, fines for their owners, a financial support of Rs 10 lakh for the victims' families, and the implementation of a proper drainage plan in coaching areas to prevent future issues.

CM congratulates Bhaker Sarabjot on bronze medal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday congratulated shooters Sarabjot Singh and Manu Bhaker for winning the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol (mixed team) event at the Paris Olympics 2024. He also extended his best wishes for their future endeavours. Earlier, Manu Bhaker had secured India's first bronze medal in the 10m air pistol individual event with a score of

221.7. Celebrating this remarkable Olympics achievement, the chief minister wrote on X: "The entire nation is thrilled and proud of your success. May your winning streak continue for years to come! 'Jai Hind!' Manu Bhaker scripted history to become the first Indian athlete in post-independence era to win two Olympic medals in a single edition of the Games as she combined with Sarabjot Singh to clinch the 10m air pistol mixed team bronze on Tuesday.

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR
Directorate of Sports
 Sealed quotations are invited from the firm of higher quality track suits and uniforms i.e. Adidas, Nike and other similar quality products firms for the purchase of track suits and uniforms of University teams/ Indian International teams.
 Closing date & time **12-08-2024 upto 4.00 pm.**
 For details log into **www.gndusports.org**
 Note: Any corrigendum / Addendum to quotation notice shall be published on the above website only.
 NA/12/24448/2023/36170
 Dated CHD :- 7/30/2024

Bizman assaulted, humiliated

Lucknow (PNS): In a shocking incident highlighting the rising issue of extortion and violence in Lucknow, Himanshu Singh, a businessman from Jankipuram (Sector-C), was brutally assaulted and subjected to humiliation by a group of goons. Singh, who operates a car repair shop in Purania (Sector-H) received a call from a person named Saurabh Singh, who requested him to come to his residence to repair a car. Singh, preoccupied with other tasks, initially declined the request, citing prior commitments.

Despite this, Singh was later coerced by two men, Lokesh and Shakeel, who forcibly took him to Saurabh Singh's house. Upon arrival, Singh was confronted by a group of individuals, including Lokesh, Shakeel, Nilesh, Deepak, and Ankit, who began to assault him. The situation worsened when Saurabh Singh arrived in a black car and joined in the brutal attack.

Singh was locked in a room where he was severely beaten and threatened with a firearm. In a shocking display of cruelty, the attackers made Singh lick the spit from the gun's nozzle, an act they claimed was to ensure his future compliance and prevent him from disobeying them again. The assailants then demanded a monthly extortion payment of Rs 30,000, threatening that failure to comply would result in death or false criminal charges being filed against him.

Youth shoots to death elder brother, niece over land dispute

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident, a youth allegedly shot his elder brother and latter's daughter with his licenced gun in Shahjahanpur on Tuesday morning. The incident occurred due to business rivalry and a land dispute between the two brothers.

Agitated by the killings, the victim's family placed the bodies on the road and staged a demonstration demanding the arrest of the accused, who absconded after the incident. Local police and senior officers, including Shahjahanpur SP Ashok Kumar Meena, reached the scene and assured stern action, after which the bodies were sent for autopsy.

According to reports, Shripal and his younger brother Guddu Rathore lived nearby in Adarshnagar locality of Nigohi police station area in Shahjahanpur. The two families frequently fought over various issues, including customers coming to their jointly owned crusher and a long-standing land dispute. On Monday afternoon, a confrontation led to police intervention, resulting in both parties being taken to the police station and released later that night, except for one family member from each side. The matter escalated on Tuesday morning when Guddu, still agitated, began

hurling abuses at his elder brother Shripal. When Shripal threatened to call the police, Guddu brought his licenced pistol and fired indiscriminately at Shripal, killing him on the spot. Shripal's 20-year-old daughter Shripari, who rushed to her father's aid, was also critically injured in the gunfire. She was rushed to the local CHC, where, she was pronounced dead by doctors. The family then brought her body back and blocked the Nigohi-Bisalpur road with both bodies, demanding Guddu's arrest before allowing the police to proceed with legal action. Following the arrival of senior officers, including SP Ashok Kumar Meena, and their assurance that teams had been formed to arrest the accused, further legal proceedings were carried out.

Meanwhile, a beheaded body of a 6-year-old girl was found near Pitambarpur Railway Station in Bareilly, police said on Tuesday. ASP, South, Manush Pareek ruled out murder angle in the incident. It appears the girl was either hit by a train or attacked by some wild animal, which dragged the body due to which the victim's head got separated from her body, he said. The body appears to be seven to eight days old and is yet to be identified, ASP Pareek said. The cause of death would be ascertained in the postmortem examination.

Illegal SIM boxes case: UP ATS arrests absconding accused

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sleuths of the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad (UP ATS) claimed to have apprehended an accused absconding in connection with a case involving the operation of illegal SIM boxes registered in Azamgarh last year. According to an official communiqué released by the UP ATS on Tuesday evening, they exposed a gang operating illegal SIM boxes in 2023 and arrested Sarfaraz Alam, a resident of Bakhra village in Sarameer police station area of Azamgarh. A large quantity of SIM boxes and related equipment were recovered during the raid. An FIR was registered under sections 420/120B IPC, 4/20/21/25 of the Indian Telegraph Act-1885, 3/6 of the Indian Wireless Network Act 1933, and 66/66D of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 at the ATS police station in Lucknow.

During the investigation and preliminary interrogation of the arrested accused, another suspect, Samiullah alias Samiullah Khan, son of Afaque Ahmed alias Afaque Alam, also from Bakhra village, Sarameer police station area, Azamgarh, was identified. The ATS issued a Look-Out Circular (LOC) and a Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW) against Samiullah. The ATS officials claimed that on Tuesday morning, they received information that Samiullah, who had been absconding, would arrive in Lucknow from Dubai. An ATS team immediately acted on this intelligence, stopping the accused at Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow. After verifying his identity, the ATS team took Samiullah into custody. The accused will now be presented before the designated court as per the legal process, and the ATS will seek his police custody remand to further interrogate him in the case.

FORM No. 1 DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL LUCKNOW
 (Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh)
 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007
DRG No. 854/2022/R.O. II
 NOTICE UNDER RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH SECTION 29 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT 1993.
INDIAN BANK erstwhile Allahabad BankC.H. BANK
 Vikas Bhawan Branch Barabanki (Branch Code 02155)
VERSUS
M/s SAI SHRADDHA MARBLE & ORS ...Certificate Debtors To.
 1. **M/s SAI SHRADDHA MARBLE** Through it's Proprietor- Sabhapati Mishra S/o Awadh Narayan Mishra Registered Address: Shop No. LGF 01, Shivani Arcade, Deva Road, Chinhat, Lucknow-227105.
 2. **SABHAPATI MISHRA S/o Awadh Narayan Mishra** Proprietor of **M/s SAI SHRADDHA MARBLE R/o 629/01, Naubasta Kalan, Deva Road, Chinhat, Lucknow-227105.**
 3. **DHANANJAY PANDEY S/o Late Markandey Pandey R/o 1/282, Vijayant Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226028.**
 4. **SMT. BHARTI MISHRA w/o Mr. PRAHLAD PANDEY R/o A-911/8, Indira Nagar, Lucknow-226016**
 ...Certificate Debtors.
 This is to notify that a sum of Rs. 68,73,350.72 (RUPEES SIXTY EIGHT LACS SEVENTY THREE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED FIFTY AND PAISE SEVENTY TWO ONLY) (Rs. 21,51,479.72 in Term Loan Account) & (Rs. 47,21,871/- in Cash Credit Loan Account) together with pendentlite and future interest @12.00% per annum from the date of filing of the Original Application i.e. 19.05.2020 till full realization has become due from you as per the certificate bearing No.854/2022 dated 23/05/2022 in O.A. No.378/2020 passed against you by Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow titled "INDIAN BANK Vs. M/s SAI SHRADDHA MARBLE & ORS".
 You are hereby directed to pay the aforesaid mentioned amount within 15 days of receipt of this notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993.
 You are hereby ordered to declare on Affidavit the particulars of assets on or before 29/08/2024.
 You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 29/08/2024 at 11.00 A.M.
Details of cost:
 Application fees : Rs. 71,005/-
 Advocate fees : Not Claimed
 Publication Charges : Not Claimed
 Miscellaneous Expenses : Not Claimed
 Clerksage : Not Claimed
 Given under my hand and seal on this 4th day of July 2024.
Recovery Officer-II Debts Recovery Tribunal Lucknow.

Govt to launch courier and parcel service through UPSRTC

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government is set to launch a new courier and parcel service through the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) buses. A five-year agreement has been signed between the UPSRTC and M/s AVG Logistics Ltd, Delhi, to facilitate this service. The required infrastructure is expected to be in place by September 9, 2024, and the service will be available on both ordinary and AC buses operated by the corporation. Transport Minister (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Singh said that a total of 11,000 buses, including both ordinary and AC, would be used for this new service. Major regions anticipated to see high volumes of bookings include

Agra, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Saharanpur, Aligarh, Moradabad, Bareilly, Hardoi, Etawah and Jhansi. The transport minister instructed officials of UPSRTC to ensure 100% compliance with the provisions of the contract. He emphasised that traffic supervisors/inspectors should inspect not only passenger tickets but also luggage on the routes. "If any conductor is found booking parcels illegally, strict action will be taken against them," he added. The minister said that all assistant regional managers and station in-charges should ensure that bus drivers/conductors stop the buses at designated bus stations for courier parcel service representatives to book parcels and receive booking receipts.

Woman alleges triple talaq over dowry

Lucknow (PNS): A woman in Saadatganj has accused her husband Sadaf Munir of sending her a WhatsApp message of triple talaq (divorce) due to her failure to provide Rs 15 lakh in dowry. The woman, who married Munir on November 27, 2010, reported that her husband had begun demanding dowry shortly after their marriage.

When Munir's initial demand for Rs 10 lakh to open a medical store was unmet, he allegedly attempted to abort her pregnancy and later expelled her from the house. Her family eventually arranged the money, allowing her to return to her husband's home. However, Munir's demands did not cease. In August 2022, he again pressurised her for an additional Rs 15 lakh, which she could not provide. This led

to further abuse and her expulsion from the home along with their two sons. On August 10, 2022, Munir allegedly sent her a WhatsApp message declaring triple talaq. Despite her efforts to resolve the issue through dialogue, Munir threatened her with acid attacks and refused to discuss the matter further. The victim's family has sought police intervention, and an FIR has been registered. This case highlights ongoing issues with dowry demands and the misuse of divorce laws. Meanwhile, a 70-year-old man, Mohammed Ahmed aka Kallu, who was mentally imbalanced, committed suicide at his house in Pandey Tola in Aliganj on Tuesday. His brother Mohammed Amin of Gudamba said Ahmed was mentally imbalanced.

D.A-V. College Kanpur - 208001
0512-2305534, 2306687
TENDER NOTICE
Ref. No. 84/Nivida/2024 Dated: 30-07-2024
 Tenders are invited from G.S.T registered firms for Projector, Screen and other items. Details for required items can be obtained from the office. Tender Form by paying Rs. 500/- can be obtained from the office of the college during office hours. Interested parties are required to send sealed tenders to the college office within 10 days of this publication. Principal will have right to reject tenders without any notice. **PRINCIPAL**

NOTICE
 This is to inform you that the Allahabad High Court pending second appeal no. 263/1984 Miss Gendarani Alias Phoolmati and 4 others Vs Baijnath son Jawaharlal resident of Badihat Thana Mahoba, District Mahoba (Hamirpur) will be disposed of on dated 30/08/2024 on the behalf on opposition Baijnath, the opposition itself or its legal nominee can appear in the Allahabad High Court for in person or through their Advocate on or before the appointed date.
 Informant
 Pradeep Kumar Gupta
 Badihat Mahoba (U.P.)

Govt presents supplementary budget of ₹12,209.93 crore



UP Finance Minister Suresh Khanna presents a supplementary budget in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other members during the Monsoon session of state Legislative Assembly at Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow on Tuesday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday tabled the Finance Bill in the Assembly seeking supplementary grants of ₹12,209.93 crore for the current fiscal 2024-25. This is the first supplementary grants sought by the government during the current fiscal. The government has sought the grants aiming to accelerate development of Uttar Pradesh and link the state's youth with skill

development and employment opportunities. Finance Minister Suresh Khanna, introducing the Bill in the Assembly, said that the supplementary budget includes a revenue account expenditure of ₹4,227.94 crore and a capital account expenditure of ₹7,981.99 crore. He noted that the proposed supplementary budget constitutes 1.66 per cent of this year's original budget. In the supplementary budget, ₹7,500.81

crore has been sought for industrial development, ₹2,000 crore for the Energy department, and ₹1,000 crore for the Transport department for purchasing new buses. Additionally, ₹600 crore are for AMRUT scheme of the Urban Development department, ₹200 crore for short-term training programmes under the Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission, ₹100 crore for rural stadiums & open gyms, and ₹28.40 crore

for establishing labs in 284 government Inter colleges under the Secondary Education department. Furthermore, ₹66.82 crore have been sought for setting up ICT labs in 1,040 government Inter colleges. For the various schemes of the Cultural Affairs department, the government has sought ₹74.90 crore, while ₹53.85 crore have been sought for establishing Atal residential schools, and ₹2.79 crore for the maintenance of residential and non-residential buildings. The finance minister said that ₹49.80 crore are proposed to be spent for the formation of the Uttar Pradesh Rozgar Mission Samiti and scheme operation, which aims to provide job opportunities at the national and state levels for the youth. Additionally, ₹3.25 crore have been sought for the renovation of the Data Centre of Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, ₹1.98 crore for the expansion of the digital communication system and related equipment of the Vidhan Sabha Hall, and ₹2.45 crore for setting up a digital CCTV surveillance and camera system in the Vidhan Sabha Library premises. Furthermore, ₹319.95 crore have been sought for new demands and other schemes in the supplementary demands.

Yogi defends encroachment removal in Akbarnagar



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing the monsoon session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly in Lucknow on Tuesday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government announced in the state assembly on Tuesday that encroachments from Akbarnagar in Lucknow have been removed, a decision upheld by both the Allahabad High Court and the Supreme Court. The issue was raised by Ravidas Mehrotra of the Samajwadi Party through an adjournment notice. Yogi intervened in the debate, stating, "Akbarnagar has been renamed 'Saumitra Van' after Lakshmanji to give Lucknow its identity." Addressing allegations regarding the use of bulldozers, the chief minister clarified, "Akbarnagar came into existence in 1984. The matter was examined by both the Supreme Court and the High Court, and the judiciary upheld the government's decision. It's no longer Akbarnagar, it's now Saumitra Van. A Night Safari will be developed on over 25 acres of land vacated from encroachment."

Party, were exploiting the poor. Yogi added that a detailed report is being prepared regarding the intentions behind the red markings in these areas. "If it is found that these markings were made with mala fide intent, accountability will be fixed. However, if the markings were created as a precautionary measure to facilitate the Kukrail River rehabilitation project, they serve to alert the public," he stated. The chief minister elaborated on the historical context, saying, "If you were familiar with Lucknow's history, you would know that the city once featured the confluence of the Gomti and Kukrail rivers. Akbarnagar developed post-1984 with most of the buildings being illegal. Defendants in this case could not stand the trial in the High Court or the Supreme Court."

"We have rehabilitated those wrongfully registered using fraudulent documents. Akbarnagar is no longer a city but has been transformed into 'Saumitra Van', named after Lord Ram's younger brother, Lakshman, to give Lucknow a new identity. The SP MLA from Lucknow should appreciate that, while the people of Lucknow elected you, we are enhancing the city with a night safari. This project will benefit you with government funding. Given this valuable initiative, you should express gratitude to the gov-

ernment." "We have put the proceedings for Panth Nagar and Indraprastha Nagar on hold. We have committed to compensating anyone with valid registration documents after we complete the river rejuvenation. Compare Kukrail now to what it used to be—what was once a drain is now a river. The nationwide river rejuvenation campaign is underway, and while we often say 'water is life', can we truly value life if we destroy it? Consider what has happened to the Gomti river in Lucknow. On the one hand, you revere the Gomti as a mother, but on the other, you've allowed it to become a polluted drain. As the MLA of Lucknow, you should commend the government for rehabilitating the river," the chief minister said.

Samajwadi Party 'serious threat' to women's safety, says Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday alleged people involved in cases related to crimes against women are from the Samajwadi Party and the party itself is a "serious threat" to women's safety. CM Adityanath made this allegation during the Question Hour on the second day of the UP Assembly's Monsoon Session. He was replying to a question raised to the government's plan to prevent the sexual exploitation of women and children in the state. Adityanath said, "The state government is completely serious about women's safety. The result of this seriousness is that cases related to crimes against women and children are continuously decreasing. There is a fear of action in the minds of criminals." He said after the formation of the BJP government in 2017, the first action to curb the miscreants was the Anti-Romeo Squad. Pointing towards the opposition members, he said, "It is said



to say that when the Anti-Romeo Squad was formed, the first to oppose it was the Samajwadi Party. "There is no hesitation in saying that in cases of crimes against women, people associated with the Samajwadi Party are found to be directly or indirectly involved." Referring to a statement by SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav, Adityanath said, "In crimes against women, they (SP) represent that generation which had said that 'ladke hain, galti

ho jati hai' (They are boys, mistakes happen). How will these people talk about security? These Samajwadis themselves are a serious threat to women's safety." Adityanath was referring to Mulayam Singh Yadav's statement at a rally in UP's Moradabad in 2014 when Yadav had questioned the death penalty for rape, saying boys sometimes make "mistakes". "Ladke, ladke hain. Galti ho jati hai (Boys are boys. Mistakes happen)," he had said. Adityanath said, "The state government is fully alert and active regarding women's safety. Our government is committed to provide security to every daughter and every businesswoman in the state." He claimed that as compared to 2016 (during SP's rule), there is a decrease in all types of crimes. "If we look at incidents like dowry in comparison to 2016, then there has been a decrease of about 17.5 per cent in 2023-24. In comparison to 2016, a decrease of 25.30 per cent has been registered in rape incidents in 2023-24." Adityanath said, "Between 2017 and 2024, the state gov-

ernment strengthened its prosecution wing in cases of sexual harassment against minor children, the result of which is in front of everyone today. The rate of conviction in courts has increased. The accused have been punished in 24,402 cases so far." He said that between 2017 and 2024, punishments have been given in 9,875 cases under POCSO Act and between 2022 and 2024, 16,718 accused have been convicted under the Act, of which 21 have been awarded death penalty, 17,013 life imprisonment, 4,653 imprisonment of ten years or more and 10,331 imprisonment of less than ten years. He said Women Power Line 1090 and other helplines have been integrated with emergency response number 112 and women help desks have been created in 1,528 police stations. He said 1.5 lakh policemen have been recruited in his regime. Before 2017, 10,000 women personnel were recruited, whereas between 2017 and 2022-23, the state recruited more than 20,000 women police constables.

SP, Azad Samaj Party accuse govt of indulging in communal politics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday slammed the Uttar Pradesh government over a bill that seeks to amend the Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, accusing it of trying to divert people's attention through communal politics. "What else do they have, they are not doing anything new," he told reporters outside Parliament when asked about the bill that has been listed for discussion and passage in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly. They are trying to divert attention of the people through communal politics, he charged. Under the amended provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2024, if a person threatens, attacks, marries or promises to marry or conspires for it, or traffics a woman, minor or anyone with the intention of conversion, then his crime will be placed in the most serious category. The former chief minister said the Centre is constructing an expressway from Buxar to Bhagalpur and if a 25 km stretch is added, one will be able to go from Delhi to Bhagalpur directly but the



Uttar Pradesh government has not put forth this demand, he said. Referring to the controversy over displaying names of eatery owners along the kanwar yatra route, he said, "They just want Hindus and Muslims to fight, and people are busy with such debates.it is a matter of practising untouchability. Will they bring a law on untouchability as well?" Samajwadi MP from Faizabad Awadhesh Prasad spoke on similar lines, and said the government is trying to divert attention from issues of livelihood. "Prime Minister Modi ji also comes from Uttar Pradesh, but the situation of the state is very bad at present.

Farmers are spending nights in fields, not at home... Stray animals have killed many farmers... Issues like paper leak, price rise, unemployment are the issues faced by people," he said. "Transformers get burnt and are not changed, farmers are unable to sow paddy... To distract from all this, they are talking about 'Love Jihad', conversion, so that their failures are not discussed, that is their aim," he said. "Religion based politics will not work in this country, by making me win, people have given the message that communal politics will not work," said the MP, who was elected from Faizabad, the constituency that covers Ayodhya where the Ram Temple was consecrated. Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) MP Chandrashekhar also accused the Uttar Pradesh government of trying to distract people's attention from main issues. "Government is not able to fulfil the basic needs of people. They are unable to provide food, shelter, and housing... good health, good education, but they are totally focused on such issues because it suits them," he said. "For us employment and price rise are the issues. So we are working on it," he said.

CPI (ML) hits out at railway minister

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The CPI (ML) said on Tuesday that the position of the Union railway minister remains secure despite the increasing number of train accidents. The party pointed out that during the Narendra Modi government, the frequency of single train accidents has been escalating, and now double train accidents are occurring. "No matter how unsafe railway passengers have become due to increasing accidents, the chair of the railway minister seems safe. Otherwise, he would have resigned after the double accident in Jharkhand," the party commented in response to the recent train accident in Jharkhand in which a goods train derailed, and subsequently, the Howrah-Mumbai Mail crashed into it, resulting in two fatalities and numerous injuries. The party criticised the railways for its apparent lack of alertness between the two accidents, suggesting that the Howrah-Mumbai Mail crash could have been prevented with proper vigilance. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav, in a statement issued on Tuesday, attributed the rising number of railway accidents to gross negligence of safety.

