

OPINION 8
PANDEMONIUM
IN PARLIAMENT

NATION 4
OPP WALKOUT DURING MODI
REPLY A DISGRACE: DHANKHAR

MONEY 10
INDIA'S SERVICES SECTOR
GROWTH RISES IN JUNE: PMI

RAIPUR, THURSDAY JULY 4, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

Established 1864

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.13 Issue 181
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PARIS DIAMOND
LEAGUE NOT ON MY
CALENDAR: NEERAJ
11 SPORTS



Modi silences critics on Manipur



Prime Minister Narendra Modi replies to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Rajya Sabha during ongoing Parliament session, in New Delhi, on Wednesday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday silenced his critics on the Opposition benches in the Rajya Sabha by informing the House that violence in Manipur is continuously declining, schools have reopened in most parts of the State, and efforts are being made to ensure return of complete peace.

President Droupadi Murmu's address to a joint sitting of Parliament, the Prime Minister said more than 500 people have been arrested and over 11,000 FIRs registered in Manipur. Modi said the Centre is working with the State Government and others to restore normalcy in the State. Addressing Rajya Sabha members, Modi said Manipur is also grappling with floods, prompting the Centre to dispatch two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to

the flood-hit State. Modi also promised action in the NEET paper leak case, and listed out achievements of his past two terms and priorities for the third. The Prime Minister spoke at length on the alleged irregularities in the conduct of competitive exams, and asserted that tough action will be taken against those involved in paper leaks. "We wanted there should be no politics on a sensitive issue like paper leak, but the Opposition is used to it. I assure the youth of India that

action is being taken to ensure that those who play with the future of students are handed down strict punishment," he said. On Manipur, Modi said Union Home Minister Amit Shah himself led from the front the efforts for peace by being in Manipur.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the deeply rooted social conflict in Manipur has a long history, leading to the imposition of President's rule 10 times since Independence. He also mentioned the five-year-long social conflict in Manipur from 1993 onwards. Modi emphasised that there is a need to handle the situation with wisdom and patience. He invited all the like-minded people to help him in his efforts to ensure normalcy and peace in Manipur. The Prime Minister has been facing the wrath of Opposition led by Congress which has charged that Modi is yet to speak on the floor of Parliament on the burning issue of Manipur violence and had again given a miss to the subject in his more than two-hour long speech in the Lok Sabha a day earlier. The Opposition also alleged that the Prime Minister did not address the issue of paper leaks about which Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had written to the Prime Minister requesting a discussion on NEET and NET paper leaks.



Police personnel keep vigil outside a hospital during Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath's visit to meet the injured victims a day after the stampede that occurred during a 'satsang' (religious congregation), in Hathras district, on Wednesday

Rush for darshan led to Hathras stampede

PN ■ LUCKNOW

Chaos caused after Narayan Sakaar Hari's followers, who tried to reach near his vehicle to seek "darshan", were pushed by the godman's security and a "slippery slope" resulted in the stampede that killed 121 people in Hathras, a preliminary report of the SDM said. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday announced a judicial probe into the tragedy while not ruling out the possibility of a "conspiracy" behind the stampede. Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Sikandra Rao submitted the preliminary report on the stampede to the district magistrate (DM). The SDM, who gave permission for the "satsang" (religious congregation), was also present at the venue when the incident occurred, according to the report. "A crowd of more than 2 lakh people was present in the satsang pandal. Shri Narayan Sakaar Hari (Bhole Baba) reached the satsang pandal at

about 12.30 pm and the program went on for 1 hour. "After this, at about 1.40 pm, Narayan Sakaar Hari (Bhole Baba) came out of the pandal to go towards Etah on National Highway-91", the preliminary report said, adding that when the godman was leaving the venue, his followers started running towards him for a 'darshan' and collect soil from around his feet. "Satsangi women/men/children etc. Started applying the dust of Baba's feet on their foreheads (while trying) to get his darshan, touch his feet and take his blessings," reads the report dated July 2. The situation worsened when more people waiting on the divider of the road ahead began running towards his vehicle, it said. "A large number of people were already standing on the dividers in the middle and on the sides of GT road, who started jumping from the dividers and started running towards Baba's vehicle to get his darshan."

Out on bail, Hemant Soren to become Jharkhand CM again

RAJESH KUMAR ■ RANCHI/NEW DELHI

In a major development, minutes after Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren resigned as the State's Chief Minister barely 152 days after taking oath, his predecessor and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's chief, Hemant Soren who is out on bail in the money-laundering case by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) staked claim to form the next Government which he relinquished a few months ago before his arrest by the probe agency. This is for the third time that Hemant will become the Chief Minister of Jharkhand. He will be the 13th Chief Minister of the State, which was carved out of Bihar on November 15, 2000.

"A few days ago, I was made the Chief Minister and I got the responsibility of the State. After Hemant Soren was back, our alliance took this decision and we chose Hemant Soren as our leader. I have resigned as per the decision of the JMM-led alliance. Our alliance is strong. All know what had happened with Hemant Soren... I was given the responsibility by the coalition partners. Now, the alliance has decided in favour of Hemant Soren", Champai said after coming out of Raj Bhawan.

A request was also submitted to Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan by Hemant to form the Government. After meeting with the Governor, Hemant told the media that all formalities to form the Government are complete.



Kuki ailing in Manipur jail gets Supreme Court's healing touch

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Wednesday took a strong note of an undertrial prisoner lodged in a Manipur jail not being taken to a hospital for treatment just because he belonged to the minority 'Kuki' community, saying it does not "trust the State". A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan made some strong observations against the State while hearing a plea filed by Lunghongam Haokip that he was suffering from piles and tuberculosis and was not taken to hospital by jail officials despite having severe backache. "We do not trust the State...The accused was not taken to hospital because he is from the Kuki community. So sad! We direct him to be examined now. If the medical report reveals something serious, we will take you to task," the bench said. The counsel for Haokip claimed the jail officials did not pay heed to persistent requests for medical help. The bench perused an order of the Manipur High Court and found that the



undertrial prisoner was not taken to hospital since he was from Kuki community and "shifting him to a hospital will be hazardous taking into account the law and order situation". Manipur has been in the grip of an ethnic conflict between the minority Kuki and majority Meitei communities. The bench directed the jail superintendent and the State authorities "to make necessary arrangements for his transportation to the Gauhati Medical College and get him examined therein. The medical exam shall be as regards piles, TB, tonsillitis, abdominal pain as well as problems in lower lumbar spine".