SP gave 'gachcha' to 'chacha': CM on Shivpal not being made LoP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took a swipe at Samajwadi Party leader Shivpal Singh Yadav in the Assembly Tuesday for being "ditched" by party president and his nephew Akhilesh Yadav for the post of the Leader of Opposition. Congratulating Mata Prasad Pandey for being appointed to the post, the chief minister said he had given the "gachcha" to "chacha", suggesting that the "uncle" had been "ditched". Countering the CM, Shivpal Yadav said Adityanath will get the "gachcha" in 2027 from his deputy chief minister, a reference to the next Assembly elections and speculation over a rift in the Uttar Pradesh BJP. Taking a swipe at Pandey, Adityanath said, "I congratulate you for your appointment. It is a different matter that you have given gachcha to chacha." The Uttar Pradesh chief minister said, "His (Shivpal Singh Yadav) destiny is like this because his nephew (Akhilesh Yadav) is always afraid. But you are a senior member of this House, I respect you." Adityanath's comment was aimed at

SP national president Akhilesh Yadav, who did not make his uncle Shivpal Yadav the Leader of Opposition but chose former Assembly Speaker and seven-time MLA Mata Prasad Pandey for the post. SP member Sangram Singh Yadav protested saying "gachcha" is an unparliamentary word, and it should be removed from the proceedings. Speaker Satish Mahana intervened and said that such things keep happening. Shivpal Singh Yadav, while replying to Adityanath, said "I did not face 'gachcha', Pandey ji is very senior and we are socialists!" He further said, "I was in touch with you for three years, so you also gave me gachcha. When you gave 'gachcha' then in this election (Lok Sabha elections), your party lagged behind and the SP emerged ahead. Now see, in 2027 the SP will come to power again and your deputy chief minister will give you 'gachcha'." SP president Akhilesh Yadav resigned from the Karhal (Mainpuri district) seat of the Assembly after being elected as the MP from Kannauj, due to which the post of LoP became vacant.

FORM No. 1
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL LUCKNOW
(Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh)
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007

DRC No. 452/2019/R.O. II
NOTICE UNDER RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH SECTION 29 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT 1993.

INDIAN BANK erstwhile ALLAHABAD BANKC.H. BANK
Vs
SMT. SUDHA SINGH & ORS.CDs To.

1. Smt. Sudha Singh, W/o Shri Satya Jeet Singh
2. Shri Satya Jeet Singh, S/o Late Braham Pal Singh, Both Resident of House No. 24, & 25, Sarashwaturpuram Jankipuram Vistar, Lucknow, U.P.
3. Shri Ram Prasad Maurya, S/o Shri Kanhya Lal Maurya, R/o House No. 8, Vimal Nagar, Kamta, Chhinhat, Lucknow.

...Certificate Debtors.
This is to notify that a sum of Rs. 22,91,820.00 (RUPEES TWENTY TWO LACS NINETY ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED TWENTY ONLY) together with pendente lite and future interest @9.00% per annum from the date of filing of the Original Application i.e. 02.01.2017 till the loan is fully liquidated and cost succeeds and is hereby allowed ex parte against you jointly and severally the addressees as per order dated 25/07/2019 passed by Hon'ble Tribunal in O.A. No. 59/2017, titled "INDIAN BANK erstwhile ALLAHABAD BANK Vs. Smt. Sudha Singh & ORS".

You are hereby directed to pay the aforesaid mentioned amount within 15 days of receipt of this notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993.

You are hereby ordered to declare on Affidavit the particulars of assets on or before 06/09/2024.

You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 06/09/2024 at 11.00 A.M.

Details of cost:
Application fees : Rs. 25,000/-
Advocate fees : NIL
Publication Charges : NIL
Miscellaneous Expenses : NIL
Clerkage : NIL

Given under my hand and seal on this 8th day of July 2024.
Recovery Officer-II
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow.

FORM No. 1
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL LUCKNOW
(Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh)
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007

DRC No. 472/2022/R.O. II
NOTICE UNDER RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH SECTION 29 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT 1993.

INDIAN BANK erstwhile Allahabad BankC.H. BANK
Vikas Bhawan Branch Barabanki (Branch Code 02155)
VERSUS
MRS. BHARTI MISHRA & ORSCertificate Debtors To.

1. MRS. BHARTI MISHRA W/o Mr. Prahlad Mishra R/o A-911/8, Indira Nagar, Lucknow-226016.
2nd Address: M/s. Aparna Saree Centre, A-913/1, Indira Nagar, Lucknow-226016.
2. MR. SABHAA PATEE MISHRA S/o Mr. Awadh Naaraayan Mishra R/o 629/01, Navbastakala, Chhinhat, Dewara Road, Lucknow-227105.
3. MR. PRAHLAD MISHRA S/O LATE RAMBALLABH MISHRA R/O A-911/8, Indira Nagar, Lucknow-226016.

...Certificate Debtors.
This is to notify that a sum of Rs. 43,32,443.00 (RUPEES FORTY THREE LACS THIRTY TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED FORTY THREE ONLY) together with pendente lite and future interest @11.00% per annum from the date of filing of the Original Application i.e. 23.05.2020 till full realization has become due from you as per the certificate bearing No.472/2022 dated 01/03/2022 in O.A. No. 375/2020 passed against you by Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow titled "INDIAN BANK VS. MRS. BHARTI MISHRA & ORS".

You are hereby directed to pay the aforesaid mentioned amount within 15 days of receipt of this notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993.

You are hereby ordered to declare on Affidavit the particulars of assets on or before 29/08/2024.

You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 29/08/2024 at 11.00 A.M.

Details of cost:
Application fees : Rs. 46,000/-
Advocate fees : Not Claimed
Publication Charges : Not Claimed
Miscellaneous Expenses : Not Claimed
Clerkage : Not Claimed

Given under my hand and seal on this 4th day of July 2024.
Recovery Officer-II
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow.

लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण
(ISO 14001 : 2004, ISO 9001 : 2008 प्रमाणित संस्था)
प्राधिकरण भवन, विपिन खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ (उ.प्र.), टेल-फ़ोन: 1800 1800 5000, वेबसाइट: http://www.ldaonline.co.in

सार्वजनिक सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण की आवासीय/व्यवसायिक रेंट/नजूल/इन्व्हेन्मेंट-दस्त योजनाओं के निम्नलिखित आवेदकों द्वारा उनके नाम के सामने अंकित सम्पत्ति का हस्तान्तरण/नामांकण किए जाने हेतु प्राधिकरण में प्रार्थना पत्र प्रस्तुत किया गया है:-

क्र. सं.	मूल आवेदी का नाम	भवन/भूखण्ड संख्या	योजना का नाम	मूल आवेदी के उत्तराधिकारी अथवा आवेदक का नाम	मूल आवेदी से अनापत्ति कर्ताओं के नाम	मूल आवेदी से (नृतक) का सम्बन्ध	
1	मो. उमर एवं श्रीमती बानो बेगम (मृतक)	भवन सं.- MIG-2/106	जानकीपुरम योजना, लखनऊ	06.01.2017 27.02.2022	मो. सोहेल (पुत्र) मो. युसुफ (पुत्र) एवं मो. उवेश (पुत्र)	पुत्र पुत्र पुत्र	
2	श्री राम कृष्ण	भवन सं.-एम0एम0-514, सेक्टर-डी-1	कानपुर रोड योजना	30.05.2019	श्रीमती विजय देवी	पत्नी	
3	श्रीमती चन्द्रा देवी	भूखण्ड सं.- 3/585, वास्तु खण्ड	गोमती नगर योजना	09.07.2022	श्री आशीष कुमार	पुत्र	
4	जय कर्न लाल श्रीवास्तव एवं विद्या देवी (मृतक)	भवन सं.- MIG 2/350	जानकीपुरम विस्तार लखनऊ	31.05.2021 23.04.2010	श्री अंजनी कुमार श्रीवास्तव (पुत्र)	पुत्री पुत्री पुत्री पुत्री	
5	श्री राजू कलानी	भूखण्ड सं.-ई-21, सेक्टर-सी-1	कानपुर रोड योजना	05.06.2018	श्रीमती ज्योति कलानी	1. श्रीमती गीतू सोमानी-पुत्री 2. श्री काल कलानी-पुत्र	पुत्री पत्नी

उपर्युक्त नामान्तरण के आवेदन के सम्बन्ध में यदि किसी भी व्यक्ति को कोई आपत्ति हो तो वह साक्ष्य सहित प्रकाशन तिथि से 30 दिनों के अन्दर अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में प्राप्त करा दे। निश्चित तिथि तक कोई आपत्ति प्राप्त न होने पर प्राधिकरण अमिलेखों में कॉलम-6 पर लिखित व्यक्ति का नाम दर्ज कर लिया जायेगा तथा उसके बाद किसी आपत्ति पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

सचिव

KDA V-C suspends clerk

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Vice-Chairman, Kanpur Development Authority (KDA), Madan Singh Garbaly has suspended a Grade II clerk for unnecessary delaying the registry of a plot and attached him to the Personnel department. During the Janata Darshan programme, allottee Devendra Kumar had complained about delaying the registry of his plot No.40 in Swarn Jayanti Extension, Part II, of 30 square metre. On going through the relevant file, vice-chairman found that the clerk Satyam Pandey had unnecessarily delayed the registry of the plot which caused problem to the allottee and tarnished KDA's image. Expressing his annoyance with the clerk, he immediately ordered to place him under suspension forthwith on Monday. The clerk was attached to the Personnel

department. At the same time, the vice-chairman issued instructions to all officers/employees to ensure timely disposal of all the applications after proper investigations failing which, they will be liable for stern penal action. Meanwhile, while reviewing the functioning of the enforcement departments, vice chairman directed their incharges and the secretary to ensure effective enforcement action under the UP Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973, for the proper development in Kanpur development area. Besides, the officiating secretary/finance controller has also directed all the zonal enforcement incharges to initiate effective enforcement action after proper survey of the construction of basements done in commercial, educational institutions and private hospital etc. and their utility. **SEARCH ON:** The Sajeti

police have not been able to trace the two friends who drowned in Yamuna river on Monday evening even after 24 hours. Reports said of the four friends bathing in the river with the help of thermocol, two of them were immediately rescued by people present over there on its bank. On Tuesday police have called some more divers from Kanpur to trace the missing friends Awadhesh Sachan of Hadauli village, Sajeti, had organised a katha at his house on Monday. He said his son Ankit Sachan (25), employed in Navy, had arrived the village on leave. Late Monday evening, Ankit along with younger brother Kapil (20), cousin Krishna (17) of Rar Patari, Ghatampur, and friend Deepak Gupta of Ghatampur had to bathe in Yamuna river. When the thermocol sheets failed to help them, all the four started drowning and

raised an alarm. On hearing the screams, people present on the bank of the river rescued Ankit Sachan and Deepak Gupta while Kapil and Krishna slipped into the area where water was deep. Efforts are on to trace them till late on Tuesday evening, SO Sajeti said. **DENTAL CHECKUP CAMP:** A comprehensive dental check-up camp was organised in collaboration with the Maharana Pratap Dental College at Geeta Nagar Metro Station. The camp provided free dental checkups to Metro employees and commuters. In addition to routine dental examinations, participants received valuable guidance on maintaining oral hygiene and addressing common dental concerns. The initiative aimed to promote better dental health within the community and provide necessary care to those using the Metro services.

Youth found hanging from tree

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A youth of Bara village under Akbarpur Kotwali police area was found hanging from a tree along the highway near Takiya village on Tuesday morning. During quizzing by police, kin suspected his killing. However, apprehending it to be a suicide case, police sent the body for autopsy. Mukesh of Bara village had gone to the field on Monday night. On Tuesday morning, he was found hanging from a babool tree along the Sikandra-Kanpur highway near Takiya village. Hearing about his death, wife Visheshia Kumari fell unconscious while sons Akash, Vikas and daughters Shalini, Shiva and Rakhi were inconsolable. Sub-Inspector Yashpal Singh of Bara outpost rushed to spot and quizzed the kin who informed about some dispute of the deceased in the village over supply of water in the field. Police suspected it to be a case of suicide and sent the body for autopsy. Kotwali incharge Satish Kumar Singh a probe was on. On receipt of autopsy report, further action will be initiated, he said.

Bade Hanuman temple corridor construction work commences

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The construction work of Bade Hanuman temple corridor on Sangam coast commenced on Tuesday. Its tender has been awarded to Univastu Boots Infra Limited. The engineers of the company performed bhoomi puja amidst chanting of Vedic mantras by Mahant Balveer Giri of Shri Bade Hanuman temple in the presence of PDA officials. The first phase is expected to be completed by December. The cost is estimated to be around ₹40 crore. The next phase of work will be done after Maha Kumbh. The corridor will be constructed in 11,186 square metres (2.76 acres). The agency will first build a boundary wall. Along with the construction, there will also be a process of



removing encroachment. The corridor will be constructed in almost the same area as the present premises of the temple and the park in front. There are currently two gates to enter the temple. After the construction of the corridor, there will be six gates, then entry will be from Akshayvat Marg. When the devotees leave after bathing in Sangam, they will enter the temple corridor

from Akshayvat Marg and after darshan, they will leave from the dam side. Before this, they will also be able to visit Akshayvat. As many as 40 shops of worship material and prasad will be built on the boundary wall of the corridor. There will be an open hall of 6,170 square meters. The winding path for entering the temple will be of 624 square metres. Apart from this, security room, kitchen, facility block and Mahant Bhawan will be built. Benches will be installed for the devotees to sit here. There will also be arrangements for greenery. Mahakumbh Mela Officer Vijay Kiran Anand said this will be a grand corridor. The work will be completed very fast. The way to enter and exit the sanctum sanctorum of the temple is currently small, it will be widened now.

'Operation Nanhe Farishte': RPF rescues 908 kids in last 8 yrs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of North Eastern Railway (NER) rescued 908 children trapped in danger at stations and trains in Varanasi division areas under 'Operation Nanhe Farishte' in the last eight years. The 'Operation Nanhe Farishte' is a mission dedicated to rescuing distressed children in various Indian Railways zones and divisions. During the last eight years (2017-2024 till Monday last), the RPF personnel of Varanasi Division (NER) have rescued 908 children. Out of these children, a total of 232 were rescued from traffickers from various stations of Varanasi division in the year 2017-2018, 200 in 2019-2020, 229 in 2021-22 and 232 till July 29 of the year 2023-2024. The rescued children include runaway, missing, forced labour, separated,

destitute, kidnapped, mentally challenged and homeless children. Senior Divisional Security Commissioner (SDSC) of Varanasi Division of NER S Ramakrishnan said that 'Nanhe Farishte' is more than just an operation. "It is a lifeline for hundreds of children who find themselves in uncertain or dangerous circumstances. The data from 2017 to 2024 depicts a story of unwavering dedication, adaptability and resilience shown by the RPF for the success of operation", the SDSC said, adding that each rescue is a testimony to the commitment of the RPF to protect the most vulnerable members of society. According to him, the year 2018 marked a significant beginning of 'Operation Nanhe Farishte' and during that year, RPF personnel of Varanasi division rescued a total of 153 victimised children, which included 134 boys

and 19 girls. "From that year a strong foundation was laid for the operation, highlighting the urgent need for such initiatives. During the year 2019, the efforts of RPF continued to be successful. By July 29 this year, the RPF teams of Varanasi Division have been successful in rescuing 908 children," he said, adding that by Monday this year, the RPF has rescued 128 children, which include 95 boys and 33 girls. "The initial trends bear testimony to the continued commitment to 'Operation Nanhe Farishte'. These numbers reflect both the persistent problem of children running away due to forced labour and other reasons and the efforts made by RPF to ensure that they reach their parents safely. Through their efforts, the RPF personnel have not only rescued children but also raised awareness about the plight of runaway and miss-

ing children, which led to further action and support from various stakeholders", said Ramakrishnan, and added that the scope of operations of the RPF is constantly expanding, facing new challenges every day and striving to create a safe environment for children across India's vast railway network. According to the Public Relations Officer (PRO) Ashok Kumar, complete information about children is available on the Track Child portal. Apart from Varanasi division's big stations like Banaras, Chhapra, Siwan, Ballia, Deoria Sadar, Mau and Ghazipur City stations, child help desks are available at various other railway stations. "The RPF personnel hand over the rescued children to the District Child Welfare Committee or Childline, which later on help the rescued children to reunite or rejoin their parents/guardians", he stated.

Yashovardhan brings laurels

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A promising cricket talent Yashovardhan Singh has brought laurels to Banaras Hindu University (BHU) when he was taken by Kashi Rudra for ₹5,80,000 in the auction held for UP T20 League organised by Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association (UPCA) recently. Yashovardhan Singh played this competition for Gorakhpur Lions last year. According to information, there was a competition among many franchisees to buy Yashovardhan Singh, who is currently honing his cricket skills under the supervision of Dr Vaibhav Rai. Vice-president of University Sports Board, BHU Prof SVS Raju and general secretary Prof BC Kapri wished Yashovardhan Singh a bright future.

Health camp benefits many

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan and National Tuberculosis Eradication Programme (NTEP), a health camp was organised in Mahgaon village of Araziline block of the district here on Monday. This camp was organised under the joint aegis of Health Department and Piramal Foundation. The work of TB Mukta Panchayat Abhiyan is being conducted continuously in all the eight blocks of the district. In the health camp organised under the leadership of Dr Naveen Singh, Superintendent of Community Health Centre (CHC), Araziline, the team examined 53 people, in which six persons were found to have symptoms of possible TB. All these patients were referred for screening and investigation. During this Arvind Gupta of Piramal Foundation said TB bacteria spread in the air due to coughing, sneezing and spitting of the patient and cause disease by reaching the lungs of a healthy person through breathing. Therefore, all persons with TB symptoms



Health camp being held under NTEP in Varanasi on Monday.

(potential patients) must get tested in this campaign. He has appealed to all the supporting organisations to put full emphasis on screening, investigation, diagnosis and complete treatment in all gram panchayats. Along with this, gram pradhan Amarnath should coordinate with Community Health Officer (CHO) Rinka Singh, all ASHA-Anganwadi workers and make people aware in the community. Under the leadership of gram pradhan Amarnath, TB was tested at TB Mukta Panchayat of the gram panchayat and along with the gram pradhan, the community is being made aware about the symptoms, screening, investigation, diagnosis, treatment, nutrition and emotion-

al support etc. of TB at the Panchayat level. On the occasion, Sonali Chaudhary, Lalita Verma, Anamika Singh (Karuna Fellow) and Mamta Organisation along with others from Piramal Foundation team were present. The speakers said one should keep many things in mind, including if there are symptoms like cough for two weeks or more, mucus coming out with cough, sweating at night, lack of appetite and continuous weight loss, then it could be TB. They said if such symptoms are seen one should immediately contact the nearest health centre. For more information, one can contact toll free number 1800-11-6666 and can also download TB Arogya Setu App.

Home guard among two killed in road accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two bike-borne youths, including a home guard, were killed after being hit by a speeding truck near Kripalpur village under Akbarpur Kotwali police station area of Kanpur on Tuesday morning. Police sent their bodies for autopsy. Homeguard Devendra (25), son of Virendra Tewari of Patari was posted in Dial 112 in Akbarpur Kotwali. On Tuesday morning, he was coming to Akbarpur with Amar Singh (38) of the village on bike. On the Kanpur-Etawah highway near Radhe Hotel, Kripalpur the speeding truck knocked them down from behind due to which they were seriously injured. On the information of passers-by, police rushed to the spot and took both the injured to the district hospital where the doctors declared them dead. Their kin also reached the hospital. Dharmendra said his brother, Devendra, was married to Shaifia three years ago and they had an 18-month-old son. Presently, his wife was four months pregnant. Devendra had proceeded from house on Tuesday morning on duty. On

the other hand, Amar Singh's brother Mohar Singh said the former was engaged in agricultural work to carry out the livelihood of his family. On Tuesday morning, he had left for Akbarpur with the home guard Devendra. Kotwali incharge Satish Singh said the truck had been impounded and raids are on to nail its driver. **THEFT:** The members of the Sarafa Association are up in arms in protest against the alleged police inaction in a theft of gold rings from a jeweller's shop by two women tricksters in Raipurwa police station area. Ramakant Gupta runs his shop under the name of Anandeshwar Jewellers in Raipurwa. He said on July 28 two women had visited his shop to buy jewellery. During the purchase, they replaced two gold rings with brass ones and returned without buying anything. On the visit of another customer, when the shopowner opened the rings box, he came to know about two gold rings being missing. He immediately informed the Raipurwa police and lodged a complaint with the CCTV footages against both the

women tricksters. So far, police has not initiated any action in the matter on the pretext of ongoing investigation nor did it lodge an FIR, he claimed. The victim then referred the issue to the Uttar Pradesh Swarnkar Samaj and local Jewellers' Association. SO Santosh Gaud said he was on leave and resumed duty on Tuesday only. He had called the outpost incharge to take stock of the incident. The FIR was lodged soon, he added. Meanwhile, state general secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Swarnkar Samaj and Jewellers Association Pushpendra Jaiswal and state president Mukul Verma have announced to intensify the movement if Raipurwa police failed to initiate action against the guilty women. Jaiswal said police did not lodge FIR even after three days of the incident on pretext of SO being on leave and carrying out investigation in the matter. He will apprise the city police commissioner of the incident and if he also failed to direct the Raipurwa police to work out the case soon, city jewellers will launch an agitation, Jaiswal added.