It sought a detailed medical report on or before July 15 and asked the State to bear all the expenses including the treatment cost. Manipur descended into chaos and violence in May last year over a high court order directing the State Government to consider including the non-tribal Meitei community in the list of Scheduled Tribes. More than 170 people have been killed and several hundred others injured since ethnic violence first broke out in the state on May 3 last year when a "Tribal Solidarity March" was organised in hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for ST status.

Seventh bridge collapse in 15 days alarms Bihar

ARCHANA JYOTI ■
PATNA/NEW DELHI

Even as a high-level panel of the Bihar Government has launched a probe into the recent spate of bridge collapses across the State, yet another incident on Wednesday involving a bridge over the Gandak river in Siwan district of the State has raised serious concern about the quality of infrastructure and public safety.

The latest bridge collapse marks the seventh such incident in a span of just 15 days in the State and second in Siwan district in the last 11 days.

Mercifully, however, despite the severity of these collapses, there have been no casualties thus far. With the State's rivers swelling due to continuous heavy rain, the possibility of more such incidents occurring in the coming days cannot be discounted, members of the Bihar Engineering Services Association (BESA) have warned.

The troubling series of incidents began on June 19 with the collapse of an under-construction bridge in Araria, followed by collapses in Siwan on June 22, East Champaran on June 23, and Kishanganj on June 24. The collapse of the bridge over the Gandaki river in Deoria Block in Siwan district on



A view of the collapsed bridge amid heavy rain in Bihar's Siwan district on Wednesday

Wednesday has severed essential connections between several villages and Mahrajan, leaving the locals at the receiving end. Deputy Development Commissioner Mukesh Kumar said the exact cause is under investigation. Senior officials from the block have already reached the site, he added. "A portion of a bridge in Deoria block collapsed this morning. The exact cause is being investigated," he added. "The incident took place around 5 am. As per initial information, the bridge was constructed in 1982-83. Repair work was going on the bridge for the last few days,"

Kumar added. Villagers suggested that heavy rainfall over the preceding days may have contributed to the collapse, with a surge in Gandaki river potentially weakening the bridge's structure. This incident follows closely on the heels of another bridge collapse in the district just 11 days ago. On June 22, a portion of a bridge collapsed in Darouanda area, prompting the Bihar Government to set up a high-level committee to investigate these occurrences. The cave-in was also reported from the Bheja police station area of Madhubani district, situated in the State's northern extreme, along the borders

with Nepal. The bridge that collapsed in Bihar's Thakurganj was built in 2007-08, and had been rendered unusable after it developed a crack and sank by a foot. Similarly, a bridge in Thakurganj block succumbed to rising water levels in the Bund River following heavy rains, causing it to sink by a foot and crack, rendering it too dangerous for use. The bridge, located in Khoshi Dangi village of Patharia panchayat, was constructed in 2007-2008 with funds from the MP budget of the then MP Md Tasleemuddin of Thakurganj and was connecting several

panchayats. This incident follows the collapse of an under-construction bridge in the Madhubani region on June 28 which was being built by the Rural Works Department of the Bihar government at a cost of ₹3 crore since 2021. Following the collapses, the blame game has already begun, intensifying concerns about accountability and oversight in Bihar's infrastructure management. Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge took a swipe at the bridge cave-in in the State while Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi smelled a possible conspiracy behind the incidents, implying a deliberate attempt to defame the BJP-led State Government. "Why has the State suddenly started witnessing incidents of bridge collapse? Why is it happening after the Lok Sabha polls? Why were such incidents not taking place a month before? I suspect some conspiracy behind it. Authorities concerned must look into this aspect," Manjhi said. He also acknowledged the use of sub-standard materials by contractors as a contributing factor and assured that the State Government is taking action against those responsible.

Twitters of Koo set to fall silent

ASAD ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian dream of having an alternative to Twitter (now X) has been shattered as the 'desi' social media platform launched in 2020 with much fanfare, and with many top Indian politicians and Government departments joining in, is to shut down. The world came to know about the yellow bird, Koo, stopping to chirp when its co-founders penned a touching note on Wednesday about the tough decision to bid adieu. The disheartening news has been received with anguish by many Koo users. Die-hard Koo fan Vinit Goenka, former Governing Council Member of CRIS, Ministry of Railways, is upset with the news. "This shutdown will be a significant setback for those who believe in the democratic values of social media, as it highlights the unending

dominance of Western media and their colonisation of the social media space," he said. In an emotion-filled post on LinkedIn, co-founders Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka shared their frustrating journey and insurmountable challenges, writing, "We explored partnerships with multiple larger internet companies, conglomerates, and media houses, but these talks didn't yield the outcome we desired." They expressed their regret, saying, "While we would have loved to keep the app running, the high cost of technology and services to maintain a social media platform has forced us to take this tough

decision." Founded in India, Koo soared to great heights, spreading its wings to Kenya and Brazil while in its prime. Its rise in Kenya followed the country's indefinite ban on Twitter for deleting a tweet by Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. Around 2021, Koo's popularity surged in India amid a contentious spat between the Indian Government and Twitter. This conflict prompted calls to expand the ecosystem of homegrown digital platforms, echoing strongly across the virtual world and propelling Koo to prominence. For a while, it seemed that this homegrown

platform would significantly challenge and perhaps even surpass Twitter's popularity in India. However, this anticipated turn of event never came to pass as Twitter managed to smoothen its relationship with the Government. Koo experienced a rollercoaster ride in its short existence. At its peak, this indigenous platform boasted around 2.1 million daily active users, approximately 10 million monthly active users, and over 9,000 VIPs, including some of the most prominent personalities from various fields. "We were just months away from beating Twitter in India in 2022 and could have doubled down on that short-term goal with capital behind us," they said. "Unfortunately for us, the mood of the market and the fund crunch got the better of us," the note mentioned as the founders signed off.

Sensex breaches 80,000 mark for first time

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Breached the historic 80,000 level intraday for the first time while Nifty raced more than 162 points to close at a fresh lifetime high on Wednesday following heavy buying in banking and FMCG shares amid firm global market trends. The 30-share Sensex hit the historic 80,000 mark for the first time earlier in the day. It surged 632.85 points or 0.79 per cent to a record intraday high of 80,074.30. The index later closed near the 80,000 level at 79,986.80, up by 545.35



points or 0.69 per cent over the last close. As many as 24 Sensex shares closed with gains and six declined. The BSE Sensex breached the 78,000 level on June 25 and 79,000 for the first time on June 27. The Nifty climbed 162.65 points or 0.67 per cent to end at an all-time high of 24,286.50. During the day, it zoomed 183.4 points or 0.76 per cent to hit a fresh intraday record peak of 24,307.25. As many as 40 Nifty shares advanced, nine declined and one closed unchanged. Among the Sensex pack, Adani Ports rose the most by 2.49 per cent.

Modi takes a dig at Congress for defending AAP after Kejriwal arrest

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday took a dig at the Congress for defending the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was sent to jail on accusations of corruption, underlining that Congress leaders in Delhi had accused AAP of the liquor scam. Modi attacked the Congress for what he called "save corrupt agitation" while attacking the AAP for alleged corruption including in the now-scrapped 2021-22 Delhi excise policy. He listed the alleged scams involving AAP including the excise policy case.

"The AAP does corruption, the AAP commits liquor scam, the AAP commits corruption, the AAP commits scam in building classrooms for children, the AAP even commits water scam... The Congress complains against the AAP. The Congress drags the AAP to court and when they are sent to jail, then they abuses Modi. Congress leaders addressed press conferences making corruption charges on AAP. Can they tell us today - was the evidence they showed correct or



false? They are duplicitous," Modi said, replying to the Motion of Thanks on the President's address. Modi said the Congress had presented so many proofs of AAP's scams before the country in a press conference. Now that the Congress and AAP are partners, was all the evidence presented a lie? "The Congress should now answer whether those proofs were true or false, he said.

He accused the Congress and AAP of double standards. "Those who are now accusing the Central government of misusing investigative agencies such as CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] and ED [Enforcement Directorate]

once appealed to the government to use them against the corrupt," said Modi. He said the AAP once urged the ED to arrest the then Congress chief minister of Chhattisgarh Bhupesh Baghel. "How has the same ED and CBI become corrupt?" The prime minister asserted that taking action against corruption is a mission for the NDA government and not a matter of electoral gains. "I want to state without hesitation and also tell the countrymen that I have given full freedom to the agencies to take the strongest action against the corrupt and corruption. The government will not interfere anywhere," the prime minister

said. "Yes, they (probe agencies) should work honestly for honesty. No person embroiled in corruption will be able to escape the law. This is Modi's guarantee," the prime minister said. Referring to the opposition members' charge that the government is misusing the probe agencies, Modi cited statements made by opposition leaders like late Mulayam Singh Yadav who had accused the UPA government of using the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against them. He also said even the Supreme Court had termed the CBI as a "caged parrot". "Allegations have been made against the central investigative agencies. It has been said that the central government is misusing the investigative agencies. Modi asserted that he had vowed in 2014, when the BJP came into power at the Centre, that the government will work for the welfare of the poor and also take actions against corruption and black money. "Action against corruption is a mission for us. It is not a matter of victory or defeat in elections for us," he added.

Security at Rahul's residence stepped up



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has stepped up security outside Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's residence here following an intelligence input of disturbance by right wing groups, sources said on Wednesday. Rahul Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party had created ruckus in the Lok Sabha on Monday. One platoon of paramilitary, including the local police personnel, has been deployed around Gandhi's residence, sources said. They said an input regarding disturbance by right wing group members was received on Tuesday after which the security has been increased around the Congress leader's residence in central Delhi. The police have suspected the people may gather with placard or hoardings outside his residence. The local police has

been asked to increase the vigil for 24 hours around his residence, sources said. Rahul Gandhi enjoys Z plus security with L (advanced security liaison) category under the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) personnel. On Wednesday, the Delhi BJP leaders and workers staged a protest here over his remarks against the saffron party and sought an apology from him. The protesters assembled near Jaisalmer House and tried to move towards the Congress headquarters on Akbar Road, raising slogans against Gandhi and his party. Addressing the protesters, BJP Yuva Morcha's national president Tejasvi Surya said it was not the time to deliver speeches but to "vigorously protest against the insult of Hindu society". "The way Rahul Gandhi accused the entire Hindu society of being violent, is an unpardonable offence. The Congress and Rahul Gandhi are repeat offenders and in the past, they tried to create a fake narrative of saffron terrorism," he charged. BJP MPs Manoj Tiwari and Bansuri Swaraj, and other senior leaders of the party were present during the protest. The Delhi Police has registered an FIR in connection with the matter.

BJP leaders protest against Rahul's remarks against party

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leaders and workers on Wednesday staged a protest here over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party and sought an apology from him. The protesters assembled near Jaisalmer House and tried to move towards the Congress headquarters on Akbar Road, raising slogans against Gandhi and his party. Addressing the protesters, BJP Yuva Morcha's national president Tejasvi Surya said it was not the time to deliver speeches but to "vigorously protest against the insult of Hindu society". "The way Rahul Gandhi accused the entire Hindu society of being violent, is an unpardonable offence. The Congress and Rahul Gandhi are repeat offenders and in the past, they tried to create a fake narrative of saffron terrorism," he charged. BJP MPs Manoj Tiwari and Bansuri Swaraj, and other senior leaders of the party were present during the protest. The Delhi Police has registered an FIR in connection with the matter.



Ranjan Dimri

need to be given a befitting reply. He said Hindu society is violent. He may even say Hindus should be shot," Tiwari said targeting Rahul Gandhi. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said if Hindus were violent, the temple in Mathura have been built by now. "Unless Rahul Gandhi, a poll-time Hindu, apologises, we will continue to protest," he said. In his first speech as the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Gandhi had launched a no-holds-barred attack on the BJP, accusing it of practising violence and spreading hate, drawing massive protests from the treasury benches, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Kejriwal moves HC seeking bail in liquor policy scam case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP convener and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday moved the Delhi High Court seeking bail in a CBI case related to the alleged liquor policy scam. The counsel for Kejriwal mentioned the matter for urgent listing before a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela which said it would be heard on Friday.

Notably, Kejriwal has directly approached the High Court for seeking bail without approaching the trial court. According to AAP legal team, there is no bar in going directly to the High Court for bail under Section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). Advocate Rajat Bhardwaj, appearing for Kejriwal, asserted that the applicant was taken into illegal custody without following the due procedure of law and he has filed a bail plea. As the counsel insisted on fixing the plea for hearing on Thursday, Justice Manmohan said, "Let the learned judge go through the papers. We will have it day after."