Man killed in brawl

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 26-year-old man was killed in a brawl in Bahria area here on Tuesday. Lathis and iron rods were used indiscriminately by the both sides. After this, several rounds of bullets were fired from both sides in which two people from both sides were injured. They were taken to the district hospital for treatment where one of them died. On receiving information, police officers reached the spot. They inquired about the incident from the villagers. After that three people were taken into custody. In view of the tension, heavy police force has been deployed in the village. A dispute was going on between two district panchayat members over a house in Dhamaur village under Bahria police station area. On Tuesday at 3 pm, both the parties came face to face over possession of the house. After this, both the parties hurled abuses on each other. After that, sticks were used by both the sides which was followed by the firing. Alok Yadav of Sari Patti Baharia and Jitendra Yadav of Abhaypur were injured and taken to the hospital. Alok Yadav succumbed to bullet injuries.

Premchand wrote fearlessly with rebellious attitude: Historian

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Well-known historian Dr Mohammad Arif said that Munshi Premchand made the subject of his writings whatever he saw and felt in the social, religious and political conditions of his time. "Premchand kept writing fearlessly with a rebellious attitude especially against the English, feudals, slavery and all the social evils", he said, while addressing a discussion organised under the banner of youth organisation AIDYO (Varanasi Unit), prior to great novelist's birth anniversary (July 31) at Shri Ramakrishna Vidya Mandir Inter College, Siddhigiribagh here on Monday. Dr Arif said that in the true sense, Premchand did what a writer can do and that is why Premchand is relevant even today. "We can understand any writer only by studying his/her contemporary writings and Munshi Premchand's thoughts still create fear against those in power. That is why Premchand's writing works are being removed from the syllabus", he said, appealing to the youth present there to under-



Historian Dr Mohammed Arif expressing views on Munshi Premchand in Varanasi on Monday.

stand Premchand. State secretary of AIDYO Ramkumar Yadav and retired teacher of the school Kripashankar Pandey also expressed their views on Premchand. Rahul Raj, Govind Lal Gupta, Jyoti Arya and Surendra Ram were also present. Earlier, the programme started with garlanding the photo of Munshi Premchand. BHU student Kajal presented Paash's

composition 'Hum Ladenge Saathi...'. The students of Basant Theosophical Society (BTS) Inter College, Shri Ramakrishna Vidya Mandir, Basant Kanya Mahavidyalaya (BKM) and Central Hindu Girls School ((CHGS) participated in story and poem reading competitions. BTS students Milan Srivastava and Divyanshu Rai got first and second place respectively in

story reading while BKM student Saumya Sharma got first and BTS student Suraj Yadav secured second place in poem reading. The programme was conducted by AIDYO district incharge Kamlesh Maurya. The chief guest of the programme was Principal of Shri Ramakrishna Vidya Mandir Paras Nath Pandey, who, later on, awarded the winners.

Competitions organised in CORE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Hindi Essay, Hindi Note and Draft Writing and Speech Competitions were organised in Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Chief Official Language Officer, Sanjay Singh Negi. Addressing the contestants, Chief Official Language Officer Sanjay Singh Negi said through these competitions wide publicity of official language Hindi will be done. He said participating in the competition is more important than getting a prize in it. He said the contestants who are declared successful in this regional level competition get an opportunity to participate in the All India level com-



petition and they deserve praise. He extended his best wishes to all the contestants. The employees of Ambala, Jaipur, Chennai and Secunderabad projects, including CORE Headquarters participated in the said competitions. They were conducted under the supervision of Deputy Chief Official Language Officer Kalyan Singh. **IFFCO EMPLOYEES' UNION ELECTION:** Election Officer PK Patel announced

the IFFCO Employees' Union election programme at IFFCO Phulpur unit. The nomination will be held on July 31 and August 1 from 11.30 am to 3.30 pm in the old H Block. The scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on August 1, publication of list of valid candidates on August 1, withdrawal of nominations on August 2, allotment of election symbols to candidates and publication of list on August 2 and voting will be held on August 6 from 05.30 am to 03.30 pm in the canteen hall. The counting of votes will start on August 6 from 4.00 pm and election results will be released on August 6. The Employees' Union elections are to be held for the posts of president, vice-president, general secretary,

joint secretary (Organisation), joint secretary (Publicity), treasurer, assistant secretary and executive member. This information was given by its PRO, Swayam Prakash. **CRITICAL:** An attempt was made to burn a woman and her daughter alive late on Monday night in Chakia Gharhara village under Nawabganj police station. Some miscreants poured petrol on both them while they were sleeping and set them on fire. They are being treated in a critical condition at a hospital. The police reached the spot and questioned the family members. Nawabganj SHO Ajay Pal said that both they have been admitted to Swaroopnari Nehru Hospital. The police is conducting investigation in the village.

IM-BHU organises FLY workshop

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A four-day workshop organised on 'Finding The Leader in You (FLY)' by Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University (IM-BHU) in collaboration with Competitiveness Mindset Institute (NJ,USA) concluded here on Tuesday. The programme was organised by Student Leadership and Life skill Initiative under the guidance of the coordinator of the programme Dr Anindita Chakraborty, assistant professor, IM-BHU. The curriculum of FLY programme is designed to assure that the student practice the five pillars namely conscientiousness, taking initiative, per-



FLY workshop being held at IM-BHU in Varanasi on Tuesday.

severance, innovativeness, problem solving with great exuberance and develop the participants to interact with each other and get insights about it from the facilitators. Many efforts were made by the facilitators to bring out the

non-cognitive skills in students and provide them a platform to showcase their ideology and noetic conceptions with the other students. The programme is included various interactive activities like buddy exercise, Capstone

Project, fly on the wall. Throughout the whole workshop and after workshop activities the facilitators, Dr Viraj Vora, Rashmi Kakker, Vahishta Patel, Mili Sharma provided adequate guidance to complete the exercises and assignments and such a great experience to the students. On the concluding session of programme addressed by Dean of the Institute Prof SK Dubey briefly discussed the importance of such leadership enhancement programme in management training curriculum and ability to transform students into future managers. This entire training workshop was facilitated with immense support from Institute's Director Prof Ashish Bajpai.

No rethink to allow investment from China: Commerce Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said there has been no rethink on the government's stand on allowing Chinese investment and the views expressed in the Economic Survey do not represent the government's views. Replying to supplementaries in the Lok Sabha, Goyal said the government scrutinises Chinese investments and its stand in this regard has not changed.

During the Question Hour, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi alleged that India has become dependent on China and quoted the Economic Survey, saying it supported getting foreign direct investment (FDI) from the neighbouring country. Goyal hit back at the Congress, saying under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) rule, India had become dependent on neighbouring countries. "Under the Congress, imports increased from USD 4 billion to USD 40-45 billion, which is more than 10 times. In our term, the increase is only 2-2.5 times. We took steps to make India self-reliant," the minister said.

"I am making a direct allegation against the UPA.... Their name has changed, it is now the INDI Alliance....," he said. "We



do not know what was that MoU (memorandum of understanding) with China. The trade deficit went up by 30 times under the UPA....," the commerce minister said. "The BJP-led NDA has controlled China and also their investment," he asserted.

Referring to the Economic Survey, Goyal said, "As far as the chief economic advisor is concerned, they bring an independent, autonomous report. It is their thought, the Government of India at present has not changed its stand."

"The investment that comes from China is checked, wherever we do not feel it is appropriate, it is stopped. Our policy remains the same, the chief

economic advisor gave an advice," he said.

The pre-budget Economic Survey made a strong case for seeking FDI from Beijing to boost local manufacturing and tap the export market.

As the United States and Europe are shifting their immediate sourcing away from China, it is more effective to have Chinese companies invest in India and then export the products to these markets rather than importing from the neighbouring country, the survey said.

India faces two choices to benefit from the "China-plus-one strategy" -- it can either integrate into China's supply chain or promote FDI from China.

UPA Govt refused 50% profit on cost in MSP, says Chouhan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday said the previous UPA government had refused to provide 50 per cent profit on cost to farmers in the minimum support price for crops, as based on the formula suggested by the M S Swaminathan Commission. During the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, Congress MP Deepender Hooda asked a supplementary question related to the farmers' protests of 2020-21 and said around 750 farmers lost their lives during the agitation. He asked if the government is considering providing jobs to the next of kin of those who lost their lives during the year-long protests at Delhi's borders against three contentious farm laws of the Centre that have since been repealed.

Chouhan said the question was not related to the main question, which was on issues faced by farmers. "The government is totally committed to farmers' welfare," he said.

The agriculture minister alleged that the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government had refused to implement the rec-



ommendations of the Swaminathan commission that had suggested 50 per cent profit to farmers on their cost. "The Swaminathan commission report came in 2006 and it said 50 per cent profit on cost should be added for calculating the MSP for crops. Their government had denied it. I have documents.... Their minister, Kantilal Bhuria, had said 50 per cent profit cannot be given. Sharad Pawar was the agriculture minister, he had also said it cannot be given," Chouhan said.

He placed a cabinet note of the UPA government, led by Manmohan Singh, on the table and said the Centre then had refused to accept the suggestions of the Swaminathan commission, saying a mechanical linkage between the MSP and the cost of production would distort the market.

SC throws out pleas for review of VVPAT verdict

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has dismissed a petition seeking review of its April 26 verdict that rejected the pleas for complete cross-verification of votes cast using the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). Termining the suspicion about manipulation of the EVMs "unfounded", the apex court had on April 26 rejected the demand for reverting to the old paper ballot system, saying the polling devices were "secure" and they eliminate booth capturing and bogus voting.

A plea seeking review of the verdict came up for consideration in-chambers before a bench of Justices Sanjay Khanna and Dipankar Datta. "We have carefully perused the review petition, as also the grounds in support thereof. In our opinion, no case for review of the judgment dated April 26 is made out. The review petition is, accordingly, dismissed," the bench said in its order passed on July 25.

VVPAT is an independent vote verification system which enables electors to see whether their votes have been recorded correctly.

SUPREME COURT NEWS

NAWAB GETS BAIL

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to NCP leader Nawab Malik on medical grounds in a money laundering case. A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma took note of the submissions of a counsel, appearing for the former Maharashtra minister, which he was suffering from various ailments. The top court said medical bail to Malik will be valid till disposal of the regular bail plea pending before the Bombay High Court.



RANJAN'S BAIL PLEA DISMISSED

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed former Ranchi deputy commissioner Chhavi Ranjan's bail plea in a case related to the sale of army land in the Jharkhand capital. A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and S C Sharma said it was not inclined to interfere with the Jharkhand High Court order rejecting the bail in October last year.

BAIL TO TMC LEADER MONDAL

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Anubrata Mondal, who was arrested by the CBI in a cattle smuggling case. A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma granted the relief to Mondal after noting that the trial in the matter would take time and he has been in jail for two years.



UDDHAV FACTION PLEA TO BE HEARD ON AUGUST 7

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will hear on August 7 a plea of the Uddhav Thackeray faction challenging Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narvekar's order declaring the Shiv Sena bloc led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as the 'real political party' after its split in June 2022. The Speaker had also dismissed the disqualification petitions of the Thackeray faction against CM Shinde and his supporting MLAs.



Centre mulls regulatory framework for acupuncture within country: Nadda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that is likely to bring relief to acupuncture practitioners across the country, the Centre is considering the establishment of a regulatory framework for the 3,000 year-old practice. This proposed mechanism aims to enhance accessibility and promote evidence-based practices within the country.

Despite acupuncture's official recognition by the Government in February 2019, the lack of clear regulatory guidelines has impeded its independent practice. The courts from time to time have echoed concern in the matter, with the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court instructing the Tamil Nadu Government last year to ensure that acupuncture is practiced by registered medical practitioners and not as an independent system of medicine until the final guidelines from the Apex Committee are approved.



The Madurai bench passed the order while disposing of a plea filed in 2016, by the President of the All Tamil Nadu Acupuncture and Alternative Medical Association Trust, seeking to forbear the police from interfering with the practice of acupuncture by their members. However, with Union Health Minister J P Nadda confirming on Tuesday that the Government is actively reviewing the apex committee's recommendations, practitioners in the sector can

now look forward to formal recognition. Nadda highlighted that a thorough consultation involving multiple departments, including the Ministry of AYUSH, has been completed. Nadda explained that based on the Standing Committee of Experts' recommendations, acupuncture was recognised as a mode of therapy. In 2018, the Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) advised that acupuncture could be considered an independent healthcare

system, provided there is sufficient evidence and expertise for teaching, training, and certification.

Following the IDC's report, an apex committee on acupuncture (ACA) was formed to oversee the promotion and regulation of acupuncture. The ACA's terms of reference included developing detailed guidelines, suggesting steps for implementing these guidelines, and addressing reimbursement issues for acupuncture treatments.

The ACA's recommendations encompass proposed curricula for certificate, degree, and diploma courses in acupuncture, a template for regulatory rules, and suggestions for treatment reimbursement. To ensure effective implementation, the committee has recommended that the government establish a regulatory mechanism to create a supportive environment for acupuncture practice as a recognised healthcare system.

Rahul, Priyanka to visit landslide-hit Wayanad

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will visit landslide-hit Wayanad on Wednesday morning, party sources said.

Landslides hit the hilly Wayanad district on Tuesday, leaving 57 people dead. The landslides triggered by heavy rainfall, which occurred early on Tuesday, have left a trail of destruction in its wake, with several houses destroyed, water bodies swollen and trees uprooted.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi condoled the loss of lives in the landslides and urged United Democratic Front (UDF) workers to provide all help to those affected. Rahul Gandhi, who represented Wayanad in the 17th Lok Sabha, said he has spoken to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the Wayanad district collector, who have assured him that rescue oper-



ations are underway. The former Congress chief expressed deep anguish over the loss of lives in the massive landslides near Meppadi in Wayanad.

"My heartfelt condolences go out to the bereaved families who have lost their loved ones. I hope those still trapped are brought to safety soon," he said in a social media post. "I have spoken to the Kerala chief minister and the Wayanad district collector who assured me that rescue operations are underway. I have requested them to ensure coordination

"My heartfelt condolences and prayers are with all those who have lost loved ones. I hope and pray that everyone is brought to safety as soon as possible," she said.

"I urge the government to take immediate action to expedite relief and rescue operations and request UDF workers to step forward to do all they can to be of support and comfort to all those affected by this tragedy," Priyanka Gandhi said in a social media post.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha later, Rahul Gandhi demanded the Centre extend all possible support for the rescue and rehabilitation of those affected. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, he also sought enhanced compensation to the next of kin of those killed in the landslides and restoration of vital transport and communication lines. Rahul Gandhi won Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly and Kerala's Wayanad seat this time but decided to represent Rae Bareilly in the Lok Sabha. Priyanka Gandhi is slated to contest the bypolls in Wayanad whenever they take place.

SC pulls up Centre for indecision on OROP, imposes fine

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court came down heavily on the Centre on Tuesday for failing to take any decision for years on the pension payable to retired regular captains of the army in accordance with the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme and imposed a fine of Rs 2 lakh on it.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Khanna and R Mahadevan gave one last opportunity to the Centre till November 14 for resolving the anomalies with regard to the pension of such retired officers under the scheme. It said the cost of Rs 2 lakh shall be deposited in the welfare funds of the Army and warned the government that if the decision is not taken by November 14, it will direct for enhanced pension by 10 per cent to the retired regular captains. It listed the matter for further hearing on November 25.

Appearing in the court on behalf of the Centre, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhatti said six anomalies have been pointed out by the Kochi bench of the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT), which needs to be rectified, but the government is yet to take a stand in the matter. The bench said, "For how many years will this go on? Either you pay an enhanced pension by 10 per cent or we are imposing a cost on you. We wanted a decision to be taken, but you have not taken it. This matter came up in 2021 but still no decision has been taken." Bhatti said the government cannot take a piecemeal decision, it has to look at the issue



holistically and consider all the six anomalies as the decision may affect others. "All I can do is tender my apology. Please give us one more chance, we will take a decision in this regard. We will file an affidavit in this regard. Give us three months' time, we will take a decision," the additional solicitor general said. The bench initially refused to give any further time to the Centre and accept any affidavit and said it will direct an enhanced pension to these retired officers. Justice Khanna said, "What is this? If the government is not taking a decision, I cannot do anything. This does not give solace to these officers. They are retired captains. They have no say. They have no access to you people. Either you start paying 10 per cent more or pay the cost. The choice is yours." As soon as the bench started dictating the order for enhanced pension for the retired captains, Bhatti asked it to kindly impose a cost because that will serve equity better than enhanced pension. The bench then gave time till

November 14 to the government as a last opportunity but imposed a cost of Rs 2 lakh on it, saying the amount has to be deposited in the welfare fund of the armed forces in four weeks. On July 23, the top court had noted that the regional bench of the AFT had passed an order on December 7, 2021 according to which the government was to take a decision on the pension payable to the retired regular captains, noticing that there was an anomaly that required to be resolved for the implementation of OROP. The Centre has challenged the AFT order and arrayed 13 retired regular captains as a party to the dispute. The bench noted that this court has repeatedly adjourned the matter to enable the appellant government to take a decision on the pension of the retired regular captains. "In these circumstances, we are inclined to impose exemplary costs and also direct that the regular captains will get pension enhanced by 20 per cent from the date the OROP scheme is applicable. However, as a last opportunity to enable the appellant to

obtain instructions, re-list on July 30," the bench had said in its July 23 order.

The root of the dispute lies in the OROP scheme introduced by the Centre in 2015. Under the scheme, the rate of pensions for past retirees were fixed at par with that for the current retirees of the armed forces. However, certain anomalies crept in the pension tables for captains and majors for the lack of proper data of the officers in the ranks of regular captains and majors since the minimum current rank of retirement to attain pensionable service is lieutenant colonel.

The Ministry of Defence appointed a One Man Judicial Committee (OMJC) to recommend the resolution of this anomaly in 2016 but no decision was taken by the ministry on the matter after that. Subsequently, the Kochi Bench of the AFT directed the ministry to resolve the anomaly based on the OMJC's recommendations in a time-bound manner. However, the Centre challenged the AFT order in the Supreme Court.

Defence Ministry inks MoU to set up three testing facilities under UPDIC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ministry of Defence on Tuesday here inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set up three state-of-the-art testing facilities under the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC), officials said.

Giving details, they said under the MoU, one facility will be established in Lucknow in Mechanical & Material (M&M) domain, and two in Kanpur - one each in Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) and Communications domains. The MoU, under the Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS), was exchanged between senior officials of defence ministry and Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) in New Delhi. The DTIS was launched by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in May 2020, with an outlay of Rs 400 crore, to set up state-of-the-art testing facilities in collaboration with private industry and Central/State Government, promoting indigenous defence production, reducing imports and enhancing self-reliance. To provide impetus to the defence and aerospace sectors within the Defence Industrial Corridors, seven testing facilities were approved - four in Tamil Nadu and three in Uttar Pradesh. While the MoU to establish three testing facilities in



Delhi Govt, top cop get NHRC notices over deaths of IAS aspirants in coaching centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



The NHRC has issued notices to the Delhi Government, city police chief and municipal commissioner in connection with the deaths of three civil services aspirants in the basement of a coaching centre here. It has sought a detailed report from them in two weeks.

The Delhi Chief secretary has also been asked to get a thorough survey done to ascertain the exact number of such institutes and coaching centres running in violation of the prescribed norms across Delhi. Every detail of such institutes, including complaints pending against them and action taken by the department concerned, is to be mentioned in the report, a statement issued by the NHRC said. The NHRC said it has "taken suo motu cognisance of media reports that three stu-

dents drowned in the flooded basement library of a prominent civil services coaching centre in Delhi on July 27".

The news reports indicated that many complaints regarding waterlogging were made to the authorities, but "no action was taken". Expressing serious concern over the incident, the commission observed that the contents of the news report indicate negligence on the part of the authorities concerned. The commission also took cognisance of the death of another civil services aspirant in Delhi's Patel Nagar area. It has been noted that a few days back, reportedly in another incident of authorities' negligence, another civil services aspirant died due to electrocution while crossing a waterlogged street. The commission has taken suo motu cognisance of it, the statement said.



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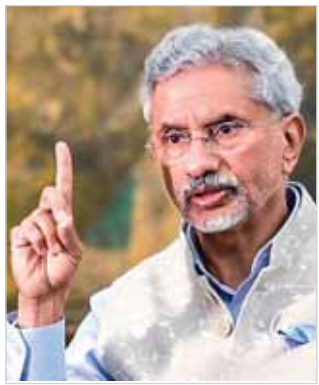
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Taking on the dragon

S Jaishankar admits strained relations with China but rules out third-party mediation

In what can be construed as a candid admission by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, he has categorically stated that relations between India and China are not on an even keel. His recent statement underscores the ongoing diplomatic tension between India and China. Even earlier he had said that China is a bigger economy, implying that we should think twice before acting against China. The Minister's assessment of the current state of the India-China relationship highlights the challenges that persist despite various diplomatic efforts and high-level engagements. One of the key aspects of Jaishankar's statement was his firm rejection of third-party mediation in resolving the disputes with China. The Foreign Minister emphasised that India prefers to handle its issues with China bilaterally, without external intervention. This stance aligns with India's long-standing policy of managing its international relations directly. Jaishankar's comments reflect India's approach to maintaining sovereignty and autonomy in its foreign policy. By ruling out third-party mediation, India is signalling its intention to address its differences with China through direct dialogue and negotiation. This position underscores India's commitment to resolving disputes through established diplomatic channels while rejecting external influence that might complicate or hinder the process.