In his petition, Kejriwal alleged the CBI was continuously haranguing and harassing him in the garb of the ongoing investigations in the liquor policy case, and called it a matter of grave dismay and concern. The Chief Minister also alleged he rendered all due cooperation and assistance to



two meetings with his lawyers in a week. The Delhi Chief Minister's plea challenging his arrest by the CBI and the trial court order remanding him to the agency's custody is also pending before the High Court. The court had issued notice and asked the CBI to file its reply while listing it for arguments on July 17. The AAP convener was arrested by the CBI on June 26 from Tihar Jail, where he is still lodged in judicial custody in a connected money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Kejriwal, who was arrested by the ED on March 21, was granted bail by the trial court in the money laundering case on June 20. However, the trial court's order was stayed by the high court. The excise policy was scrapped in 2022 after the Delhi lieutenant governor ordered a CBI probe into alleged irregularities and corruption involving its formulation and execution. According to the CBI and ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours extended to the licence holders. While a Rouse Avenue Court has extended till July 12 the judicial custody of Kejriwal in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam. Kejriwal appeared before the court of Special Judge Kaveri Baweja through video conference. He is currently allowed

the CBI when he was called for interrogations in April 2023. His arrest is wholly illegal, unconstitutional and unsustainable, the Chief Minister claimed, adding, that the remand orders are patently routine, leading to vitiation of the entire process of arrest and proceedings. "The investigations have already been completed and the materials which form the basis of the arrest have already been gathered. A premier investigating agency like the CBI cannot play truant with the process of law. It has to act with dispassion and objectivity while dispelling any notion of bias or lop-sided approach," the petition by Arvind Kejriwal read. Kejriwal has also challenged a trial court's July 1 order rejecting his application for directions to the prison authorities for allowing two additional meetings every week with his lawyers through video conference. He is currently allowed

100 per cent humidity makes city weather suffocating for residents

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As a cloud cover enveloped the national Capital as parts of the city received rain on Wednesday, weather remained muggy and suffocating for Delhiites due to 100 per cent humidity level recorded in the city. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the humidity level stood at 75 per cent at 8:30 am and 100 per cent at 5:30 pm. Parts of the city and the adjoining region of Delhi received light to moderate rain accompanied by thunderstorms, with wind speeds of 40 to 60 kmph, and lightning. The sky remained cloudy throughout the day. Safdarjung, the city's primary weather station, recorded the maximum temperature at 34.1 degrees Celsius, three notches below the normal. The minimum temperature settled at 29 degrees Celsius, a notch above the normal. Researchers suggest that these humid and hot conditions, largely driven by global warming, during monsoons are a significant challenge to the health and well-being of the people of India, especially to physical labour. Prolonged exposure to such conditions can result in potentially fatal health hazards. They also drew attention to the immediate need to revise



outdoor working hours, especially in the regions experiencing extreme moist heat conditions during monsoon season, as humid heat can severely impact labour productivity. "For instance, a 3 degrees Celsius increase in global warming can reduce labour productivity by 7 per cent and contribute to at least 4 per cent reduction of GDP in India, which leads to inflation in crop prices," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Earth's Future. Therefore, with work performance projected to decline in the country by 30-40 per cent by the end of the century, the rising moist heat during monsoon can be devastating in the future, they said. Further, there was no warning for heavy rain in Delhi by the met department after days of failed prediction by the IMD about heavy rain in the city. The IMD stated that their predictions analyse models

and other measurements, which sometimes do not align. For instance, due to the shifting of the rainfall belt, heavy rain did not occur in Delhi as forecast last time. The IMD advised the public to be cautious of slippers roads, low visibility, disruption in traffic and localised water logging in low lying areas which was caused due to the rain spell. On Friday, there was a flood like situation in the city after Delhi received heavy rain. "Avoid going to areas that face water logging problems often, check for traffic congestion on your route and be updated with weather warning," the IMD advised the public. In order to address the issue of water logging on National Highways during the monsoon season, NHAI has taken various measures for flood preparedness and provide emergency response on the National Highways across the country.

Panel members reject Maliwal's claim of AAP dismantling DCW

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal accused her party's government here of "systematically dismantling" the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW), two members of the panel on Wednesday dismissed her allegations as "malicious" and "fictitious". In their letters to Maliwal, DCW members Firdos Khan and Kiran Negi also urged the MP not to use her "personal political gains" the struggle of more than 700 women employed by the commission and under grant programmes who have not got their salaries since November last year. Maliwal on Tuesday wrote to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, accusing his government of "systematically dismantling" the commission after she resigned as its chief. There was no immediate reaction from Maliwal on the letters of Khan and Negi, the subject lines of which read: "Request to stop using struggle of 700+ women for personal political gains". Maliwal had resigned as the DCW's chairperson following her nomination to the Rajya Sabha by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). "Over 700 women who have been employed in the commission and various grant programmes across the city have been left without any salary since November 2023 but you



have made the struggle of these women only about yourself and have made statements that the attack on DCW started after your resignation," the letters read. Negi and Khan in their letters, the content of which was the same, stressed that Kejriwal and his government have stood with the DCW in the face of the attack on the commission. "Ma'am, the attack on the commission from the vested interest of the system has been ongoing since 2016 and the Hon'ble chief minister and the elected government have always stood with the commission as a strong shield," they said. "I humbly request you to kindly desist from attacking the elected government and instead, expose the Hon'ble LG (Delhi lieutenant governor) and the actual perpetrators of this attack on the commission, like you have done for all these years till two months back," they said in their letters.

Sukesh threatens legal action over his biopic

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chandrasekhar, who is accused in a Rs 200 crore cheating case involving the wife of a former Fortis Healthcare promoter, has threatened to pursue legal action against individuals involved in creating a film or biopic based on his life and personality.

"It has come to Our Client's attention that numerous individuals are infringing upon his Personality/Publicity/Celebrity/Biopic/life rights, by falsely asserting and misrepresenting their authorization to create a film or biopic based on his life and personality whether directly or indirectly," his lawyer stated. He also threatened to press charges against anyone involved in doing so. "Please be informed that legal action, both civil and criminal, will be pursued against anyone found guilty of infringing upon Mr. Sukesh Chander Shekhar's rights, particularly regarding his personality, literary works, and biopic rights. Such infringements can lead to



severe legal consequences," he said. He added that Sukesh is a man of repute and enjoys goodwill in the Indian Film Industry, various business houses and Political Circles and holds goodwill and reputation both nationally and at a global level. Further, he informed that Sukesh "has already licensed, assigned and/or otherwise dealt with all his rights in relation to, inter alia, his personality, attributes and life story and events to a third party and public at large is warned and cautioned to refrain from exploiting our client's personality and his life story, events, incidents, whether directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever."

HC rejects plea seeking disqualification of Modi, suggests medical help for litigant

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday rejected a plea seeking disqualification of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from contesting elections and said that person who filed the plea appeared to be suffering from mental health issues. A Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela asked the local Station House Officer (SHO), Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and the District Judge to keep a watch on the petitioner, Captain Deepak Kumar and exercise their powers under the Mental Healthcare Act, if necessary. The bench said they were in agreement with the single judge, who had earlier rejected the plea, that the petition and the appeal are replete with "unsubstantiated, disjointed, scandalous and preposterous allegations." "Are you well?" an exasperated bench asked the appellant, adding he needs "medical help". The plea had alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was hatching a conspiracy and was involved in an act of terrorism. The plea further alleged that

Modi and his accomplices attempted to destabilise national security by planning a fatal crash of an Air India flight in 2018 which the petitioner commanded as a pilot. He alleged that Modi "made a false oath or affirmation which otherwise must be made after the nomination paper has been submitted to RO (returning officer)". While dismissing the plea, the bench said, "All the allegations in the present appeal are a figment of imagination of the appellant and bereft of any material particulars." During the hearing, the bench said, "Are you well? Your application is inchoate. It is going from one end of the spectrum to another. It is going from they have taken false oaths to the three people you are naming be debarred from contesting elections to saying that the plane you were flying crashed to your daughter being missing to some former CJI trying to kill you. Are you well? No human being can understand the petition." Responding, the petitioner said, "Yes I am well, Sir. The petition is very clear, Sir. Yes, my daughter is being kidnapped, there is a police report

to this effect. I was also kidnapped and taken to a police station where they bargained with me that if I keep my mouth shut, they will hand over my child back to me." The bench told him the plea makes no sense and the single judge was right in holding that it was replete with unsubstantiated allegations. While dictating the order, the division bench said it was of the opinion that the appellant, if not suffering from hallucination, is conjuncting facts and certainly needs medical help. "But the appellant insists he is well and needs no medical help. However, keeping in view the provisions of the Mental Health Act, this court directs the SHO of the local police station, SDM and district judge to keep a watch on the appellant and if required, may exercise the discretion conferred on them, individually or collectively, under the said statute," it said. On May 30, the single judge had rejected the plea saying the allegations levelled were "reckless" and "unsubstantiated" and the petition was tainted with malafide and oblique motives and such averments in a petition cannot be entertained.

Student wings of INDIA Bloc parties protest at Jantar Mantar



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Raising slogans against the central government and the National Testing Agency (NTA), the student outfits of some INDIA bloc parties staged a protest at the Jantar Mantar here on Wednesday against alleged irregularities in several competitive examinations. In a separate protest, the Congress' youth wing, Indian Youth Congress (IYC), staged a demonstration against the

irregularities near the protest site. Several Youth Congress workers shaved their heads as a sign of protest while raising "anti-Modi" slogans. The members of the Left-backed All India Students Association (AISA), Student Federation of India (SFI), All India Students' Federation (AISEF), along with the Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha and the Congress' students wing NSUI gathered at the Jantar Mantar to take out a march. The student groups aimed to

march to the Parliament to press for their demands of scrapping the National Testing Agency, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation and decentralisation of entrance tests. However, the students were not able to hold the march due to heavy police deployment and barricading at the site. They also demanded re-examination of the medical entrance test NEET-UG for all candidates, who had appeared in the May 5 exam.

Rs 3,289 cr provision for highways in Chhattisgarh

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Union Ministry for Road Transport and Highways had approved Rs 3,289 crore for upgrading and road broadening work of national highways in Chhattisgarh.

This was stated by Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao on Wednesday.

Talking to reporters, Sao said the Center had sanctioned the amount for work on 18 highways, measuring 253 km.

Also, an additional Rs 35 crore has been approved by the ministry for survey and



preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) of 1,006 km of eight new highways, he said.

Sao said the Center had sanctioned the amount for work on 18 highways, measuring 253 km.

Sao thanked the Union government and Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari for making the provision for Chhattisgarh.

UNICEF lends helping hand for health sector in Surguja

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Wednesday collaborated with the Chhattisgarh government for supporting and enhancing development works in the health and nutrition sectors of Surguja division.

A government official said the Department of Health and Family Welfare has collaborated with UNICEF for primarily providing technical support in Surguja's newly formed district of Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur.

A biennial programme, from July 2024 to July 2026,



will ensure an extensive implementation of this project. UNICEF will not only provide technical support in the health and nutrition sectors in the district but will

also work on other components affecting health and nutrition such as education, sanitation, child protection and disaster management.

All the departments at district-level will provide required financial and administrative support.

Through this project, the health and nutrition initiatives in the Surguja division, particularly in Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, will gain significant momentum, the official said.

Representing UNICEF at the meeting were the Acting State Head, William Hanlon, Health Specialist Dr. Gajendra Singh and Nutrition Specialist Dr. Aparna Deshpande.

1,991 schools get facelift under 'School Jatan'

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

To provide a better learning environment, the Chhattisgarh government has renovated a total of 1,991 schools as part of the 'Mukhyamantri School Jatan Yojana', an official statement said on Wednesday.

Following the directive of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, repair and renovation works across the state have been expedited, with schools being decorated attractively. This has led to a rise in enrollments.

Renovation works have been completed in 333 schools in Mahasamund, 1,104 in Surguja, 280 in Rajnandgaon and 374 in Kanker district.



The works include artistic painting, additional rooms, refurbishments and other projects.

Man with severe blockage in heart, kidney veins gets renewed life

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

A 66-year-old patient with 100 percent blockage in the renal artery and 90 percent blockage in the coronary artery got a fresh lease of life after being treated through the laser excimer method.

As per the available medical literature, this is the first case in which a complete blockage of the kidney vein was treated by laser angioplasty, an official communiqué said on Wednesday.

A team led by the Head of the Cardiology Department, Dr. Smit Srivastava, of the Advanced Cardiac Institute in Raipur, performed the procedures.

The patient was treated



with interventional procedures called left renal artery chronic total occlusion and stent re-stenosis of the coronary artery. Dr. Srivastava said there

As per the available medical literature, this is the first case in which a complete blockage of the kidney vein was treated by laser angioplasty.

percent blockage and the other 70-80 percent.

First, the left renal artery, which was 100 percent blocked, was opened with an excimer laser. Then the path was widened with a balloon. The tube was opened completely, and normal flow was restored to the kidney by inserting a stent, he said.

The patient had undergone an angioplasty for the heart's coronary artery earlier. The blockage was inside the stent as well as outside, he said.

This too was opened with the help of a laser, and a path was created with the help of a balloon. The blood flow was restored by inserting a new stent, he said.

Both procedures were successful and the patient is recovering well, he said.



The medal winner of the Asian Powerlifting championship, J Bhagwat Rao from Bhillai, on Wednesday met Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, who lauded his feat at the event at Hong Kong. He also wished him a bright future.

AIIMS-R's Prof. Agrawal felicitated by IMA, Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), Delhi, felicitated Prof. Alok Chandra Agrawal, Dean (Academics), All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur, for his remarkable contribution to patient care.