Prime Minister Modi had personally taken a keen interest in resolving the issue but to no avail. Chinese Premier Xi was invited and given a grand welcome but that did not break ice and the tension on borders continued. In the complex web of geopolitics, India has drifted closer to the US which wants to use India to contain Chinese influence, naturally much to the consternation of China. The Chinese unease is reflected in its actions on the border which had remained peaceful from 1962 to 2017 when the Doklam incident happened. India-China relations are complex and multifaceted, influenced by historical, political, economic, and strategic factors. The two countries share a long border. The most notable conflict occurred in 1962 when the Sino-Indian War broke out over border disputes in the Aksai Chin region. Ironically trade relations between the two countries have grown despite border disputes. China is one of India's largest trading partners. However, recent years have seen border skirmishes and strategic rivalries. In recent years, the relationship has been marked by both cooperation and contention. The Doklam skirmish in 2017 was a prominent example of border tensions. The confrontation occurred in the Doklam plateau, an area disputed between China and Bhutan. Additionally, the 2020 clashes in the Galwan Valley further highlighted ongoing tensions. Despite these challenges, India and China have continued to engage diplomatically and economically. Both nations must recognise the importance of managing their differences while pursuing mutual benefits, given their significant roles in the global economy and regional geopolitics.

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PICTALK



Clouds hover over the hill town of Shimla

Kolkata's healthcare transformation into world-class medical facilities

Over the past two decades, Kolkata's medical facilities have transformed significantly, reducing the exodus of patients to Chennai and Vellore

The hordes of medical pilgrims filling up berths in Coromandel Express and Madras Mail have thinned substantially over the years, as Kolkata's private healthcare sector scrambles to make up for lost time. Kolkata was not always best served in matters of healthcare, and for patients with serious ailments and often with not-so-serious conditions, Chennai, Vellore or Mumbai were the default destinations. It was also a matter of perception as most Kolkatans believed they would receive superior care in outpatient hospitals only. However, the healthcare landscape in Kolkata has been undergoing a paradigm shift over the past two decades, riding the tailwinds of private sector initiatives, as the bed count continues to soar. The availability of able doctors was never a problem in the city and now that the pool of healthcare experts has increased significantly with a steady reverse traffic of medical practitioners coming back from the NHS in the UK and other advanced countries' health systems to cater to the growing demand



back in their hometown. Over time, the city has gradually regained its confidence in its private hospitals seeing that they aren't short of modern facilities and latest equipment anymore. The faith is beginning to trickle back, ounce by ounce, and the Coromandel isn't as packed with south-bound patients as before. Of course, it hasn't happened overnight, and there is still a long way to go. Kolkata's progress in terms of private sector participation is in sync with the national scenario as analysts say between 2016 and now, the country's healthcare industry has grown at a CAGR of 22% and the Centre's allocation of Rs 90,658.63 crore for the sector in the interim Budget for 2024-25 reflects this uptrend. However, restora-

tion of faith in any service, not the least healthcare delivery, takes a lot of commitment and meticulous planning. After all, like any other customer, a patient has a retail choice and can switch allegiance if expectations are not met. It is well known that a big and significant milestone in this medical makeover of Kolkata was the unveiling of the Rabindranath Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences in 2000 by Narayana Health Group's Founder, Dr. Devi Shetty. This set the ball rolling and many other world class hospitals started their services in Kolkata. It was the flagship venture of the founder which he started in his favourite city, Kolkata. The journey began over two decades ago with a single speciality hospital and has grown into a network of four super-speciality hospitals in Kolkata. Now Kolkata can boast of super-speciality tertiary care, these facilities offer over 35 specialities such as Cancer Care, Mother & Child Care, and Orthopaedics. The healthcare sector in India, serving a vast population of

1.4 billion, faces challenges like inadequate infrastructure, doctor shortages, poor rural facilities, and limited health insurance access. Addressing these issues, the Group plans a 1,000-bed hospital in New Town and a 100-bed facility in Mukundapur. The New Town hospital will treat 5,000 to 7,000 OPD patients daily. Kolkata's hospitals also serve patients from neighbouring countries, managing a growing load of non-communicable diseases. The adoption of cutting-edge technology and modern treatment protocols has reduced the average hospital stay from six to four days, optimizing resources. A future-ready approach aims to increase smiles by saving lives. Healthcare evolution, on desirable lines, is crucial in the region. This would lead to a higher stage of advancement, guided by the principles of compassion, innovation, and deep dedication that were envisioned over two decades ago. (The Author is the Group Chief Operating Officer of Narayana Health. Views expressed are personal)



R VENKATESH

Honouring the legacy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak



RAJDEEP PATHAK

As the nation commemorates Tilak's 168th birth anniversary, we reflect on his profound influence on the independence movement and his contributions as a reformer

In 1921, Mahatma Gandhi's visit to the Nellore district marked a significant moment in India's freedom movement. He inaugurated the Satyagraha Ashram in Pallepadu and delivered significant speeches at the Town Hall and V.R. College. At the Rebala Lakshmi Narasa Reddy Town Hall, he unveiled a portrait of his political mentor, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, emphasizing Tilak's profound patriotism and leadership, which galvanized the freedom movement. Gandhi extolled Tilak's legacy, invoking the ideals of "Swaraj" (self-rule) and characterizing the Non-Cooperation Movement as an act of "self-purification". He urged contributions to the 'Tilak Swaraj Fund', established in 1920, to support educational institutions, Khadi promotion, and Swadeshi efforts. It was a successful mobilized mission. July 23, 2024, marked the 168th birth anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, also revered as "Lokmanya" and "The Lion of Maharashtra". This is for his dual role, as a freedom fighter and social reformer. His impact has also been underscored by notable figures, such as British journalist Valentine Chirol who termed him "the father of Indian unrest", while Jawaharlal Nehru hailed him as "the father of the Indian revolution" and Mahatma Gandhi recognized him as "the Maker of Modern India". A distinguished Sanskrit scholar and thinker, Tilak was also a visionary leader. Sri Aurobindo, in his collection of Tilak's writings and speeches, emphasized Tilak's transformative influence on the Indian National Congress, reshaping it from its occidental characteristics to embrace mass participation in the freedom struggle. In "The Intellectual Biography of Bal Gangadhar Tilak" published in the Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Raj Hans Ojha, contends that "The story of Tilak is the story of India's Swaraj, of the Indian National Congress, coming to its adulthood, and of the rise of Indian masses for the first time in quest of 'Home Rule' and 'Independence'". Lokmanya Tilak believed that "Swaraj is the foun-



ation and not the height of our future prosperity. We have to build a new nation, develop a new character, live the principles, which we advocate, faith in spiritual values, love of country and tolerance for views from which we differ." Tilak's intellectual contributions were many. His works such as, "The Orion or Research into The Antiquity of The Vedas" (1893) and "The Arctic Home of Vedas" (1901), complemented his political activism. Despite his devotion to independence, he expressed a preference for academia, a path cut short by his untimely death on August 1, 1920, at age 64. His educational contributions are equally noteworthy. He co-founded institutions like the 'New English School', the 'Deccan Society for Education', and 'Fergusson College', and presented a comprehensive educational blueprint to the Hunter Commission (1882 & 1919). Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a strategist, transcending the roles of an idealist and philosopher, and his multifaceted contributions continue to resonate in India's historical and educational landscape. As a formidable journalist, Tilak was renowned for his fearless and impartial stance in his weekly publication, 'Kesari'. He championed a rigorous

HE WAS AMONG THE FIRST MAINSTREAM POLITICAL LEADERS IN INDIA TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT "THE NATION THINKS NOT WITH THE BRAIN BUT WITH AN OVERHEATED HEART. IT IS ONLY IN THE THROES OF TUMULT THAT NATIONS ARE BORN"

approach to journalism, asserting that 'Kesari' would boldly address all issues, resisting the prevailing trend of appeasing the British and embodying its namesake's courage. Bal Gangadhar Tilak also leveraged his paper 'Maharashtra Advocate for the People, drawing upon Hindu scriptures and the Bhagavad Gita to support his arguments. His profound contributions as a patriot, scholar, and politician had a significant impact on Mahatma Gandhi, who, in a March 4, 1905, article, lauded Lokmanya's scholarship, particularly his astronomical findings that traced Indian scriptures to over 10,000 years old, recognizing him as a luminary whose intellectual influence extended beyond national borders. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was imprisoned in 1908. He strongly believed that "There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free." Gandhi and Tilak had great mutual respect for one another. In his reflections in The Indian Opinion, Gandhi praised Tilak for his readiness to endure suffering for the cause of India's freedom. While they were ideologically different in their thoughts and actions, both

Lokmanya Tilak and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi fought for one cause, which was 'freedom'. Mahatma Gandhi maintained a profound respect for Tilak's contributions and acknowledged his unparalleled influence and the reverence he commanded among the masses. In his tributes and public statements, Gandhi consistently lauded Tilak's selfless service, burning patriotism, and magnetic leadership. Tilak's mantra, "Swaraj is our birthright, and I shall have it", resonated deeply with Mahatma Gandhi, who adapted it to his philosophy of truth and non-violence, and thus, Tilak's assertive nationalism blended with Gandhi's principles of peaceful resistance. Mahadev Desai, recalls Mahatma Gandhi's views on Lokmanya Tilak, which he expressed on 24 July 1934 at Kanpur (Kanpur today), in one of the meetings. Mahatma Gandhi said: "If Tilak Maharaj taught us that 'swaraj is our birthright', he also taught us that 'selfless service' is the key to win it. Selfless service may have been in existence before Tilak came, but he was who systematized it." Tilak's life was a demonstration of this great ideal of Karma Yoga. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNAUTHORISED PG MUSHROOMING

Madam — Paying guest accommodations (PG) for women have made headlines following the brutal murder of a woman in one such facility located in a posh Bengaluru locality. It is crucial to take strict action against unauthorized PGs. The police argue that without a formal complaint, securing PGs is not inherently their responsibility, and this claim is understandable. Nonetheless, increased patrolling in sensitive areas where these accommodations are situated should not be overlooked. Thus, the responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of female residents falls on the PG owners. It is alarming to note that many PGs in India lack security guards. Security personnel should thoroughly frisk strangers seeking entry into PGs. The importance of a biometric fingerprint system for all entrants cannot be overstated. Additionally, providing kitchens that prepare hygienic food is essential to prevent women from frequently venturing out for meals, enhancing their safety. Troublemakers such as hawkers and beggars should be kept at bay. Regular presence and unwavering supervision by the owners at the PGs can significantly boost residents' morale. Overall, a collective commitment is vital.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

USE OF TRIBALS IN THE SCHOOL NAMES

Madam — The Madras High Court has strongly criticised the Tamil Nadu government for using the term "Tribal" in the names of government schools. This issue arose with schools in the Kalvarayan Hills being named "Government Tribal Residential School." The court rightly observed that this terminology is inappropriate, especially for a secular government. The use of caste or community names in school titles is astonishing and deemed unacceptable by the court. The court emphasised that labeling a school as a "Tribal School" could stigmatise the children attending it, making them feel their school is inferior to others. This could lead to an inferiority complex among the

Grand spectacle of Paris Olympics



The Paris Olympics 2024 have begun, filling the city with excitement and drawing visitors from around the world to witness this grand sporting event. While the Olympic games promise thrilling spectacles, Paris offers many other activities to enrich your visit. If you're a food enthusiast with a penchant for history, indulge in iconic Parisian bites

that offer a delightful journey through time and taste. Wander through charming streets and savor culinary delights that are integral to Parisian culture. For those seeking unique experiences, venture beyond the usual tourist spots and discover offbeat attractions that provide a different perspective on the city. Additionally, Paris offers various free activities that allow you to enjoy the city's charm without breaking the bank. From serene parks to historical landmarks, there's no shortage of cost-free ways to immerse yourself in the Parisian ambience. Lastly, don't miss out on the must-see attractions that define Paris. Iconic sites such as the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, and Notre-Dame Cathedral are timeless treasures that captivate visitors. Janyanth Subramaniam | Mumbai

students. Caste and community play a significant role in the political arena as vote banks. The caste system is deeply entrenched in government policies and programs, leading to reverse discrimination. The principle of "all are equal in law" is often neglected, with reservation in education and employment based on caste. Some states have defied the Supreme Court's directive to limit reservations to 50 percent, extending them to over 75 percent, which adversely affects merit. If some communities feel deprived of fair representation in education and employment, the government may consider pro-rata reservations for all communities as a solution. KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

continues unchanged. Recently, the Supreme Court agreed to consider separate petitions from opposition-ruled Kerala and West Bengal. These petitions allege that the respective governors refused to assent to bills passed by their assemblies. This is not an isolated incident; similar cases have been brought before the Hon'ble Supreme Court numerous times. West Bengal, for example, claimed in its petition that the Governor had withheld assent to eight bills. I believe the position of governors has never been impartial in this country. The office has become increasingly politicized; a study found that between 1950 and 2015, only a quarter of governors completed a five-year term, with 37 percent serving less than a year. Defying traditions, governors are typically appointed by the ruling party without consulting the elected state government, leading to strained relations between federal and state governments. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Madam — Since independence, our country has undergone significant changes. While we have adopted many new governance systems, we still retain some from our colonial past. One such legacy is the role of governors acting as representatives of the President in all states, a practice that

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FIRST COLUMN

CURIOUS MINDS
ENGINEER CHANGE

Mental re-engineering can infuse life with renewed vigor and purpose



RAVI VALLURI

Often, conventional and commonplace way of thinking only results in clambering the ladder. A person leading a ho-hum existence cannot re-engineer his/her personality. Tale of an old man Aeons ago, lived an elderly gentleman who in the winter of his life decided to embark on a spiritual journey to transfigure his personality. The pater now embarked on the spiritual sojourn and enrolled in a monastery. Upon completing his tutelage, armed with various nuances of Zen teachings, he left for his small town. He stepped out of the portals of the temple of knowledge and involuntarily slipped into a rivulet. "Oh, the old monk falls in the river!" chortled some young tutees.

He was to dramatically declare that the re-engineering processes and techniques he acquired had enabled him to accommodate water into himself and not the other way around. "We are shaped by our thoughts, we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves," said Gautama Buddha. The thought process, thinking patterns, building blocks of thought, organised thinking and goal direction are five keys to re-engineer the mind to metamorphose and refashion our lives. An ingenious individual to re-engineer his life has to change the existing pattern. He should begin by identifying the problem. In the swathes of his mind, such a process represents and delineates the problem; as he/she is mindful and discerning, solutions and a set of sub-goals are outlined. The quick-witted individual then selects the balm for the misadventure and executes it with precision.

The human mind is now brim-full of ideas and it is time to evaluate the outcome and once again rethink and redefine problems and arrive at new solutions. It was the time of Sakhya Muni Gautama Buddha when an animated group of denizens were involved in a rambunctious argument about Divinity and various religions. In sheer exasperation, they arrived at the feet of Lord Buddha. The Compassionate and Enlightened One smiled and ruminated for a while. Lord Buddha then asked his disciples to arrange for an elephant and for four persons to be blindfolded. And so, it happened that the first of the blindfolded persons felt the elephant's leg and exclaimed that God appeared as a pillar. The second person



touched the elephant's tummy and opined that Almighty God was a wall. The third gentleman stroked the elephant's ear and observed that God was a piece of cloth. The fourth man grazed the tail and described that God was a piece of rope. Once again, the group of four was engaged in a raging debate on the form of Almighty God. After the exercise was completed, Buddha asked the assembled disciples and citizens.

The four blindfolded individuals felt the same elephant, but provided varying answers, so what could be the correct answer? The episode just proved that no one individual or thought process is complete. One should always be prepared to accept that one might be correct in parts and that other streams of thought could be complementary. Techniques for training the spiritually inclined can re-engineer their lives by undertaking the bouquet of courses imparted by the Art of Living, or pursue Vipassana; attempting to mutate their minds through the practice of yoga, pranayama and meditation. Others have a logical bent of mind and charter a different path.

They need to develop a passion, take up a sport, and read inspirational literature among other things. But it is elemental and foundational to re-engineer the mind and thought processes at regular intervals to live life with gusto.

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

Balanced budget reflects
Modi's vision of 'Vikasit Bharat'

K S TOMAR

PM Modi's "self-reliant India" vision is central to the 2024-25 Union Budget. It boosts domestic production, supports SMEs, and fosters innovation to reduce import dependency

Prime Minister Modi's vision of a "self-reliant India" (Atmanirbhar Bharat) is a recurring theme in the budget. This vision emphasizes self-sufficiency in critical sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. The budget outlines measures to boost domestic production, support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and encourage innovation. These initiatives are designed to reduce import dependency and create a robust, self-sustaining economy. At the same time, the budget reflects Modi's understanding of India's interconnectedness with the global economy. The focus on enhancing India's export competitiveness, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), and participating in global value chains underscores the dual approach of strengthening domestic capabilities while engaging with the global market.

This balanced approach is crucial for India to navigate the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly complex global economic landscape. The Union Budget, a cornerstone of the country's economic planning, may serve as a reflection of the government's strategic priorities and vision for the future. It is being billed as a path-breaking foundation of Reforms for the next 5 years. According to some experts, under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the budget has been targeted to foster economic growth, address social inequalities, and position India as a key player on the global stage. The latest budget unveiled amidst a backdrop of global economic uncertainty, showcases a balanced approach, combining domestic development with an international outlook.

CHALLENGES BEFORE FM

In light of the 2024-25 Union Budget, the BJP-led central government faces scrutiny over its dealings with opposition-ruled states, which allege discrimination in fund allocation and policy implementation. Experts say that Central Schemes and Fund Allocation; The Budget reveals a 15% increase in allocations for flagship schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Ayushman Bharat. However, opposition states argue that their share of these funds does not reflect their proportionate needs. For instance, Tamil Nadu has claimed that despite a significant allocation under PMAY, delays in fund release and implementation hinder effective utilization. The central government's response involves reiterating the equitable distribution based on various factors, but opposition states view these explanations sceptically. Implementation Issues; Critics point to inefficiencies in scheme implementation as evidence of discrimination. The opposition-ruled states have raised concerns about delays and insufficient execution of these schemes.

The central government needs to ensure that these funds are utilized efficiently and that implementation is monitored closely to address these grievances. Political Dynamics; Allegations of political bias also come into play. Opposition leaders argue that central agencies are used to target political rivals, exacerbating feelings of discrimination. With the BJP's political rivals accusing it of manipulating central resources, the government must navigate these complex political dynamics carefully.

STEPS TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS



THE BUDGET REVEALS A 15% INCREASE IN ALLOCATIONS FOR FLAGSHIP SCHEMES SUCH AS THE PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA (PMAY) AND AYUSHMAN BHARAT. HOWEVER, OPPOSITION STATES ARGUE THAT THEIR SHARE OF THESE FUNDS DOES NOT REFLECT THEIR PROPORTIONATE NEEDS

To mitigate allegations of discrimination, the central government should adopt multiple strategies which include Enhanced Transparency: Provide detailed reports on fund allocations and expenditures to ensure transparency and address concerns of inequitable distribution.

The focus should be on the efficient and timely execution of central schemes, particularly in opposition-ruled states, to demonstrate commitment to equitable development. The Centre must engage in regular discussions with opposition state governments to address grievances and ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed. A Balanced Approach for Sustainable Growth: The Indian Union Budget, under the leadership of Modi, presents a balanced blueprint for growth, combining a focus on domestic development with a strategic international outlook. The emphasis on infrastructure, healthcare, education, and financial inclusion reflects the government's commitment to inclusive growth.

At the same time, the focus on global partnerships, defence manufacturing, and renewable energy highlights India's aspirations to be a key player on the world stage. Domestic Positives: A Focus on Inclusive Development; The budget's primary focus is on inclusive growth, ensuring that the benefits of economic development reach all sections of society. A significant allocation has been made towards infrastructure development, including roads, railways, and digital infrastructure. This not only promises to create jobs but also lays the groundwork for long-term economic resilience. The emphasis on renewable energy and green technology is another forward-looking aspect, aligning with global trends towards sustainability. Healthcare and educa-

tion have not received substantial attention. The substantial increase in funding for public health infrastructure is a must, especially after the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, investments in education, particularly in digital and vocational training, will equip the younger generation with skills for the future job market.

This focus on human capital development is critical for sustaining economic growth in the long term. The government's commitment to financial inclusion continues with initiatives to expand the reach of banking and financial services to rural areas. This effort is crucial for integrating rural populations into the formal economy, enhancing their economic opportunities, and reducing regional disparities. Moreover, targeted welfare schemes for farmers, women, and marginalized communities underscore the government's intent to address social inequalities and ensure a more equitable distribution of resources. Extreme evidence of a discriminatory approach exhibited in the union budget estimates for 2024-24 pertains to the allocation of Rs 11,500 crore for flood mitigation to Bihar whereas Himachal as well as Uttarakhand faced unprecedented catastrophe in July/August 2023 which suffered extensive damages to the tune of over Rs 12,000 crore and Rs 4,000 crore respectively but figures have not been mentioned in the budget.