He was felicitated with the 'Eminent Doctor Personality Award'.

At an event in New Delhi, IMA President Dr. R.V. Asokam and Secretary General Dr. Anil Kumar J. Nayak lauded Prof. Agrawal and his innovative approaches in academics. They praised him for his exceptional dedication and commitment.

"Your accomplishments and unwavering commitment to the medical profession make you an esteemed role model for aspiring doctors and a beacon of hope for patients," Dr. Asokam said.



Lt Gen (Retd) Ashok Jindal, Executive Director, and faculty members of AIIMS-R have also congratulated Prof. Agrawal.

RMC to set up AI lab in Raipur

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Raipur Municipal Corporation has issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) seeking a corporate partner to set up an Artificial Intelligence (AI) lab here, an official communiqué said on Wednesday.

The initiative aims to promote research innovation and technological innovation, strengthen educational opportunities, and drive economic growth in the region. It will also provide a platform for collaboration among local talent, researchers and businesses.

The EOI has been issued to reflect transparency, inclusiveness and leverage the best expertise, the communicate said.



कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, मंडल क्रमांक 1. रायपुर (छ.ग.)
दूरभाष - (0771) 2331431 फेक्स - (0771) 4055885 ईमेल: Sel.raipur@gov.in
निविदा निरस्तीकरण सूचना
पृ. क्र. /40-48/सा.24 रायपुर, दिनांक /07/2024

इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा क्रमांक 152896 एन.आई.टी. क्रमांक 235 दिनांक 14.02.2024 B.T Patch Repair work on Jora Saddu Dhaneli Road (Ring Road No. -3) Under Sub Dn. No. 3 Raipur को अपरिहार्य कारणों से निरस्त किया जाता है।
जी.नं. 07896

अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, मंडल क्रमांक 1. रायपुर (छ.ग.)
G-242500789/3

'Know Your Army' education programme on Oct 5, 6

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Indian Army will hold 'Know Your Army' educational tour programmes on October 5 and 6 to provide a comprehensive understanding of the military to people of Chhattisgarh, especially children.

The Commander of the Indian Army for Chhattisgarh and Odisha subregions, Brigadier Aman Anand, briefed Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai about the programme in Raipur on Wednesday.

The initiative aims to instill discipline, patriotism, and awareness of the army's contributions and foster enthusiasm for military service in children.

Anand said the children will be taken on educational tours to various military institutions across the country.



He added that the programme will showcase various weapons and techniques of warfare. Along with this, exhibitions of tanks, artillery, air defence weapons, bridging equipment and other armaments will be held.

New AI model to boost patient response to cancer therapy

AGENCIES ■

Australian researchers have developed a new artificial intelligence (AI) tool that can help to select the most suitable treatment for cancer patients. The new tool DeepPT, developed by researchers at The Australian National University (ANU), predicts a patient's messenger RNA (mRNA) profile.

This mRNA -- essential for protein production -- is also the key molecular information for personalised cancer medicine.

When combined with another tool called ENLIGHT, DeepPT was found to successfully predict a patient's response to cancer therapies across multiple types of cancer, said lead author Dr Danh-Tai Hoang from ANU.

Dr Hoang said, "DeepPT

was trained on over 5,500 patients across 16 prevalent cancer types, including breast, lung, head and neck, cervical and pancreatic cancers."

The tool, detailed in the journal Nature Cancer, showed an improvement in patient response rate. The AI tool draws on microscopic pictures of patient tissue called histopathology images, also providing another key benefit for patients.

"This cuts down on delays in processing complex molecular data, which can take weeks," Dr Hoang said, as any delay can affect patients with high-grade tumours who might require immediate treatment.

"In contrast, histopathology images are routinely available, cost-effective, and timely," Hoang added.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Opp walkout during Modi reply a disgrace: Dhankhar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday said the Opposition has set a "dangerous precedent antithetical to democratic values" by walking out during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply during discussion on the motion of thanks to President's address. In his concluding remarks of the 264th session of Rajya Sabha before adjourning the House sine die, Dhankhar also termed the instance of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge walking into the well of the House during the session "a disgrace to parliamentary conduct and propriety".



over the disruptions that marred the proceedings". "Witnessing seasoned members conduct themselves irresponsibly was particularly disheartening. I wish to reiterate that disruption not only impedes the transaction of the listed business but also erodes the prestige of this esteemed institution," he asserted. Pointing out the instance of Kharge entering the Well of the Rajya Sabha on Friday, Dhankhar said, "It was extremely painful to notice that even the Leader of the Opposition walked into the Well of the House and that was

a disgrace to parliamentary conduct and propriety." He asked the members of the House to "exemplify their conduct so that this becomes a temple for deliberations, discussion, dialogue and debate". "Their walkout today was extremely painful. It was a historic occasion. The government was in its third term with the prime minister heading it continually after six decades. They walked away from their constitutional ordainment and that has set a dangerous precedent antithetical to democratic values," Dhankhar said.

The 264th session of the Upper House began with President Droupadi Murmu's address to both houses of Parliament, which the chairman described as "an important tradition that set the tone and outlined the government's agenda". The House also witnessed Modi introducing his new council of ministers after he was sworn-in as the prime minister for the third consecutive term. "The Motion of Thanks to the President's address witnessed lively participation by 76 members for over 21 hours. The House also heard maiden speeches by 19 newly-elected members," Dhankhar said. The Rajya Sabha chairman said while the prime minister gave a "spirited address while participating in the debate", the House lost 43 minutes due to forced adjournments but the shortfall was "made up by continuing discussion during lunch break and sitting beyond the scheduled time".

Putin, envoys condole devotees' deaths in Hathras stampede

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday expressed condolences over the stampede at a religious congregation in Uttar Pradesh in which 121 people were killed. Several envoys here including Germany, China, France and Israel also mourned the deaths. "President of Russia Vladimir Putin sent a condolence message to President of India Droupadi Murmu & Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi over the tragic stampede in #UttarPradesh: Kindly accept the most sincere condolences over the tragic accident in Uttar Pradesh," the Russian Embassy in India said in a social media post. The stampede took place on Tuesday at Phulrai village in Sikandra Rao area of the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh. The victims were part of the crowd of thousands that had gathered near Phulrai village in the Sikandra area for the 'satsang' by religious a

preacher. Meanwhile, envoys of several countries, including Germany, France, China and Israel have mourned the loss of lives in a stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras and extended condolences to the victims' families. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in a social media post on Tuesday had said he was deeply distressed by the tragic incident. "Deeply saddened by the tragic loss of lives in a stampede in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. Sincere condolences to the bereaved families. Pray for the speedy recovery of the injured," he wrote on the social media platform. The stampede at a religious congregation killed 121 people as devotees suffocated to their deaths and bodies piled atop each other in the worst such tragedy in recent years. The incident took place as the devotees -- most of them women -- headed home after a 'satsang' in the Hathras district's Phulrai village. The 'satsang' was conducted by Baba Narayan Hari, who is also



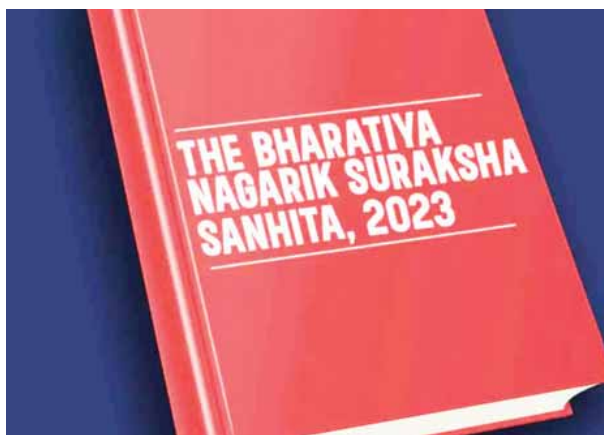
known as Jagat Guru Saakar Vishwahari's Bhole Baba. German envoy Philipp Ackermann in a post on Tuesday evening offered condolences to the families that lost their loved ones in the stampede and said he was deeply saddened about the tragic incident. "Deeply saddened about the tragic events in Hathras. My condolences to the families that lost their loved ones. We hope that help quickly reaches the injured," he wrote on the social media platform. Later on Tuesday night, Chinese envoy Xu Feihong also took to X to mourn the loss of lives in the incident.

"Shocked and saddened about the tragic events in Hathras, UP. Deeply mourn for the lives lost and extend heartfelt sympathies to victims' families. Wish the injured a speedy recovery," he wrote on the social media platform. French Ambassador to India Thierry Mathou also posted a message on X, which was reposted by the French Embassy in New Delhi. "Deeply saddened by the loss of lives following the tragic stampede in Uttar Pradesh's #Hathras district. France expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the victims and wishes the injured a speedy recovery," the envoy wrote on X. Israeli Ambassador Naor Gilon also echoed the sentiments expressed by the other envoys. "Deeply saddened about the loss of lives at the tragic stampede in #Hathras, UP. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims. Wishing a speedy recovery to the injured. Such incidents are truly heartbreaking," he wrote on X.

New law makes sexual offences gender neutral

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A police officer can detain a person who resists or disregards lawful directions to prevent a cognisable offence, according to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) which came into effect on Monday. Also, the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which replaces the British-era Indian Penal Code, has made sexual offences "gender neutral" for the victim and the perpetrator, according to official documents. The BNSS, which replaced the British-era Code of Criminal Procedure, has introduced "a new insertion" as Clause 172 in 'Preventive Action of the Police'. It states that people must conform to directions of the police issued in the course of preventing the commission of a cognisable offence, officials said. The provision allows a police officer to detain such person and produce them before a magistrate or, in petty cases, release the person as soon as possible within 24 hours, they said. Under the BNSS, police officials have been given a layer of immunity in cases of dereliction in carrying out duties on the orders of an executive magistrate to disperse unlawful assembly. In such cases, police officers cannot be prosecuted without the sanction of the government.



Under clause 58 of the BNSS, police personnel can now produce an arrestee before any magistrate within 24 hours even if the judicial officer does not have jurisdiction, officials said. A provision has also been made under Clause 53 that a medical practitioner conducting an examination of an arrested person can conduct one more medical exam if the practitioner deems it fit, the officials said. To misuse arrest provisions by the police, an additional obligation has been cast on the state governments under BNSS clause 37/B to designate a police officer who would be responsible for maintaining information about all arrests and arrestees. The information will have to be prominently displayed in every police station and at district headquarters. The new criminal law also makes it mandatory for a police

officer to get permission from an officer ranked Deputy Superintendent of Police or above in case of offences punishable with imprisonment below three years and the accused being infirm or above 60 years of age. Information related to an arrest can now be furnished to "any other person" apart from the present arrangement of "relative or a friend". "The category of persons who could be informed regarding the arrest of an arrestee has been expanded to include 'any other person', apart from the existing provisions related to informing any relative or a friend," an official said. Clause 48/3 of BNSS makes it mandatory that an entry of the fact as to who has been informed of the arrest shall be made in a book to be kept in the police station in such form as the state government may provide.

BJP flays Opposition MPs for RS walkout

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday flayed the opposition members for staging a walkout during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the Rajya Sabha and said their intention was to only create ruckus in the House as they did not have the "strength" to hear the truth. The opposition parties' INDIA bloc, led by the Congress, staged a walkout of the Rajya Sabha after the Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was not allowed to intervene during Prime Minister Modi's reply on the motion thanking President Droupadi Murmu for her address to the joint sitting of Parliament. "The opposition is demoralised, aimless and anarchic due to its defeat (in the Lok Sabha polls) for the third time in a row. It is disrespecting our constitutional values and is busy in conspiracy to hide its defeat," BJP chief and Leader of the Rajya Sabha JP Nadda said in a social media post. "These negative efforts by them cannot hinder the NDA government's journey towards achieving its goal of building a 'developed India'," he added. Nadda said that Prime Minister Modi paved the way for building a "developed India" in the



Rajya Sabha in his reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address. This will become a roadmap for the progress of people and rapid development of the country, he added. Nadda said the last 10 years under Prime Minister Modi's leadership have been marked by "revolutionary decisions, historic progress and upliftment" of people. "This journey of development will acquire new dimensions in 'Modi government-3.0'," the BJP chief said. "We will take the global prestige of the nation to new heights," he added. Slamming the Opposition members, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged that they staged a walkout during the prime minister's speech as they did not have the strength to hear the truth. "It's sad. They had boycotted the prime minister's speech in

the last session. They created uproar (in the Lok Sabha) in the current session as well and boycotted (PM's speech) in the Rajya Sabha. This shows that perhaps, as the prime minister also said, they do not have the strength to hear the truth," he told reporters in Parliament complex, when asked for comment. On the Opposition's charge that Kharge was not allowed to intervene during the prime minister's speech, Trivedi said the Leader of the Opposition spoke in the Rajya Sabha for about 90 minutes and the treasury benches listened to him "peacefully". "They started making noise when the prime minister was speaking. This clearly means that they did not intend to hear the truth. Their objective was not to hear the reply to their questions but only create uproar," the BJP MP charged.