Himachal government is in a quandary as 550 lives were lost and rehabilitation of lakhs of hapless people had been undertaken by the state government by making provision of Rs 650 crore hence expected a liberal Special Package from the union finance minister who preferred to just give an assurance about financial assistance to the state but no allocation

of the budget. Inordinate delay in the announcement of a "Special Package" had affected relief and rehabilitation works though the state demanded immediate help of Rs 9,042 crore from the centre in Aug 2023. Chief Minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu regretted the apathy of the centre which gave nothing for one year. The finance minister skipped Punjab also which witnessed devastation owing to heavy rains and floods in 21 out of 23 districts and damages were more than Rs 1,680 crore. About 70 lives were lost and the state government has been demanding financial assistance which has been ignored in this budget. Contrary to it, Bihar has been chosen for special treatment and the finance minister allocated Rs 11,500 crore for flood mitigation which is being interpreted as a Reward for helping BHP to form a government after its reduced strength in Lok Sabha. Experts say that Bihar has been India's most flood-prone state with 76% of the population of north Bihar living under recurring threat of devastating floods for decades hence it deserves a special package but not by ignoring other states that suffer an identical natural disaster every year. As India navigates the challenges of a post-pandemic world, the budget's provisions for economic resilience, social equity, and environmental sustainability provide a solid foundation for future growth. Modi's vision of a self-reliant India resonates throughout the budget, offering a roadmap for the country's economic and strategic aspirations. This holistic approach, balancing domestic priorities with international engagement, positions India well for a sustainable and prosperous future.

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist based in Shimla; views are personal)

How persistence and empathy can cure tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is a 'curable infectious disease linked to inequities, it is therefore crucial to invest in partnerships that address these disparities with empathy

A year ago 20-year-old Tahira was convinced she was going to die. A fever that refused to go accompanied by a persistent cough, a loss in appetite and extreme weakness had confined her to the bed for months. Her husband, a rickshaw puller, had neither the means nor the time to take her to a doctor. It was only when her brother came to visit her in Kolkata and saw her failing health that he decided to take matters into his own hands. He brought Tahira back with him to her natal house in Seemapuri, Delhi.

This decision was to save her life. Around this time, Humana People to People India (HPPPI), a not-for-profit, was reaching out with information and guidance on tuberculosis (TB)



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

as a part of their Project LEAD (Leveraging Educating, Advocating to Disrupt TB transmission). Working in close coordination with the government's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), LEAD focussed on the oft-ignored and overlooked marginalized communities living in low-grade urban slums, the homeless and migratory population in four cities, Delhi, Mumbai, Howrah and Hyderabad.

Persistence Pays When LEAD field officer Shanti met Tahira, she immediately knew what had to be done. First, she was taken for a chest X-ray. When it showed Tahira presumptive for TB, sputum microscopy was conducted which confirmed TB. Once this became clear, the diagnosis was reconfirmed through the WHO-recommended molecular test via the Cartridge-Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (CBNAAT) and drug susceptibility test via Line Probe Assay (LPA) provided free at the government GTB Hospital. The drug susceptibility test is done to ensure that the TB bacteria (Bacillus Mycobacterium Tuberculosis), that infects a person is not resistant to the medicines they are treated with.

Realising there was no time to waste, Shanti quickly enabled her registration on Ni-Akshay, the government's NTEP real-time patient management web system, so that her card could be made and her treatment started the same day. As a trained worker, Shanti knew time was of the essence and treatment adherence critical. So, for the next six months, Shanti would become Tahira's shadow. She kept a watchful eye and followed up doggedly with 40 visits to ensure Tahira didn't miss out or falter in sticking to the drug regimen.

Her persistence paid off when Tahira tested negative a couple of months ago and is now completely cured. The Techno CATTB being an infectious disease, early detection and



treatment is vital especially as it spreads when persons with the illness expel the bacteria into the air, mostly by coughing. Here is where technology can play a role. Cough Against TB (CAT) an innovative application AI-powered cough-sound-based screening tool to assess the likelihood of pulmonary TB developed by Wadhvani AI, resulted in a 10.8% presumptive rate and a positivity yield of 15.6%.

One of the important outcomes of using CAT was its detection of asymptomatic cases, which otherwise would have been missed. While technology has been an enabling tool, the real success of screening over 600,000 individuals, identifying 3,182 people with TB (PwTB), and supporting 98% of them in Delhi with treatment adherence has been due to the commitment and compassion shown by the women field workers. The project findings at the end of the one-year project indicate that the female field officers proved to be more effective than their male counterparts in TB awareness and screening because of their empathy. A Human Touch How a human touch can make all the difference was seen in Tahira's

case. Shanti's support to Tahira during her challenging treatment journey was not just by counselling but also through food ration supplements every month through her contacts with an NGO. Additionally, she also linked her to NTEP's Ni-Akshay Poshan Yojana, the government scheme to provide Rs 500 per month for PwTB to buy food. Deploying women now cured of TB as activists and field workers have also worked wonders to reach out to those who fall through the cracks. They know what it means to live with TB and the societal stigma that have to face. Their determination to help others in similar situations has boosted early detection and treatment. It is a known fact that those most at risk are people residing in poorly ven-

tilated and overcrowded conditions, suffering from malnutrition and diseases and with limited access to healthcare. Project LEAD has shown that women field officers are more successful in persuading TB screening and treatment adherence among the vulnerable and marginalized because of their understanding and sensitivity. TB researchers Dr Anurag Bhargava, Dr Madhukar Pai and Dr Madhvi Bhargava reiterate that TB is a "curable" infectious disease linked to inequities, it is even more imperative to invest in more partnerships that bridge these inequalities with empathy.

(The author is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views are expressed are personal)

Only Centre can raise quota limit by removing 50% cap: Uddhav

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday said the state lacks the power to remove the 50% cap on reservations, asserting that only the Centre has the authority to raise the ceiling limit through Parliament. Thackeray slammed the Eknath Shinde-led government over the vexed Maratha reservation issue and demanded deliberations with various sections to find a solution through mutual understanding instead of holding discussions only with politicians.

"The state does not have the right to increase the limit of reservations. It can be resolved in Lok Sabha. My MPs will back it (if any law is proposed to increase the 50% cap)," the former chief minister told reporters. "Everyone must go to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and he should decide (on resolving the reservation issue). Whatever it is (the decision), we will accept it," he said. Thackeray said the ruling party must clarify whether it wants to hurt the (interests of) Other Backward Classes, citing the High Court's stay on the Bihar government's decision to raise quotas to 65 per cent. The former chief minister said Marathas won't get justice till incumbent rulers



(Shiv Sena led by Shinde, BJP, and NCP headed by Ajit Pawar) continue to be at the helm of affairs. Thackeray said the former ally (BJP) has changed and become "brutal". "This brutal tendency must be destroyed in Maharashtra and the country," he said while responding to a query on allegations raised by former state home minister and NCP (SP) leader Anil Deshmukh against Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis. Deshmukh had claimed an

"intermediary" had visited him when he was the home minister in the previous MVA government on behalf of Fadnis, who was the opposition leader, with affidavits implicating then CM Uddhav Thackeray and ministers Aaditya Thackeray, Ajit Pawar and Anil Parab. Fadnis has denied these charges. Thackeray called for rehabilitating residents of Dharavi slum sprawl, undergoing redevelopment, in the same locality and not elsewhere in the city.

Four killed in lightning strikes in Jharkhand



PTI ■ RANCHI

At least four people were killed and four others were injured in separate incidents of lightning strikes in Jharkhand's Ranchi district on Tuesday, an official said. Three persons were killed in Mandar block and one in Chanhoh block, he said. Mandar Circle Officer Rajendra Das said that one death each was reported in three villages — Cambo, Tilta and Baski — in Mandar police station area, around 30 km from Ranchi. "Four others, who were injured in lightning strikes, hail from Cambo village. They were referred to Ranchi's Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences for better treatment," he said. Das said that lightning struck them when they were sowing paddy in their fields. A 30-year-old woman was killed in a lightning strike in Lundri village in Chanhoh police station area, another official said.

Rajasthan schools to commemorate Article 370 abrogation, Congress condemns move

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The Rajasthan Education Department's academic calendar for new session in state government schools has sparked a political debate as it proposes to celebrate abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and birthday of Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Article 370 of the Constitution, which granted special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, was abrogated on August 5, 2019.

Congress state president Govind Singh Dotasra criticised the BJP-led state government's decision, terming it as a "shameless" move to serve political interests. The secondary education department calendar, Shivira Panchang, also proposes to observe Savarkar's birthday on May 28. "Congress opposes this politicisation of education and imposing its divisive ideology on students," Dotasra said. The calendar, which was released on Sunday, also features Surya Namaskar Diwas on February 4, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti on February 7, Mother's Day-Father's Day on February 14, and Subhas Chandra Bose Diwas, also referred to as Desh Prem



Diwas, on January 23. Earlier, the primary school education department had published its annual calendar on July 9, incorporating the celebration of the Ram temple consecration. After taking charge of the office on February 26, School Education Minister Madan Dilawar had criticised the historical portrayal of figures like Savarkar and Maharana Pratap, arguing that previous narratives unjustly glorified the Mughal emperor Akbar. He had alleged that Savarkar's role in the freedom struggle was wrongly written in history. Congress spokesperson

Swarnim Chaturvedi also condemned the new calendar, saying it is an attempt to politicise education and propagate Hindutva ideology. The school education minister's approach lacks focus on education, instead it is intended towards teaching students about Savarkar, who apologised to the British instead of fighting against them, Chaturvedi alleged. BJP spokesperson Mukesh Pareek defended the calendar and accused the Congress of indulging in appeasement politics. Pareek asserted that the BJP's intention is to educate students about influential

leaders like Savarkar and Maharana Pratap so that they can be inspired by them. "The BJP government will ensure that students take inspiration from the lives and roles of great leaders like Maharana Pratap and Savarkar," he said. The secondary education department calendar also encourages students' participation in school activities. It includes initiatives, such as "No Bag Day" on the second and fourth Saturdays, and celebration of national events, such as Independence Day, Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanti.

Cong to counter BJP-JD(S) foot march over MUDA scam

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister KG Parameshwara on Tuesday said the ruling Congress has planned to organise public meetings to counter the opposition BJP-JD(S)' foot march over the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment scam. The two opposition parties have decided to hold a foot march from Bengaluru to Mysuru from August 3 to 10 in protest against the alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by MUDA, including to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi, and demanding his resignation. Reiterating that the police will not give permission to the foot march, but also won't stop them, the Minister, however, warned action against any activities in violation of law.

Parameshwara, who met Siddaramaiah on Monday night ahead of his Delhi visit today, accused the opposition of indulging in "false propaganda and spreading information that is far from truth." "We (Congress) will also make efforts to inform the people as to what the truth is. We will inform truth to the people a day before they start spreading lies, we will inform the people whether it is in Mandya, Bidadi, Ramanagara, Mysuru -- as to what the truth is by organising meetings (on August 2)." With police permission denied for the foot march, BJP state President B Y Vijayendra on Tuesday said the opposition will not be cowed down. "... If they (govt) try to suppress it, it will reach some level that is unimaginable. This government cannot stop us." Reacting to a question on this,



Parameshwara said: "Let's see what happens. If they threaten the government, is the government weak? Is the Karnataka government so weak? I have said that we will not give them the permission, but we will also not stop them." "It is their right to protest, let them do it, but if anything is done in violation of law, naturally the police will do their duty to protect the law. I'm not saying that they will violate the law. In case such things happen we will do our

we do it? no one will do it unnecessarily." Denying any wrong doing, the Chief Minister has said MUDA had legally allotted 14 residential sites to his wife in lieu of illegally acquiring her land. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout. Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts. BJP leaders have claimed that the MUDA "scam" is of the magnitude of Rs 4,000 crore to Rs 5,000 crore. The Congress government on July 14 constituted a single member inquiry commission under former High Court Judge Justice P N Desai to probe the MUDA 'scam'.

Mamata raps Centre for railway mishaps

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday attacked the Narendra Modi Government for "gifting" Railway accidents "on weekly basis" in the name of development. Hours after 18 coaches of Howrah-Mumbai Mail derailed in Seraikela-Kharsawan district of Jharkhand killing two persons and leaving about 20 injured, Banerjee said railway accidents had become a regular affair adding, the present Government was "producing high sounding nothings in the name of development." In a subsequent post on the X Banerjee wrote, "another disastrous rail accident! Howrah-Mumbai mail derailed in Chakradharpur division in Jharkhand today early morning, multiple deaths and huge number of injuries is the tragic consequences." Banerjee who had before



assuming the Chief Ministership of Bengal in 2011 been the Railway Minister on several occasions said, "I seriously ask: is this governance? This series of nightmares almost every week, this unending procession of deaths and injuries on railway tracks: for how long shall we tolerate this? Will there be no end to the callousness of Government of India?" Another Trinamool Congress and Bengal minister Firhad Hakim too slammed the Centre and the Indian Railways

for investing only in Gujarat and nowhere else. "This is the third or fourth accident in a matter of a few weeks ... whose fault is this ... the people purchase tickets not to die but to reach their destinations safely ... lakhs of posts have been left vacant by the Indian Railways ... more so in the department of safety ... and the people are dying like animals," he said. The BJP was quick to react wondering how many accidents occurred when Banerjee was at the helm of affairs. "I can count half-a-dozen accidents when Mamata Banerjee was the Railway Minister ... there were accidents at Sainthia, Banstala and many other places in which many people died ... whom will the TMC blame for those accidents," asked State BJP leader Pranoy Roy. The Left on the other hand blamed the "anti-people" and "pro-rich" policy of the BJP Government for the recent spate of accidents.

Wayanad-type disasters to recur till Government mends ways: Experts

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A man-made disaster which was waiting to strike Wayanad is the ideal word to describe the mishap that happened on Tuesday. Noted environmentalist Madhav Gadgil who headed the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel that studied the current status of ecology of the Western Ghats of which Wayanad is a part had designated more than 50 per cent of the region as belonging to the Ecologically Sensitive Zone 1 (ESZ-1) which means that the entire district is fragile and vulnerable to any kind of natural disasters. The Kerala Government discarded the suggestions by the Gadgil Committee and turned a blind eye to the massive deforestation, quarrying and mining in Wayanad district. "Cash crops like tea, coffee, rubber and spice cultivation reigned supreme and the political parties that ruled the State gave away vast stretches of reserve forest lands to encroachers from Central Travancore and Northern Districts like Kasaragod and Kannur," said P K Ramachandran, former member of Rubber Board and a botanist of repute. T P Kunhikkannan, economist-turned-environmentalist who has studied the topography of Wayanad from Ground Zero and has authored many books and research papers said that it was a cardinal sin to dis-

tribute the reserve forest lands as patta to encroachers. "The forest area/green cover has depleted beyond recognition and this is seen as the main reason for the landslides that is marauding the nature. Organized religions play havoc with the fragile ecology of Wayanad by peddling lies and half-lies about Gadgil Committee findings," said Kunhikkannan. Both Ramachandran and Kunhikkannan were highly critical of the explosion in Resort Culture in the district. "The resorts that have mushroomed in Wayanad with the blessings of political parties have literally destroyed the district's beautiful landscape," pointed out Kunhikkannan. According to John Peruvanthanam, who has dedicated his life in preserving the environment, said the cutting down of trees and levelling the hills have led to rain water percolating to the empty water pockets underneath the forests. "When the land could not take any more water, these pockets burst with stupendous force thereby causing death and destruction all around," said John. Landslides occur in Kerala's High Ranges on a regular basis. The Kavalappara landslide that claimed more than 100 lives in 2019 and the one in Idukki that saw another hundred being swallowed by the mad flow of flood waters are still fresh in the minds of the people.

FM terms misleading Opp claims of Budget bias

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not take the name of 17 States. I would like to ask the members of the UPA Government at that time — did money not go to those 17 States? Did they stop it?" Sitharaman said. She was responding to comments by several Opposition members that the Budget has provided funds only to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh and nothing to other States. She also said the Government is complying with the fiscal deficit trajectory. It will bring down the deficit to below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26 from the targeted 4.9 per cent for the current fiscal. The deficit was 5.6 per cent in 2023-24. The Budget has provided substantial financial support of ₹17,000 crore to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir this year. It includes ₹12,000 crore towards financing the cost of J&K police. "That's the burden we want to take on our shoulders," Sitharaman said. The Finance Minister said that the government is working to realise its goal of building 'Viksit Bharat' by the year 2047. Sitharaman stressed that the FY25 Budget has not given lesser allocation to any sector compared to FY24 and no state is being denied any money. "Unemployment rate, for the age group of 15-59 years has actually come down for J&K, from 6.4 per cent in 2020-21 to 5.7 per cent in 2021-22 to 4.4 per cent in 2022-23," Sitharaman said. On agriculture the Finance Minister said, "Agriculture had ₹0.30 lakh crore in 2013-14, whereas now it has ₹1.52 lakh crore. It is 8,000 crores more than last year, which is 2023-24. Education and employment had ₹0.85 lakh crore allotted in 2013-14, whereas today it is ₹1.48 lakh crore, 23 per cent more allocation," she highlighted.

Anti-cheating Bill also passed

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future of youngsters desirous of finding employment in Uttar Pradesh." The aim of the Bill is to bring more transparency in the public examination system, bringing impartiality and credibility and assuring youngsters that their efforts will be rewarded in an impartial manner. The student and the competitive examinees will be kept free from criminal responsibility keeping in mind their future, but "decisive and strong action" will be ensured against those guilty. The Bill, once it becomes a law, will come into force from July 15, 2024.

Report blames coaching centre...

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Another student Satyam Singh said, "Our demands are immediate compensation for the family members of the victim from Rau's IAS Study Circle on moral grounds and strict action against those responsible for the safety and security lapse." "Somewhere we had a brief hope that the administration will listen to us, we will be heard, heard by the UPSC coaching lobby, heard by the authority, but after four days we have come to a realisation that this protest is going nowhere," said a woman, who is on a hunger strike. Heavy police deployment has been made in the area to maintain law and order. According to officials, Rau's IAS Study Circle was illegally using the basement of the building as a library. Locals have alleged that the drainage system in the area was heavily clogged with silt.

Wayanad landslides...

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Hospitals in the district and Kozhikode wore pictures of heart-rending scenes as the survivors scanned the dead bodies in search of their dear and near ones who disappeared in the mishap. Chief Minister Vijayan has sought the assistance of the global community of nations for financial aid.

UP Govt passes...

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Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had taken this initiative with the intention of curbing 'love jihad', a term coined by some Hindu outfits for alleged forcible conversion. An ordinance was issued for curbing forced conversion in November 2020 and later, after the bill was passed by both the houses of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature, the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act-2021 came into force.

Commenting on the bill outside Parliament, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said "What else do they have, they are not doing anything new. They are trying to divert the attention of the people through communal politics." The Supreme Court in May this year orally commented that the Uttar Pradesh 'anti-conversion' law in some parts may seem to be violative of the fundamental right to religion guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution.

India to be third...

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Referring to the much-praised PM Package worth Rs 2 lakh crore in this year's budget, he said it will benefit more than 4 crore youth. "PM Package is holistic and comprehensive. It is interlinked with end-to-end solutions. It aims to make India's manpower and products globally competitive in terms of quality and value," he said. Modi also touched upon the Internship scheme introduced to enhance skill and exposure for the youth, thereby boosting their chances of employment, while at the same time incentivizing those generating employment on a large scale, he said. Therefore, he said, the government has announced incentives in EPFO contribution. Observing that the manufacturing ecosystem has transformed in the last 10 years, he said, Make in India and simplification of FDI rules in various sectors along with multi purpose logistics parks, PLI for 14 sectors are some of the measures taken in the past. The Budget has announced plug-and-play investment-ready investment parks for 100 districts of the country, he said, adding, these 100 cities will become new hubs of Viksit Bharat. The prime minister underlined some points in the budget such as increased allocation for nuclear power generation, Digital Public Infrastructure for agriculture, Bhu-Aadhar card for providing number to land parcels of farmers, Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for space economy, Critical

Mineral Mission, and upcoming auction of offshore blocks for mining. These new announcements will open new avenues of progress, he said. Highlighting that opportunities are being created, especially in the sunrise sectors, he said, there is a need to make a name in the semiconductor value chain to play a crucial role in the future and therefore, the government is laying emphasis on promoting the semiconductor industry. He also touched upon encouraging electronics manufacturing, especially during the present era of mobile manufacturing revolution. Noting that the clean energy initiatives in this year's budget are being highly discussed, the prime minister said that in today's era, both energy security and energy transition are equally important for the economy and ecology. "Our industries and entrepreneurs have always shown their commitment to the development of the country," he said expressing confidence that they will play a key role in making India a global player in all the sunrise sectors. Pointing out that the nation is moving forward with the resolutions of Viksit Bharat, he said 25 crore people have risen out of poverty in the last 10 years, and emphasized the government's efforts to increase ease of living and boost quality of life. Modi also drew a comparison with the Budget of the previous government and Budget presented during his government.

3 children killed, 5 injured in UK stabbing

PTI ■ LONDON

A nine-year-old girl died on Tuesday in the "ferocious" stabbing incident in Southport, north-west England, taking the death toll to three after two children – girls aged six and seven – were killed on the spot. Five others continue to fight for their lives as Merseyside Police detectives question a 17-year-old male arrested on suspicion of murder to try and establish the motive behind the attack at a children's dance workshop at Hart Street on Monday. The police force on Tuesday reiterated the incident is "not currently being treated as terror-related and we are not looking for anyone else in connection with it". In its update on the investigation, Merseyside Police said the third child died as a result of injuries sustained in the knife attack in the early hours of this morning. Eight other children suffered stab wounds during the attack, five of whom remain in a "critical condition". Two adults are also in critical condition after



being injured during the incident. "A name has been shared on social media in connection with the suspect in the incident in Southport. This name is incorrect and we would urge people not to speculate on details of the incident while the investigation is ongoing," the police statement said, concerning the suspect who remains in custody. The children, aged between six and 11 years, were attending a summer holiday workshop themed around singer Taylor Swift's music.

"A 17-year-old male from Banks in Lancashire, who was born in Cardiff (Wales), has been arrested on suspicion of murder and attempted murder and has been taken to a police station where he will be interviewed by detectives," Merseyside Police Chief Constable Serena Kennedy told reporters, giving details of what she said was a "ferocious" attack. "It is understood that the children were attending a Taylor Swift event at a dance school when the offender, who was armed with a knife, walked into the premises and started to

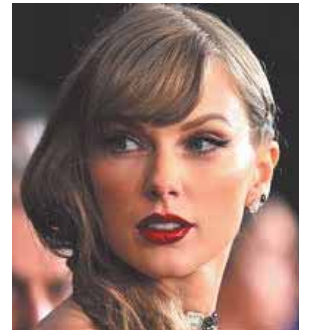
attack those inside. We believe that the adults who were injured were trying to protect the children at the time they were attacked," she said. "As a mum of two daughters, and the nanna of a five-year-old granddaughter, I cannot begin to imagine the pain and suffering the families of the victims are currently going through and I want to send them our heartfelt condolences and sympathies," she added. The royal family, including King Charles, Queen Camilla and the Prince and Princess of Wales, issued statements expressing their shock and sadness at the "utterly horrific" incident. "We send our most heartfelt condolences, prayers and deepest sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who have so tragically lost their lives and to all those affected by this truly appalling attack," reads the King's message. On a personal note, Prince William and Kate Middleton said that as parents they "could not begin to imagine" what the families of the children were going through.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the whole country had been "deeply shocked" by the attack. "I know I speak for everybody in the whole country in saying our thoughts and condolences are with the victims, their families, their friends and the wider community. It's almost impossible to imagine the grief that they're going through and the trauma that they are going through," he said. Opposition Leader Rishi Sunak also expressed his shock over the "horrendous attack" and thanked the emergency services for their response. Singer Taylor Swift has said the knife attack at a dance workshop themed around her music which left three children dead and nine more injured has left her "completely in shock". Posting on Instagram, the star said she was "at a complete loss" for how to convey her sympathies. She said the "horrendous trauma inflicted on everyone who was there" had left her at a "complete loss for how to ever con-

vey my sympathies to these families". Meanwhile, flowers, notes and cards expressing an outpouring of grief have been piling up at the site of the attack, a community centre used regularly by the locals including for mother and child events. The local Labour MP, Patrick Hurley, said the community was waking up in "shock and grief" after the brutal stabbings and that a vigil is planned for Tuesday night in support of the victims and their families and friends, several witnesses described horrific scenes as a knifeman launched the attack, with bleeding children seen on the street as they ran out of the community centre to flee the attacker. Horror-struck and screaming parents were seen rushing about, with locals trying to help the injured children. The dance class is believed to have been fully booked with 25 young children in attendance. A police cordon remains in place around the scene at Hart Street in Southport, a seaside town north of Liverpool – referred to as Merseyside.

Taylor Swift 'in shock'

AP ■ LONDON



British police say a third child has died after a stabbing at a kids' yoga and dance class. The 9-year-old girl died on Tuesday. Two girls aged 6 and 7 previously died following Monday's attack in Southport, northwest England. Five children and two adults are in critical condition in hospitals. A 17-year-old boy has been arrested and is being questioned by police. Police were questioning a suspect and working Tuesday to understand what motivated a 17-year-old boy to attack children at a Taylor Swift-themed dance and yoga class, leaving two dead and six in critical condition. A total of nine children and two adults were hurt in the rampage in Southport in northwest England. Both adults and six of the children were in critical condition in local hospitals. Swift said she was "completely in shock" and still taking in "the horror" of the event. "These were just little kids at

a dance class," she wrote on Instagram. "I am at a complete loss for how to ever convey my sympathies to these families." A 17-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion of murder and attempted murder. Local people left flowers and stuffed animals in tribute at a police cordon on the street lined with brick houses in the seaside resort near Liverpool – nicknamed "sunny Southport" – whose beach and pier attract vacationers from across northwest England. Witnesses described scenes "from a horror movie" as bloodied children ran from the attack just before noon on Monday.



Protesters smash an advertising board during demonstrations against the official election results declaring President Nicolas Maduro's reelection, the day after the vote in Caracas, Venezuela on Monday. AP/PTI

Venezuelan opp says it has proof its candidate defeated Maduro

AP ■ CARACAS

As thousands of people demonstrated across Venezuela, opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez on Monday announced that his campaign has the proof it needs to show he won the country's disputed election whose victory electoral authorities handed to President Nicolas Maduro. Gonzalez and opposition leader Maria Corina Machado told reporters they have obtained more than 70 per cent of tally sheets from Sunday's election, and they show Gonzalez with more than double Maduro's votes. Both called on people, some of whom protested in the hours after Maduro was declared winner, to remain calm and invited them to gather peacefully at 11 am Tuesday to celebrate the results. "I speak to you with the calmness of the truth," Gonzalez said as dozens of supporters cheered outside campaign headquarters in the capital, Caracas. "We have in our hands the tally sheets that

demonstrate our categorical and mathematically irreversible victory." Their announcement came after the National Electoral Council, which is loyal to Maduro's ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela, officially declared him the winner, handing him his third six-year term. In the capital, the protests were mostly peaceful, but when dozens of riot gear-clad national police officers blocked the caravan, a brawl broke. Police used tear gas to disperse the protesters, some of whom threw stones and other objects at officers who had stationed themselves on a main avenue of an upper-class district. A man fired a gun as the protesters moved through the city's financial district. No one suffered a gunshot wound. The demonstrations followed an election that was among the most peaceful in recent memory, reflecting hopes that Venezuela could avoid bloodshed and end 25 years of single-party rule. The winner was to take control of an economy

recovering from collapse and a population desperate for change. "We have never been moved by hatred. On the contrary, we have always been victims of the powerful," Maduro said in a nationally televised ceremony. "An attempt is being made to impose a coup d'état in Venezuela again of a fascist and counterrevolutionary nature." "We already know this movie, and this time, there will be no kind of weakness," he added, saying that Venezuela's "law will be respected." Machado told reporters tally sheets show Maduro and Gonzalez received more than 2.7 million and roughly 6.2 million votes respectively. "A free people is one that is respected, and we are going to fight for our freedom," Gonzalez said. "Dear friends, I understand your indignation, but our response from the democratic sectors is of calmness and firmness." Venezuelans vote using electronic machines, which record votes and provide every voter a paper receipt that shows the candidate of their choice.

Voters are supposed to deposit their receipt at ballot boxes before exiting the polls. After polls close, each machine prints a tally sheet showing the candidates' names and the votes they received. But the ruling party wields tight control over the voting system, both through a loyal five-member electoral council and a network of longtime local party coordinators who get near unrestricted access to voting centres. Those coordinators, some of whom are responsible for handing out government benefits including subsidised food, have blocked representatives of opposition parties from entering voting centres as allowed by law to witness the voting process, vote counting and, crucially, to obtain a copy of the machines' final tally sheet. Electoral authorities had not yet released the tally sheets for each of the 30,000 voting machines as of Monday evening. The electoral body's website was down, and it remained unclear when the tallies would be available.

British Pakistani radical preacher jailed for life

London (PTI): Anjem Choudary, a radical Islamist preacher with dual British and Pakistani nationality, was on Tuesday jailed for life with a minimum term of 28 years behind bars by a UK court for directing a terrorist organisation. Choudary, 57, had been found guilty at Woolwich Crown Court of directing Al-Muhajiroun (ALM) and encouraging support for the proscribed organisation through online meetings. Sentencing him at the same court to a prison term means he would be in his 80s by the time he can seek parole. Justice Mark Wall told Choudary his behaviour was of the "highest culpability." "Organisations such as yours normalise violence in pursuit of an ideological cause. They drive wedges between people who would otherwise live together in peaceful co-existence," said Judge Wall. During a six-week trial which concluded last week, the jury heard how Choudary helped found ALM in 1996 and spent nearly 30 years running its operations under dozens of different names. ALM was first proscribed, or banned, by the UK in 2006 under the name Al Ghuraba. In 2010, ALM was included in the ban as an alternate name. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said Choudary was still acting as its leader as late as July 2023, when he was arrested, making online speeches to a US-based offshoot called Islamic Thinkers Society (ITS). That group was infiltrated by undercover law enforcement officers in the US, who were present at online lectures in 2022 and 2023. The court heard that Choudary said he viewed being called an extremist as a "medal" during lectures. Choudary was released early from a five-year sentence for inviting support for the Islamic State (ISIS) terror group in October 2018 under licence conditions that prevented him from using the internet until July 2021. But within days of the conditions expiring, he began issuing press releases on WhatsApp and Telegram from his home in Ilford, his trial heard. Following a joint investigation by the Metropolitan Police, the New York Police Department, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, he was arrested and charged with terrorism offences.

Harris worse than Biden: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Former president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has called his likely Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, a "worse candidate" than President Joe Biden, who she replaced more than a week ago. "I think she (Harris) is the worst candidate than him (Biden). She is far more radical left," Trump told Fox News host Laura Ingraham in an interview on Monday, his first after Harris, 59, became the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party. Harris officially declared her candidacy after incumbent President Biden withdrew from the race for a second term on July 20. She is expected to be officially declared as the presidential candidate by the Democrats next month. "I thought she was a little younger. I mean, she's 60 years old. I didn't realise she was 60. She's talking a big game. But her game is pretty bad. She was the border czar. She's trying to pretend that she wasn't," Trump said. "She was for defunding the

police. She was for open borders. She was for having anybody come in. Now I notice that they're actually saying they want to have immunity for everybody that came into the country, and they want to have citizenship," Trump alleged, asserting that giving citizenship to everybody would destroy the country. "It's in such bad shape. Our country has never been in a position like this. In addition to which we could end up in a third world war. We have 20 million people that have come into the country. I would say by now 20 (million) is probably going over that number," he said. Trump reiterated his allegations that the Democratic establishment staged a coup against Biden. "They staged a coup against the president of the United States. They went to him and told him 'You are leaving. You are way down in the poll. Seventeen points, I think,'" he said. "It's like you're in a fight with somebody, and you're really winning, and they take him out and they put somebody else in. Nobody ever heard of this before," he added. "This is a coup. They took him.

They said even though you got 14 million votes, you're out. And he said 'I am not going out... They took him out. He was losing badly, so they took him out. He wants something to say. He's sitting there with nothing to do, nobody to talk to. They threw him out. This was a coup, the first one of the president of the United States,' Trump said. Trump also said that while he "probably" will debate Harris, he "could also make a case" to avoid a face-to-face confrontation with her, CNBC News reported. After the interview's broadcast, the Harris for President campaign said Ingraham practically begged Trump on Fox News to commit to debating Harris. "Why won't Donald Trump give a straight answer on debating Vice President Harris? It's clear from tonight's question-dodging: he's scared he'll have to defend his running mate's weird attacks on women or his own calls to end elections in America in a debate against the vice president," said Harris for President spokesperson Ammar Moussa. "Vice President Harris will be on

the debate stage (on) September 10th. Donald Trump can show up, or not," Moussa said. Donald Trump seems to be backing away from his earlier commitment to debate Vice President Kamala Harris, questioning the value of a meetup and saying he "probably" will debate but he "can also make a case for not doing it" – prompting her campaign to say he's "scared." Trump, in an interview with Fox News Channel that aired Monday night, was pressed several times about committing to debating Harris before giving a squishier answer than he had in recent days. The Republican former president had been willing to debate President Joe Biden when Biden was the Democratic nominee after months of suggesting that the president was not mentally up for the matchup – or the presidency. But after Biden dropped out of the race and Harris became poised to be the Democratic presidential candidate, Trump has been questioning the terms of the original debate he agreed to with Biden.

Despite rising tension, Beirut airport remains operational

AP ■ BEIRUT

Fears of an escalation in the simmering conflict between Hezbollah and Israel have prompted some airlines to cancel flights to Lebanon, but business appeared to be proceeding as usual Tuesday at the Beirut airport, where many travellers greeted the warnings with a shrug. Hadi Sharqawi, 24, a Lebanese student in Italy, arrived Tuesday after two days of flight cancellations, to spend a month and a half with his family as he normally does in the summer. He is from the town of Kharayeb, which is in southern Lebanon although relatively far from the border where clashes have been ongoing for 10 months. "As far as the threats, they didn't influence me at all to not come to Lebanon," Sharqawi said. "Even if there are threats, we will still come." Seventy-one-year-old Mohammad Mokhaled, from the southern town of Jarjouh,

who was waiting to pick up his daughter Tuesday, agreed. "We are not scared of the situation, because we are used to this," he said. "We hear airstrikes regularly and the breaking of the sound barrier, and it doesn't affect us." Lebanon is bracing for a retaliatory strike from Israel after a missile hit a soccer field in the town of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-annexed Syrian Golan over the weekend, killing 12 children and adolescents. Israel accused the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah of carrying out the strike, to which Hezbollah issued a rare denial. Even before the deadly incident, rhetoric and fears of a full-blown conflict had been intensifying, but it has had relatively little impact on the summer tourist season, during which tens of thousands of Lebanese working or studying abroad typically come to visit their families, filling up restaurants and beach clubs.

Israel and the Lebanese militant group have traded nearly-daily strikes since the war in Gaza erupted on Oct. 7 following Hamas' surprise attack on southern Israel. The Beirut airport reported that 406,396 passengers arrived in June compared to 427,854 arrivals in the same period in 2023, a decrease of 5 per cent. It also recorded 300,362 departed the country in June, compared to 280,366, an increase of 7 per cent. Amal Ahmadih, 23, was leaving Tuesday to return to Qatar, where she works in a restaurant, after a vacation in Lebanon. Ahmadih said she was leaving as originally scheduled and had not pushed up her flight due to security concerns. "Honestly everyone was telling me that the situation was not good but I wanted to come to see my friends and my family," she said. "Whatever happens, at the end of the day, this is my country."

Taliban disavows many Af diplomatic missions abroad

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

The Taliban on Tuesday disavowed many Afghan diplomatic missions overseas, saying it will not honour passports, visas and other documents issued by diplomats associated with Afghanistan's former Western-backed administration. It's the Taliban's latest attempt to seize control of diplomatic missions since returning to power in 2021. Many Taliban leaders are under sanctions, and no country recognises them as Afghanistan's legitimate rulers. The country's seat at the United Nations is still held by the former government that was led by Ashraf Ghani, but the Taliban wants it. In a statement posted to social media platform X, the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs said documents issued by missions in London, Berlin, Belgium, Bonn, Switzerland, Austria, France, Italy, Greece, Poland, Australia, Sweden, Canada and Norway are no longer accepted and the ministry "bears no responsibility" for those documents. The documents affected include passports, visa stickers, deeds and endorsements. The ministry wrote that people in those countries will need to approach embassies and consulates controlled by the Taliban's Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan government instead. "All Afghan nationals living abroad and foreigners can visit the IEA political and consular missions in other countries, other than the above-mentioned missions, to access consular services," it said. The Taliban did not immediately respond to questions. One Afghan national living in London, Asad Mobariz, expressed disappointment and frustration with the decision. The master's student called it unfair and impractical to expect Afghans in affected countries to travel abroad for consular services. "This decision disregards our needs and places an undue burden on us," he told The Associated Press. "These services are crucial for my ability to travel, work and maintain my legal status in the UK." The decision would create immense hardship for the Afghan population in Europe and lead to increased financial strain and potential legal issues for those unable to access consular services locally, he said.

Another Afghan national, Adnan Najibi, who lives in Germany, said discrediting embassies was unlikely to benefit the Taliban. "I live in a small town with a relatively low population; however, I still see that there are hundreds of Afghans living here," Najibi said. "If someone previously obtained an Afghan passport, marriage certificate or any other document in a day, it may now take weeks or even longer." In March 2023, the Taliban said they were trying to take charge of more Afghan embassies abroad. Their chief spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the administration had sent diplomats to at least 14 countries. The new developments mean the closest available Afghan embassies are likely to be in Spain and the

Netherlands. In October, they stressed that they were working with Taliban authorities in Kabul after the Taliban suspended consular services at the embassies in London and Vienna over their "lack of transparency and cooperation." Some countries retain an active diplomatic mission in Afghanistan, including Pakistan and China. Also on Tuesday, the UN mission in Afghanistan said local intelligence officials in May forcibly closed the office of a women-led nongovernmental group for allowing some of its female employees to physically report to work. The NGO was allowed to reopen days later after signing a letter saying it would not allow women employees to come to the office, according to the mission's latest report on

Taiwan president urges democracies to unite at gathering of foreign lawmakers

AP ■ TAIPEI/TAIWAN

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te welcomed what he called the "largest-ever" delegation of foreign lawmakers to Taiwan and said Tuesday it showed the importance of democracies uniting, even as Beijing pressured members of the delegation not to visit. "This demonstrates the support and the value various other countries place on Taiwan," Lai said. "It also sends an important message to democratic countries around the world. Maintaining democracy requires unity, and we must protect democracy together." Lai made his remarks at a conference in Taipei held by the

Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC), a group of hundreds of lawmakers from dozens of countries concerned about how democracies approach Beijing. Beijing views the self-governed island democracy of Taiwan as part of its territory and has been upping its threats to annex it by force if necessary. Lai's party, the Democratic Progressive Party, doesn't seek independence from China because he believes that Taiwan is already a sovereign nation. Beijing sees Lai as a separatist and refuses to speak with him. China has ramped up pressure against the island since Lai took office in May, sending large and planes on a large

military drill to show displeasure at his inauguration. That comes after years of Beijing's pressure on Taiwan – which has been ruled by the DPP for three terms now – on diplomatic, military and economic fronts. Lai said at the conference that Taiwan would work with other democracies to protect democracy from "the threat of authoritarian expansionism." "China's threat to any country is a threat to the whole world," Lai told attendees. China "uses diplomatic kidnapping, economic coercion, internet attacks, and spreading false and fake things to continuously muddle matters and seek to undermine regional peace and stability."

Sensex, Nifty rise for 3rd day on gains by Tata Motors, HDFC Bank

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty eked out gains in volatile trade to settle at record high levels on Tuesday, extending their gaining streak to the third day on the back of buying in Tata Motors and HDFC Bank.

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 99.56 points or 0.12 per cent at 81,455.40 - its all-time closing high -- with 16 of its components advancing and 14 ending lower. The index opened higher and jumped 459.43 points or 0.56 per cent to hit an intra-day high of 81,815.27. The NSE Nifty edged up 21.20 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,857.30. During the day, it surged 135.65 points or 0.54 per cent to 24,971.75. The index hit a low of 24,798.65.

"The domestic market ended flat, due to by-profit-booking at higher levels. However, the expectation of dovish comments from the US Fed and BoE in the upcoming policy meetings this week is



supporting the optimism," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Despite heavy volatility, the combined market valuation of all BSE-listed companies hit the USD 5.50-trillion (Rs 460 lakh crore) milestone for the first time.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Motors, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv, Power Grid Corp, Titan, Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank, Maruti Suzuki India and Tata Steel were among the biggest gainers.

Sun Pharmaceuticals, ITC,

FMCG, healthcare, IT and Teck were the laggards.

CAMS shares closed over 9 per cent higher at Rs 4,692.20 per piece ahead of June quarter results that are scheduled to be released this Friday. On Tuesday, shares of Tata Motors closed higher by 3 per cent on the BSE. During the day, it advanced 4.9 per cent to hit its 52-week high of Rs 1,179.05 apiece. The company's market valuation jumped by Rs 12,843.07 crore to Rs 3,86,408.44 crore.

Also, shares of transmission and distribution structure manufacturing company Skipper settled over 9 per cent higher at Rs 403.75 apiece after the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 32.42 crore in Q1 FY25.

NTPC, Power Grid, Strides Pharma Science and Colgate-Palmolive shares also hit 52-week highs on the bourse.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the negative territory. European markets were trading on a mixed note. The US markets closed higher on Monday.

India's gold demand dips 5% to 149.7 tonnes in June quarter on high prices, says WGC

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's gold demand declined 5 per cent to 149.7 tonnes during the June quarter, due to record high prices, the World Gold Council (WGC) said in a report on Tuesday.

The gold demand stood at 158.1 tonnes during the corresponding quarter of the previous calendar year, WGC's 'Q2 2024 Gold Demand Trends' report said.

However, in value terms, gold demand increased 17 per cent during the second quarter at Rs 93,850 crore, compared to Rs 82,530 crore in the same period of the previous year.

Prices during the April-June quarter soared, with the cost of 24-carat gold crossing Rs 74,000 per 10 grams.

The average price of gold during the April-June period in US dollar terms was USD 2,338.2, compared to USD 1,975.9 in the same period of 2023. The average quarterly price in rupee terms was Rs 62,700.5, compared to Rs 52,191.6 in the same period last year (excluding import duty and GST), WGC said.

"India's gold demand softened slightly in the second quarter of 2024,



reaching 149.7 tonnes, down 5 per cent year-on-year. This can be attributed to record-high gold prices impacting affordability and causing a slowdown in consumer purchases. However, the overall value of demand remained strong, increasing by 14 per cent, highlighting gold's enduring value for Indian consumers," said Sachin Jain, WGC Regional CEO, India.

Further, the report said the total jewellery demand in India declined 17 per cent to 106.5 tonnes during the quarter compared to 128.6 tonnes in the corresponding period of the last year.

Total investment demand increased 46 per cent in the second quarter at 43.1 tonnes

in comparison to 29.5 tonnes in the same period of last year, said the report.

The WGC report further stated that recycled gold in India during the quarter under review dipped 39 per cent to 23 tonnes, compared to 37.6 tonnes in Q2 2023.

Total gold imports in India during the April-June quarter were 196.9 tonnes, which is 8 per cent more compared to 182.3 tonnes in the same period of last year.

Jain said jewellery demand felt the pressure of high prices, declining 17 per cent to 107 tonnes due to high local prices, the general election and a severe heatwave.

"While festivals like Akshaya Tritiya and Gudi Padwa

provided a temporary boost, record high prices continued to dampen consumer sentiment," he added.

However, he said, investment demand surged 46 per cent to 43.1 tonnes, its highest second-quarter level since 2014 driven by expectations of further price appreciation and safe-haven buying.

Bucking global trends, India's gold recycling fell 39 per cent to 23 tonnes, as consumers opted to exchange old jewellery for new rather than cashing in. This indicates limited distress selling and highlights gold's enduring role as a store of value in India, he noted.

"Looking ahead, the recent 9 per cent reduction in import duty on gold is expected to revive the gold demand in the July quarter ahead of the main festive season that begins from September, which could be further boosted by a healthy monsoon. India's economic outlook too remains positive, with strong GDP forecasts and rural sector recovery are all likely to support demand in the second half of the year. Our forecast for full-year demand is between 700 to 750 tonnes," Jain added.

Indian Bank eyes recovery of ₹7,000 crore this financial year: MD & CEO

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Public sector Indian Bank has targeted to recover about Rs 7,000 crore during the current financial year, a top official said on Tuesday.

The bank has also received the approval from the Reserve Bank of India and shareholders to raise Rs 5,000 crore which would be decided at an opportune time, the bank's Managing Director and CEO Shanti Lal Jain said here.

The city-headquartered Indian Bank has reported a 41 per cent jump in its net profit to Rs 2,403 crore for the April-June 2024 quarter due to a decline in bad loans. It had earned a net profit of Rs 1,709 crore in the corresponding quarter of last year.

"Last time, we recovered about Rs 8,700-Rs 8,800 crore. But what happens is slowly, this number may come down and this time we have planned that we will be making a recovery of around Rs 7,000 crore," Jain told reporters.

Elaborating, he said recovery of Rs 7,000 crore for a financial year comes to Rs 1,750 per quarter and the bank in April-June 2024 quarter recovered Rs 1,937 crore. He said the recovery

would be more than the slippages during the current financial year.

According to bank officials, the slippage ratio contained to 1.50 per cent in June 2024 as compared to 1.57 per cent in June 2023.

On fund raising, Jain said the bank's capital adequacy is 16.47 per cent and with the net profit of Rs 2,403 crore for the April-June 2024 quarter has been added, the capital adequacy ratio is 17.08 per cent. "Point is, the bank is adequately capitalised. Basically, the bank is able to take care of capital needs. We have Board of Directors approval. Shareholders approval to raise Rs 5,000 crore through equity and Rs 2,000 crore through Tier II Bonds and Rs 5,000 crore of infra bonds during this financial year," he said.

"That approval is with us and at the opportune time within the financial year we will take a call on this," he said.

To a query on how much the bank was looking to recover through ARC, he said last year the bank made about Rs 464 crore and this financial year also it would be around Rs 400 crore of recovery.

To another query, he said the bank opened about 77

branches last year and this year they have planned to open 100 branches.

Jain said the bank was focused on delivering value-added and suitable solutions with the smart use of technology to customers "Through a combination of cutting-edge technology and personalised service, we aim to simplify banking, making it more accessible, convenient and secure" he said.

He said the bank has launched its omni-channel banking application INDSMART — which offers a wide range of services including banking services and e-shopping facilities to customers. This application has several features like integrated bill payment, e-shopping, business planner providing a seamless and enriched experience for customers, he said.

Customers would also be able to avail loan facilities or open fixed deposits and savings accounts through the application, he said.

Indian Bank made a business of Rs 36,678 crore through digital channels in April-June 2024 quarter. Mobile banking users grew by 33 per cent year over year reaching 1.75 crore customers.

Paytm sees no impact of lowering of UPI incentives on its path to profitability

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fintech firm One97 Communications, which owns Paytm brand, sees no impact of lower incentives earmarked by the government in the budget for promoting small ticket digital transactions, a top official of the company said.

Speaking on the sidelines of launching "Card NFC Soundbox" machine, Paytm CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma denied any impact of lower allocation of incentives to promote small ticket digital transactions on his guidance over profitability this fiscal year.

"We remain committed to doing the same (achieve a profitable quarter in this fiscal) because we already said without UPI incentive," Sharma said.

The government has lowered incentive allocation for Rupy and UPI transactions by about 42 per cent in the budget.

Sharma during the company's earnings call had given guidance to achieve a profitable quarter during the current fiscal.

"My team and we are also committed to making sure that we go back to profitable



quarters very, very soon. We are hoping and working on making sure that we deliver at least one profitable quarter in this financial year as soon as we are able to see a lot more clarity coming our way" Sharma had said.

Paytm had reported widening of loss to Rs 840 crore in the quarter ended June 30, 2024. The company had posted a loss of Rs 358.4 crore in the same period a year ago.

Consolidated revenue declined 33.48 per cent to Rs 1,639.1 crore during the quarter, from Rs 2,464.2 crore in the same period a year ago.

While discussing Paytm's Card NFC Soundbox, which clubs card-based payment along with QR code-based payments, Sharma said the new device covers a very niche segment and is in line with the company's intent to cover every use case in the payment segment.

Check for 'wilful default' in NPA accounts exceeding ₹25 lakh, RBI urges banks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Tuesday issued a Master Direction on the Treatment of Wilful Defaulters and Large Defaulters under which banks and NBFCs will have to examine the 'wilful default' aspect in all non-performing asset accounts with outstanding amounts of Rs 25 lakh and above.

A lender will identify and classify a person as a 'wilful defaulter' by following a specified procedure. The evidence of wilful default will be examined by an identification committee, according to the direction.

"Wilful defaulter" means a borrower or a guarantor who has committed wilful default, and the outstanding amount is Rs 25 lakh and above.

"The lender shall examine the 'wilful default' aspect in all NPA accounts with an outstanding amount of Rs 25 lakh and above...From time to time," it said.

If a wilful default is observed in the internal preliminary screening, the lenders will complete the process of classification/declaring the borrower as a wilful defaulter within six months of the account being classified as



NPA.

The Master Direction further said the lenders should formulate a non-discriminatory board-approved policy that clearly sets out the criteria based on which the photographs of persons classified and declared as wilful defaulters shall be published.

"No additional credit facility shall be granted by any lender to a wilful defaulter or any entity with which a wilful defaulter is associated," it added.

The bar on the additional credit facility to a wilful defaulter or any entity with which a wilful defaulter is associated would be effective for one year after the name of the wilful defaulter has been

removed from the List of Wilful Defaulters (LWD) by the lender.

The RBI said the primary objective of the directions is to provide for a non-discriminatory and transparent procedure, having regard to the principles of natural justice, for classifying a borrower as a wilful defaulter by the lenders.

The directions also aim to put in place a system to disseminate credit information about wilful defaulters for cautioning lenders to ensure that further institutional finance is not made available to them, the Reserve Bank said.

These directions will be effective after 90 days.

Sebi returns IPO documents of Vishal Mega Mart, Avanse Financial Services, 2 others

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has returned the IPO draft documents of four firms, including supermarket major Vishal Mega Mart, education-focused NBFC Avanse Financial Services and private equity major TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences, an update with the regulator showed on Tuesday.

Additionally, the offer document of BMW Ventures was returned too. The company's initial public offering (IPO) papers were received by Sebi on July 1.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has returned the offer documents of these four companies for "non-compliance with Regulation 7(1) (a) of Sebi ICDR Regulations, 2018, as on July 24, 2024".

According to the Regulation 7(1) (a) of Sebi ICDR Regulations, an issuer making an initial public offer shall ensure that it has made an application to one or more stock exchanges to seek an in-principle approval for listing of its specified securities on such stock exchanges and has chosen one of them as the designated stock exchange.

Vishal Mega Mart, on July 12, took the confidential filing route to submit its draft papers with the markets regulator.

Avanse Financial Services



filed its draft papers in June to raise Rs 3,500 crore through IPO. The proposed initial share sale comprised a fresh issue of equity shares of up to Rs 1,000 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to Rs 2,500 crore by the selling shareholders, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

The company, promoted by Olive Vine Investment Ltd, an affiliate of private equity major Warburg Pincus, proposed to use the funds to increase its capital base for future needs.

Sai Life Sciences' proposed IPO consisted of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an OFS of 6.15 crore shares by a promoter, investor shareholders and other shareholders, as per the draft papers.

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

Construction firms in India adopting digital tech to optimise internal processes: Study

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Construction companies in India are increasingly adopting digital technologies to assist project delivery, optimise internal processes and overcome the impact of industry challenges such as growing raw material costs and labour costs, a study has said.

Indian companies are exploring a range of newer technologies aiding all the facets of the business including data analytics, construction wearables, prefabrication and modular construction (57 per cent), as well as the integration of cloud software and mobile applications to streamline and manage projects efficiently, it said.

Autodesk, Inc recently announced the launch of the second edition of its State of Digital Adoption in the Construction Industry 2024 report in collaboration with Deloitte.

The report is based on insights from 933 construction firms across six markets including Singapore, Australia, Japan, India, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Businesses were asked about their use of 16 digital technologies, and the number of technologies that were indicated in use counted. The average number of technologies in use was 5.3, with responses covering the whole range from 0 to 16.



Indian companies surpassed their counterparts from markets such as Australia, Japan, and Singapore in terms of investments in newer technologies with 28 per cent of their business expenditure on average being directed towards integrating newer technologies.

Further, robotics and automated systems were identified as the technology most planned for by Indian businesses followed by augmented and virtual reality and artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML).

"While challenges like increasing prices of raw materials and growing competition persist in the Indian market, its current strong economic state and steady outlook for the forthcoming years, as reported by the IMF, have provided a congenial

atmosphere for businesses to evaluate and adopt newer technologies, and consequently lead the Asia Pacific market in terms of investments in transformational technologies.

"Indian businesses have aptly recognized this phase as the ideal time to leverage digital technologies to identify newer growth pockets, usher in efficiencies throughout project lifecycles and give them a competitive edge," said Sumit Oberoi, Senior Industry Strategist, Asia Pacific at Autodesk.

"Priority areas for construction businesses to improve digital adoption include starting small, selecting a digital champion, tracking a range of success measures, and asking whether your business is AI ready," he added.

Premier Energies, PN Gadgil Jewellers, 2 others get Sebi's go-ahead to float IPOs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four companies, including Premier Energies Ltd and P N Gadgil Jewellers Ltd, have received Sebi's go-ahead to raise funds through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), an update with the markets regulator showed on Tuesday.

The other two firms that obtained the regulator's clearance to float initial share sales are -- Ecos India Mobility and Hospitality Ltd and KRN Heat Exchanger and Refrigeration Ltd.

The four companies, which filed their preliminary IPO papers between March and April, obtained Sebi's observation letters during July 22-26.

In Sebi's parlance, obtaining the observation letters means it's going ahead to float the public issue.

According to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP), solar cell company Premier Energies' proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 1,500 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 2.82 crore shares by a promoter and investors.

Under the OFS component, South Asia Growth Fund II Holdings LLC will divest 2.38 crore equity shares, South Asia EBT Trust will divest 1.53 lakh equity shares, and promoter Chiranjeev Singh Saluja will sell 42 lakh equity shares.



Proceeds from the fresh issue of Rs 1,168 crore will be used for investing in subsidiary Premier Energies Global Environment Private Ltd, to partially finance the establishment of a 4GW solar PV TOPCon (tunnel oxide passivated contact) cell and 4GW solar PV TOPCon module manufacturing facility in Hyderabad, and the remainder will be allocated towards general corporate purposes.

The Rs 1,100-crore IPO of jewellery retail chain P N Gadgil Jewellers Ltd is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth up to Rs 850 crore and an OFS of equity shares to the tune of Rs 250 crore by a promoter SVG Business Trust, according to the draft prospectus.

Of the IPO proceeds of Rs 850 crore, a total of Rs 387 crore will be utilised for the funding of expenditure towards setting up 12 new stores in Maharashtra, Rs

300 crore for payment of a debt, besides a portion will also be used for general corporate purposes.

Chauffeur-driven mobility provider Ecos (India) Mobility & Hospitality Ltd's maiden public issue is entirely an OFS of 1.8 crore equity shares by promoters - Rajesh Loomba and Aditya Loomba - with no fresh issue component.

At present, promoters and promoter group entities hold a 100 per cent stake in the company.

Since it is an OFS, the Delhi-based firm will not receive any proceeds from the IPO and the money will go to the promoters selling shares.

KRN Heat Exchanger's initial paper was filed in January 2024 comprising entirely a fresh issue of 1.93 crore equity shares with no OFS component. Later, the company filed updated papers in late March with revised issue size.

Going by the draft papers filed in March, the company's proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of size of 1.6 crore equity shares.

Funds will be used for investment in wholly-owned subsidiary KRN HVAC Products for setting up a new manufacturing facility at Neamrana, Alwar, in Rajasthan.

All the four companies will be listed on the BSE and NSE.

MANU CLINCHES HISTORIC SECOND OLYMPIC MEDAL

WINS 10M AIR PISTOL MIXED TEAM BRONZE WITH SARABJOT

PTI ■ CHATEAURoux (FRANCE)

A calm and composed Manu Bhaker scripted history to become the first Indian athlete in post-independence era to win two Olympic medals in a single edition of the Games as she combined with an equally unruffled Sarabjot Singh to clinch the 10m air pistol mixed team bronze here on Tuesday.

The Indian pair defeated the Korean duo of Lee Wonoh and Oh Yeh Jin 16-10 to earn the country its second medal at Chateauroux's shooting range.

The 22-year-old Bhaker had earlier snared the women's 10m air pistol bronze medal at the same venue on Sunday, wiping off the memories of a horrendous Olympic debut in Tokyo 2020 where her pistol malfunctioned leaving her in tears.

Before her, British-Indian athlete Norman Pritchard had won two silver medals in 200m sprint and 200m hurdles at the 1900 Olympics but that achievement had come in the pre-Independence era.

While it is a massive achievement for women's sport in the country, Tuesday's medal is also redemption for Sarabjot, who had failed to make the men's 10m air pistol final, finishing ninth on Saturday with a score of 577.

"I'm feeling really proud and there is a lot of gratitude, thanks for all the blessings" said Bhaker after the match, which the two young Indians played with remarkable poise to make it a one-sided contest.

"Actually we can't control (what the rivals will do), we can do what is in our hand, me and my partner thought let's just try our best and we will keep fighting till the end," added the shooter from Jhajjar in Haryana.

In Tokyo, she could not even qualify for this event alongside Saurabh Chaudhary and had finished seventh.

Ambala shooter Sarabjot, who passed through a difficult phase trying to come to terms with the disappointment of the



individual competition just three days back, said he was under a lot of pressure to perform. "I'm feeling good, the game was very tough and there was a lot of pressure, I

am very happy," said the 22-year-old Sarabjot, who comes from a farming family. The Indians started on the wrong foot with Sarabjot's opening shot fetching a

poor 8.6, while Bhaker shot 10.2 for an aggregate of 18.8. The Koreans aggregated 20.5 to take the opening round and open a 2-0 lead.

In mixed team events, the pair that reaches 16 points first wins the medal.

Down 0-2, Bhaker's consistency came to the fore and it rubbed off on Sarabjot as the pair took the next four rounds to take their tally to 8-2.

Such was her level of confidence that Bhaker had just three shots below 10 in the entire contest which lasted 13 rounds.

It was an uphill task for the Koreans who succumbed to pressure and could not match their rivals losing 16-10.

IT'S ALL ABOUT KEEPING IT STEADY: Bhaker said the high-speed and high-precision sport requires a steady mind.

"We don't need to be in a hurry, just relax and breath. Shooting is the kind of sport where it's all about nerves, your heart beats heavily, we can't move, we have to stand at one place," she explained. "Actually we can't control everything. So, I just looked to get my best out, gave all our energy in all the shots, just didn't give up and kept trying hard in every shot," she said.

Sarabjot said he has been trying hard to forget the disappointment of his individual performance.

"It was in my mind that I should just forget the last shot and focus on new one and give my best now. I can't express what I feel when I see India winning a medal." Bhaker will next be seen in action in the 25m women's pistol qualification on August 2 and has a good chance of making the finals.

She had won gold medals in this event at the 2023 World Championships and the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games.

The prodigal talent's long list of honours also includes nine World Cup gold medals across events.

Sarabjot is also a World Championship, World Cup and Asian Games gold-medallist.



Manika becomes first Indian TT player to reach pre-quarterfinals

PTI ■ PARIS

Manika Batra made history by becoming the first Indian table tennis player to reach the singles pre-quarterfinals at the Olympic Games with a fluent 4-0 win over world number 18 and home favourite Prithika Pavade here on Monday.

The 29-year-old Manika dominated from start to finish for a 11-9 11-6 11-9 11-7 win over Prithika, who has Indian roots. It turned out to be one of the most memorable matches for an Indian table tennis player in Olympics history.

Manika had reached the round of 32 at the Tokyo Olympics and she bettered that performance on Monday. "I am happy that I beat a French player in Paris. I defeated a higher-ranked player. I did not think of creating history and making the pre-quarters, there are more rounds, I will take it match by match and give my best as I always do," Manika told PTI after her match.

Manika's ploy to attack Prithika's backhand proved very effective but that was not the strategy she had devised before the match.

"I had planned to play to her forehand as discussed with my coach but I was getting the

points on her backhand, so I did not change the tactics. I did play a few shot on her forehand too, I did not want her to think that I am playing only on her backhand.

"It was a tough match. Staying relaxed helps me both on and off the court. I do breathing exercises that help me during the match. I will give my best whoever I play against in the next round," she said.

Prithika's parents are originally from Puducherry but the family shifted to France in 2003. She was born in a Paris suburb a year later.

The 19-year-old Prithika had competed in the Tokyo Olympics, making a first-round exit but has improved considerably since then as she is currently ranked 18th in the world as against 28th rank of Manika.

Left-handed Prithika came into the Olympics on the back of a splendid run where she made the WTT final for the first time in her career in June but could not find a way to go past Manika, who dished out a commanding show.

The first game was a tight affair with both players going neck and neck. At 8-8, Manika induced a backhand error from her young rival and closed the game with a ferocious forehand drive that

Prithika could not return. Manika carried the momentum in the second game, taking a 3-1 lead.

Prithika fought back to level the scores, inducing errors from the Indian. However, Manika's attack on Prithika's backhand got her points consistently. In no time, she was leading 9-6. Consecutive backhand errors from Prithika handed Manika the second game.

There was no stopping the seasoned Indian, who got a healthy 3-0 cushion in game three as Prithika struggled with her returns.

A desperate Prithika went all out and got her first point with a thumping forehand winner. With a 5-1 lead in hand, Manika kept attacking the backhand side of the French player, making it 8-4.

Trailing 5-10, Prithika made it a contest by taking four points in a row but Manika needed just one more to close the game. The home favourite netted a backhand drive to concede the game and a 3-0 lead to the Indian.

A ferocious forehand gave Manika a 10-5 lead in the fourth game and five match points. She converted the third when Prithika netted her backhand to win the match in 37 minutes.

Boxing champion Usyk comes to Paris to support Ukrainian athletes

AP ■ PARIS

Heavyweight boxing champion Oleksandr Usyk has come to Paris to support Ukrainian athletes at the Olympics amid war at home.

On Monday, he visited the Ukrainian House in Paris and from there he watched the fencing competition in which Ukrainian Olga Kharlan won the bronze medal in women's individual saber, marking the first medal for Ukraine at the 2024 Olympics.

"My personal wish was, and I probably knew, that Olga is one of those people who would bring a medal for Ukraine," Usyk told the Associated Press minutes after Ukrainian fencer won the medal.

Usyk expressed hope that there would be more medals as the competitions continue. He emphasized that the presence of the Ukrainian team is significant, considering the



daily missile strikes, damaged sports infrastructure, and Russian occupation of regions that were home to many athletes.

"We are at war. But our athletes still came," he said. "They are fighting."

On both of his arms, he has tattoos of the Olympic rings. One of them is labeled "London 2012," where he won the gold medal in the heavyweight category. "We support all our Olympians

who are here in Paris representing our country," he said. "The more awards for us, the better."

One of Ukraine's most prominent athletes is the boxer Oleksandr Khyzhniak, who lost his gold-medal final in Tokyo and is now back to fight for it again at the 2024 Olympics.

"He has unfinished business that he has set for himself, which is the Olympic gold," Usyk said.

Talent-rich US men's basketball team still figuring out how to get most out of its roster

AP ■ VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ (FRANCE)

The question was apt, but at the same time a little flabbergasting for Stephen Curry to ponder.

Could he envision a scenario in which Kevin Durant, who shined in the U.S. men's basketball team's Olympic-opening victory over Serbia, might continue to come off the bench?

"We're talking about Kevin Durant as a sixth man," Curry replied. "That tells you how good this team can be."

Highlights were plentiful for the U.S. In the Serbia win, LeBron James awed with his signature one-handed dunks and celebratory flexes. Durant had a nearly perfect shooting night in his first official basketball game in two months because of a calf strain.

And everybody - who played that is - scored.

That's because just as eye-popping was that Jayson Tatum - the newly minted highest-paid player in the NBA - and Tyrese Haliburton, who recently signed franchise record contract himself, didn't see the court. It illustrates the embarrassment of riches that exists for a team that says it's



still figuring out how best to utilize its talent. "We're still trying to build identity around who we are with this 12-man group," Curry said. "It's important to stay focused on not just getting a win, but how we do it."

Coach Steve Kerr said aside from it being almost impossible to give sufficient minutes to 12 players in a 40-

minute game, the idea of sitting Tatum in particular struck him as just as unfathomable.

"It seems crazy. I thought I was crazy when I looked at everything and determined these are the lineups I wanted to get to. Jayson's first team All-NBA three years in a row. He's one of the best players in the world."

So good that Kerr said on Monday that Tatum will play when the team plays South Sudan on Wednesday.

Complicating Kerr's decision-making going forward is that Durant's contributions off the bench continued a trend that started during the exhibition portion of the leadup to the Olympics, in which the reserves have provided needed jolts for a team prone to slow starts and turnovers. The turnover total was 17 against Serbia.

And that, too, is the result of trying to find the proper rotations on a roster layered with skill.

Curry even acknowledged being nervous before making his Olympic team debut. It showed at times when he was beaten on a couple of back cuts on defense and had another turnover on an inbounds pass.

But he also thinks the answer to fixing those issues is not getting in their heads about it.

"It's just a matter of everybody being ready to do what you're asked to do, because every game is going to be a little different," Curry said. "You can pick any five of us 12 and it's a Hall of Fame lineup out there."

Chinese women beat reigning champions United States in volleyball

AP ■ PARIS

The U.S. Women's volleyball team had a bad enough start in its Olympic title defense. It managed to keep it from turning into a disaster.

The Americans lost the first two sets to China on Monday in a pool play format where total points and sets won can become playoff tiebreakers. So China's eventual five-set victory - both teams scored the same number of points - left the reigning champions with a sense of relief.

"I'm really proud of our fight. You know, it's not easy to go from being down 0-2 to fight neck-and-neck in the fifth like that," setter Jordyn Poulter said. "You either win or you learn. So we have a lot of that we can learn from here, a lot that we can improve and get better at, and we don't want to peak too early."

They definitely didn't have to worry about that.

"We obviously didn't have the start that we wanted, but the third, fourth and fifth were really promising," blocker Haleigh Washington said.

"Going five with a team like China is incredible, and squeezing out any point we can get in the pool is going to be really important for us. And so I'm just happy the way that we just fought."

The American women will play their second match of the preliminary round on Wednesday against Serbia, and then meet host France on Sunday in the pool play finale. The top two teams in each of the three pools and the top two third-place teams will advance to the knockout round, with wins, total points and set and point ratio used as tiebreakers.

"It just highlights how thin the margins are and how we have to take care of some of these little plays," coach Karch Kiraly said. "And I want to give our team a huge amount of credit

for fighting back. It is not easy to come back from down 2-0 against a really good China team."

The Americans only lost one match in pool play in Tokyo and did not lose a set in the knockout stage en route to their first-ever gold medal. With eight holdovers from the 2021 champions, they arrived in Paris as the fifth-ranked team in the world.

But sixth-ranked China won the first two sets handily, 25-20 and 25-19, before the Americans came back to win the third 25-17 and rallied from a 13-10 deficit to tie it 13-13 on a challenged ball that barely caught the Chinese end line.

For the first time, the crowd was engaged and chanting "U-S-A!" and at 17-14, China took a timeout to regroup. It was 21-20 for the Americans when they ran off the last four points, getting an ace from Washington to set up point.



On the winner, Washington's dig set up Andrew Drews' spike.

But China again took the lead in the tiebreaker. The Americans staved off two match points before Zhu Ting's spike went off blocker Andrea Drews for the victory.

Japan's Yuto wins second gold medal in men's street skateboarding Paris, Jul 30 (AP) Yuto Horigome was not even thinking about the podium this time. The first men's street skateboarding champion when the sport debuted in the

Olympics in 2021, he was so far back going into his final try that it looked as if he would fall short.

Instead, the 25-year-old from Japan landed the best trick of the competition to pass Americans Jagger Eaton and Niyjah Huston for a repeat title. Horigome scored a 97.08 on Monday to vault into first and secure back-to-back gold medals. He beat Eaton by just 0.1 points in a thrilling finish in front of a charged-up crowd that was much different than the empty stands in Tokyo three years ago.

"It means everything," Horigome said. "It feels like a dream, a living dream. It's crazy. Tokyo, no one was there, no crowds, so I'm very happy this time (with) all the fans here. It's a special moment." Eaton and Huston each sat in first place during the final. Eaton was in gold medal position until Horigome finished a trick known as a

nollie 270 to nosebluntside - similar to the one the Arizona native did minutes earlier to get into that spot.

"The roller coaster I was I thought I won, and then I got off the ride," Eaton said. "Yuto, it's all respect. I feel like at that level, between first, second and third, you could've picked anybody to win."

Huston said of Horigome: "I don't think Yuto feels fear or pressure. He definitely doesn't feel pressure." As for how the 29-year-old longtime X Games star was feeling, it was mixed emotions after a disappointing seventh-place finish in Tokyo. With Snoop Dogg - who has quickly become one of the celebrity faces of this Games - in attendance, Huston nailed his second run with the Snoop and Dr. Dre's "Still D.R.E." playing on speakers around La Concorde Urban Park.

But then came the end, when he and Eaton had one final

chance to springboard Horigome and claim gold. Each wiped out in the final two jumps of the day.

"I was close to getting that gold, and I'm truly mad at myself for just not putting that last trick down because I know it's something I can do," Huston said, acknowledging a bit of redemption. "But it's hard to put down those tricks in those moments."

It was even harder because of the elite level of skateboarding going on, even among those who finished lower in the final. Canada's Cornado Russell, who had three tricks scored over 92 but was out of medal condition because of two unsuccessful runs, had some high praise for what this street event represented for the sport.

"It's the future," Russell said. "It's the future of skateboarding. This is one of the best ones. There's many more to come."

US men's soccer team close to reaching knockouts of Olympics for first time since 2000

AP ■ SAINT-ETIENNE (FRANCE)

The United States men's soccer team is closing in on qualification to the knockout phase of the Olympics for the first time since Sydney 2000. Argentina is back in control of its destiny after its first game was marred by violence and chaos - and a shock defeat to Morocco. The group stage of the men's soccer tournament at the Paris Games concludes on Tuesday and with only Spain and Japan guaranteed their place in the quarterfinals tensions are likely to be high as a host of nations battle for a place in the final eight. The U.S. is competing in its first Olympics since Beijing 2008 and the 4-1 win against New Zealand last week has put it in a strong position to advance. "I said, even before coming here, when people ask me what they can expect from us, I said one thing: I promise that this group is going to give everything on the field and where that's going to take us, I don't know. But I know that they're going to give everything," U.S. Coach Marko Mitrovic said.

The Americans face Guinea at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard in Saint-Etienne after the win against New Zealand saw Mitrovic's team bounce back from an opening 3-0 loss to France in Group A. The U.S. is in second place, level with New Zealand on three points, but ahead on goal difference. France, which is top on six points, plays New Zealand in its final match and is expected to secure the win or draw needed to be certain to advance. There is the potential that three teams could be tied on either six or three points, depending on results in the final round of games. That would mean goal difference or other tiebreaker criteria is required to determine which teams advance. **GROUP B:** Argentina plays Ukraine and is on top of Group B on goal difference, with all four teams tied on three points. Argentina beat Iraq 3-1 in its second game after its opening loss, which was marred by violent scenes when Moroccan fans rushed the field and forced a delay of around two hours. Ukraine's late 2-1 win against



Morocco means all four teams won and lost their opening two games and a tiebreaker could be required if there are two draws in the final round of fixtures. "We're not thinking about the next round. First we have to beat Ukraine," said Argentina coach Javier Mascherano. **GROUP C:** Spain (6 points) has qualified after back-to-back wins in Group C but could still have a big say over who joins it in the next round. Spain plays second-placed Egypt (4 points), which needs a draw to guarantee it advances. Third-placed Dominican Republic (1 point) plays already eliminated Uzbekistan (0 points). **GROUP D:** Any one of three teams could join Japan and advance from Group D. Japan (6 points) is into quarterfinals after back-to-back wins and plays last-placed Israel (1 point), which needs a victory to stand any hope of qualifying. Second-placed Paraguay (3 points) plays Mali (1 point). A win for Paraguay would guarantee its place in the quarterfinals.

Carlos says he has been dealing with groin muscle problem since Wimbledon

AP ■ PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz took a medical timeout for what he said is a lingering groin muscle issue in the second set of his 6-1, 7-6 (3) singles victory over Tallon Griekspoor at the Paris Olympics. Alcaraz is scheduled to play doubles for Spain with Rafael Nadal on Tuesday - and the opponents happen to be the Dutch pair of Griekspoor and Wesley Koolhof. "It's a pain that I've been dealing with. I know what I have to do ... To deal with this pain," said Alcaraz, a 21-year-old who won the French Open at Roland Garros, the same site being used for Olympics tennis, last month, and Wimbledon this month.



"I will try to recover as soon and as (best) as I can tonight," he said, "to be ready ... 100 percent tomorrow in my doubles." Alcaraz said he watched part of Nadal's 6-1, 6-4 loss to Novak Djokovic in singles earlier Monday, before preparing to face Griekspoor. "When Djokovic is playing at this level, it's really, really difficult to play against him. Really aggressive, no mistakes, moving very, very well," Alcaraz said. "I saw Rafa playing decent, let's say. Not his best tennis, for sure. But when Djokovic is like this, he's almost unbeatable." That last word is one often used to describe Alcaraz, who was the first teenager to reach No. 1 in the ATP rankings, was the youngest man to win major titles on hard, grass and clay courts, and defeated Djokovic in each of the past two Wimbledon finals. "One of the best players there is," Griekspoor said about Alcaraz. "Someone who likes to play on this court. He made it very difficult for me in the first set." That was clear. But in the second, Griekspoor began to serve better and hit more aggressively, and suddenly it was a much tighter match. After Alcaraz left the court with a trainer while trailing 5-4 in that set, he

returned and was a single point from being pushed to a third. Griekspoor couldn't convert that chance, which Alcaraz erased with a volley winner that he celebrated with a right uppercut and a yell of "Vamos!" Soon, in the tiebreaker, he was back in full control. "I didn't see any problems with him," Griekspoor said when asked how Alcaraz seemed in the second set. "I don't know what the problem was, but it's not like he fell down or twisted his ankle and couldn't walk anymore. He was still all over the place." Griekspoor said he would prepare for the rematch of sorts by going back and taking a look at the first-round doubles victory for Nadal and Alcaraz to help figure out a game plan. Giant barrels and steady swells for men's third day of surfing competition Teahupo'o (France), Jul 30 (AP) With the ceremonial blow of a conch shell and blare of a judge's horn, the third day of the Paris Olympics surfing competition in Tahiti began on Monday with the men's surfers going head-to-head, some reaching the end of the road in their quest for gold. Stunning waves and steady swells in the morning heats brought a fresh surge of energy to competitors and spectators, after Sunday's lackluster

conditions, while conditions rapidly tapered around midday due to a storm, postponing the women's afternoon competition. "Today is probably gonna be one of the most exciting days... There's some serious waves out there," said Jordy Smith from South Africa, who lost to Peru's Alonso Correa in the day's first heat. "I got pounded a couple of times." Coming out of a barrel and riding across a wall of nearly 10-foot cerulean blue water, French Polynesian surfer Kauli Vaast raised his arms to the air, an enormous smile on his face as he cruised to victory in his heat, knocking out Griffin Colapinto from the United States. "I just came out, after a great ride, great takeoff and great wave," Vaast said. "That one felt good, and I was just too happy and enjoying the moment." Colapinto's loss was the first for the U.S. Team during the Paris Olympics surfing competition, after the entire team won their heats the first day of competition thus directly qualifying for Monday's round. John John Florence from the U.S. Was also eliminated from the competition. Brazil also suffered its first surfer being knocked out of the competition, after Filipe Toledo lost to Japan's Reo Inaba.

Gabriel Medina from Brazil made Olympic history on the waves, receiving the highest score in Olympic surfing history - a 9.9, just shy of a perfect 10. After the ride he launched himself into the air, raising his right arm and pointing towards the sky in a gravity-defying moment. At times water safety patrol staff on jet skis pulled surfers from the water after their rides, towing them to calmer waters before jettling them back out to the wave. "It's really dangerous out there. It's super shallow ... You can see the corals," Medina said after his win against Kanoa Igarashi from Japan. On land, emotions ran high. Expletives were commonly heard from losing surfers coming back to shore. Broken boards, snapped from the power of the waves, were laid on the ground and inspected by teams shaking their heads. Staff of opposing teams going head-to-head whistled in awe and clapped at their opponents rides, marveling as surfers reappeared from being inside heavy barrels of water. Blustery winds swept in around midday, turning the surf conditions sour, marring the men's final heats and causing the women's competition being postponed. Monday was the last men's competition day before the quarterfinals, semifinals and gold medal heats take place on the fourth and final day of competition. Correa from Peru, Inaba from Japan, Joan Duru and Vaast from France, Joao Chianca and Medina from Brazil, Ethan Ewing and Jack Robinson from Australia all qualified to compete in the final day of the men's competition. The rest of the competition functions as a single-elimination, head-to-head bracket. Each heat will feature two surfers, with the winner advancing to the final stage of competition: the quarterfinals, semifinals and final gold medal heat. The next competition day will be determined after officials assess wave conditions.

Ex-NBA player Chase wins beach volleyball debut in Paris

AP ■ PARIS

Chase Budinger has never forgotten how badly he played in his first NBA game. He'll have only good memories from his Olympic debut. The former Arizona and professional basketball player and his partner, Miles Evans, beat host France in straight sets on Monday to coast through their opening match of the Paris beach volleyball tournament. "I really tried to use my basketball experience of playing in front of big crowds to be composed the whole time," Budinger said after a 21-14, 21-11 victory. "But it definitely was not like that inside." Budinger spent seven years in the NBA, mostly as a bench player for the Rockets and Timberwolves, before turning to beach volleyball to fulfill an Olympic dream. His first game, he still remembers, "I played awful."



"On the bus ride over here, I was telling Miles about my first basketball game, of how nervous I was and how the nerves really got to me," Budinger said. "I was 0-for-2 (from 3-point range), had two turnovers and one of my shots I had was an airball. So the nerves affected my game play." At the Eiffel Tower Stadium on Monday the jitters didn't get to him - even against a French team that had won the last three matchups on the

international tour. "It took me six years. It took me a long time to finally achieve this goal and I am here competing at the Olympics," Budinger said. "And there is no better feeling." Budinger and Evans scored the first three points and never trailed in the first set. In the second, France did eke out a 3-1 lead before the Americans won the next three points and finished the match in just 32 minutes.

"It's one of the best starts we could imagine," Evans said. "I had all these bad scenarios in my head going into this match. I am super thankful we were able to overcome that." Unlike the NBA debut against the Portland Trail Blazers back in 2009, Budinger said, "I felt like out here, I was able to get a couple of points early. That helped relieve some of that stress, those nerves and allowed me to play my game more without it affecting me as much." In other notable beach action on Monday, Americans Kristen Nuss and Taryn Kloth beat Tokyo silver medalist Taliqua Clancy of Australia and her new partner, Mariafe Artacho del Solar, in straight sets to improve to 2-0 in Paris. France swept Rio gold medalist Laura Ludwig of Germany and her new partner, Louisa Lippmann. Qatar, the bronze medalist in Tokyo on the men's side, beat top-ranked Sweden 2-1 to improve to 2-0 in pool play.

Chennaiyin FC announces 22-member squad for Durand Cup

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC on Tuesday announced a 22-member squad for the 133rd edition of the Durand Cup being played from July 27 to August 31. Chennaiyin FC are placed in Group D along with ISL side Jamshepur FC, Indian Army and Assam Rifles with all six games of the stage to be played at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshepur. The Marina Machans will face Indian Army in their opening game on Wednesday as the group winners and possibly the second-placed team will advance to the knockouts. "The squad features a blend of senior team members and promising reserves, including notable players such as Vincy Barretto, Bikash Yunnam, Irfan Yadwad, Samik Mitra,



Alexander Romario Jesuraj, and Sachu Siby," the club said in a statement. "This mix of experience and youth is reflected in the roster, which comprises three goalkeepers, eight defenders, nine midfielders, and two forwards, ensuring a well-

balanced team across all positions." Chennaiyin FC, who reached the quarterfinal stage in the 2022 and 2023 iterations of the Durand Cup, will take on Jamshepur FC on August 4 followed by their last group stage game against Assam

Rifles on August 11. "We are going there to win games. We are not going there to take part. As a team, we are going to be together, on the field, off the field. There's going to be unity. We are going to go on the field and fight and give our 100 per cent," said CFC assistant coach Noel Wilson, who joined the club ahead of this season. **CHENNAIYIN FC SQUAD:** **Goalkeepers:** Mohanraj K, Samik Mitra, Malhar Umesh Mohol **Defenders:** Niketh N, Bikash Yunnam, Alexander Romario Jesuraj, Rojakk Ali SK, YV Praful Kumar, Aby S, Shanu Stellus, Sachu Siby **Midfielders:** Ngangom Raman Singh, Ganeshpandi S, Solaimalai R, Jayasurya, Vivek S, Karthik T, Vincy Barretto, Komal Thatal, Lalpekhlua

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh claimed the first gold medal of her just-burgeoning career Monday night with a dominating victory in the 400-meter individual medley at the Paris Olympics. The 17-year-old McIntosh collected her first medal of any color on the opening night of swimming, taking a silver in the 400 freestyle behind Ariarne Titmus - and ahead of Katie Ledecky. Now, McIntosh has the most prized color of all. "I try to take every event very individually and just do my work, but starting off for me - getting on the podium - is definitely a great way to start," McIntosh said. "You try to continue to get better and

17-year-old McIntosh wins gold in 400-metre IM

better." She pushed the pace hard through the first half of the gruelling race - the butterfly and backstroke legs - to leave everyone in her wake except American Katie Grimes. McIntosh was under her own world-record pace, but couldn't keep it going. She touched in 4 minutes, 27.71 seconds, more than three seconds off the mark of 4:24.38 she set at the Canadian trials in May. But it was more than enough to blow away the field in the Olympic final. McIntosh seemed to take it all in stride. Maybe it's because she competed at the Tokyo Olympics at age 14, so she sort

of feels like a veteran now. "Every single time I get to race on the world stage, I learn more and more about handling mentally and physically and emotionally and trying not to get too high or too low," McIntosh said. She's got a grueling schedule in Paris which includes two more individual races - the 200 butterfly and 200 IM. There are no plans to celebrate just yet. "I mean, obviously I'm super happy with this gold," McIntosh said. "But now I'm all about the 200 fly on day five." Grimes, who is also swimming the open water event in Paris, held on to claim the silver in



4:33.40. The Americans also grabbed the bronze when Emma Weyant touched in 4:34.93. **ANOTHER TEEN RULES:** David Popovici made the teenagers 2-for-2 on the night when he pulled off a thrilling victory in the men's 200 freestyle. The 19-year-old Romanian was among three swimmers who swapped the lead back and forth on the final lap. First, it was American Luke Hobson edging in front. Then Britain's Matthew Richards, out in Lane 1, pushed to the lead. Finally, it was Popovici mustering everything he had to get to the wall in 1:44.72 -- a mere two-hundredths ahead of

Richards, with Hobson just 0.07 back to earn the bronze. Britain's Duncan Scott, the silver medalist in Tokyo three years ago, finished in 1:44.87 to miss out on the podium this time. The top four were separated by a mere 0.15 seconds. **GOLD FOR ITALY, AGAIN:** Thomas Ceccon gave Italy its second gold in as many nights at La Defense Arena, rallying to win the men's 100 backstroke. China's Xu Jiayu led at the turn, just ahead of American Ryan Murphy - the 2016 gold medalist. Ceccon was third, but he switched to another gear on the return lap. The Italian, who has held the

world record since the 2022 world championships in Budapest, now has a gold medal to go with it after finishing in 52.00. Xu claimed the silver (52.32), while the 29-year-old Murphy settled for the bronze for the second Olympics in a row at 52.39. Ceccon followed Nicolò Martinenghi, who grabbed Italy's first gold at the pool with a victory in the 100 breaststroke Sunday night. **LOOKING AHEAD:** In the only semifinals of the night, Australia's Kaylee McKeown and Regan Smith of the U.S. Set up a much-anticipated duel in the women's 100 backstroke. They each won their heats, with McKeown posting the fastest time (57.97) ad McKeown right on her heels (57.99).

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