India-Mongolia joint military exercise to defence boost ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a further boost to bilateral defence ties, the 16th edition of India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant' commenced on Wednesday at Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya). The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from July 3-16, army said here. Last edition of the annual exercise was conducted in Mongolia in July 2023. Giving details about the latest drill, officials said Indian contingent comprising of 45 personnel is being represented by a battalion of Sikkim Scouts along with personnel from other arms and services. The Mongolian contingent is being represented by personnel from 150 Quick Reaction Force Battalion of the Mangolian Army. The Opening Ceremony of the Exercise was attended by His Mongolian Envoy to India Dambajavyn Ganbold and Major General Prasanna Joshi, General Officer Commanding 51 Sub Area of the Indian Army. The aim of the Exercise is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate. The exercise will focus on operations in the semi-urban and mountainous



terrain. Tactical drills during the Exercise include Response to a Terrorist Action, Establishment of a Joint Command Post, Establishment of an Intelligence and Surveillance Centre, Securing of a Helipad/ Landing Site, Small Team Insertion and Extraction, Special Heliborne Operations, Cordon and Search Operations besides Employment of Drones and Counter Drone Systems amongst others. Major General Gyanbamba Sunrev, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Mongolia is scheduled to attend the closing ceremony on July 16 along with Lieutenant General Zubin A Minwalla, General Officer Commanding 33 Corps of the Indian Army. The Exercise will enable both sides to share their best practices in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures of conducting joint operations. The exercise will also facilitate developing interoperability, bonhomie and camaraderie between the two armies. This will also enhance the level of defence cooperation, further augmenting bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

Cabinet panels on security, economy, political affairs formed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi government on Wednesday constituted various cabinet committees, including the country's highest decision making bodies on security, economic and political affairs. According to an official notification, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) comprises Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Apart from Prime Minister Modi, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs comprises Defence Minister, Home Minister, Finance Minister, External Affairs Minister, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Heavy Industries and Steel Minister HD Kumaraswamy. Others in the committee are: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of Panchayati Raj and Fisheries Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh.

Aspirin can reduce flu-induced inflammation in blood vessels in pregnancy, says study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Aspirin, commonly used to manage preeclampsia (a type of high blood pressure) in pregnant women, shows potential in alleviating flu-induced inflammation in blood vessels when administered in low doses, according to a first-of-its-kind study in the world. This approach could enhance placental blood flow, critical for foetal development during pregnancy, said the study led by Dr Stella Liong, a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at RMIT University. The researchers investigated whether therapies used for preeclampsia could be adapted to mitigate the effects of flu infections. Influenza A infections during pregnancy is a big concern as every pregnancy overlaps with part of a flu season. The outcomes were promising in mice, highlighting aspirin's role in reducing inflammation and improving foetal outcomes, found the study. It was conducted in collaboration with Professor John O'Leary from Trinity College Dublin and Professor Doug Brooks from the University of South Australia. Low-dose aspirin is commonly taken to

prevent preeclampsia, as it stops the body from creating chemicals that cause inflammation. "When the vascular system is inflamed, it leads to poor blood flow and affects the aorta's function," she said. "This is especially a problem during pregnancy where good blood flow to the placenta is crucial to the development of the foetus." The research found foetuses and placenta from mice with influenza A were smaller than those from uninfected mice. Markers of low oxygen to the blood and poor blood vessel development were also evident in the foetuses. However, mice treated daily with low-dose aspirin had less inflammation and improved foetal development and offspring survival. Brooks said influenza A infections during pregnancy were a big concern. "There are long term implications for both the mother and the foetal, and aspirin might provide a simple solution for preventing this influenza associated pathology," Brooks said. As per health experts, the flu virus during pregnancy could trigger a damaging hyperactive immune response, causing the virus to spread around the body from the lungs through the blood vessels.



First Indian woman Naval officer scales Mt Kilimanjaro

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a historic feat Surgeon Commodore Diviya Gautam has become the first serving Naval Woman Officer from India to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, at a height of 19,341 ft on 6 June, Coast Guard said here on Wednesday. Mt Kilimanjaro is world's highest freestanding mountain and Africa's tallest peak. Giving details, officials said Diviya Gautam is posted as Principal Director Medical Services at Coast Guard Headquarters on deputation from Indian Navy. She joined the Indian Navy as a Doctor after graduating from Government Medical College Patiala in 1995. She climbed the peak along with her husband Commodore Gaurav Gautam (Retired) and 8 other Indian friends now set-

tled in the US. Though the couple did not have adequate physical preparation due to service exigencies but they owe their success to their military training, mental grit, endurance and proper acclimatisation, given the high altitude and varying weather conditions. Despite the physical and mental challenge involving diverse climatic zones making it an even more challenging endeavor, Diviya Gautam demonstrated remarkable perseverance and determination. The couple's ascent to the snow-clad peak is a testament of their good order training, will power and support of their organizing team and the teammates. They had started the final trek at 12 midnight and reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, Uhuru Peak on 6 June 2024 at 7:20 am after trekking non-stop for 7 hours.

Congress predicts fall of Modi Govt any time

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's legitimacy has been diminished to "one-third" and his Government is on its "last legs" and can fall anytime. Hitting out at the Prime Minister over his remarks on Manipur in the Rajya Sabha, the Congress also said he made an "astounding claim" that the situation is normal there when in actuality it is still tense and pointed out that he has still not visited the State since violence erupted in May last year. The Opposition party's assertion regarding recently held Lok Sabha polls came over the Prime Minister's remarks in the Rajya Sabha that since the results came out, one Congress leader kept on beating the drum that there is a "one-third government" in place. "What can be a bigger truth than this that we have completed 10 years, 20 more are left. One-third is done, two-thirds are still left and so we are very happy for this prediction," Modi said in his reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address to the joint sitting of Parliament. Modi's remarks were an apparent dig at Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who has been referring to the PM as 'one-



third PM'. Reacting to the remarks, Congress general secretary Ramesh said, "As always, the 'one-third' Pradhan Mantri is distorting. The label of 'ek tihai' (one-third) does not refer to his government's tenure. It refers to our very own non-biological PM." "After the resounding personal, political, and moral defeat of June 4th, it is his legitimacy and aura that has been diminished to one-third - and he himself is dependent on two other Ns for his political survival. His Government is anyways on its last legs and can fall anytime," Ramesh said in an apparent reference to JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar and TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu. In his speech in the Rajya Sabha, Prime Minister Modi said the 2024 general election verdict showed people have rejected propaganda and voted for performance. He said the politics of misleading people has been defeated. Modi said for his party BJP, the Constitution is not just a compilation of articles but its spirit and words are very important

too. As regards Manipur, Congress criticism came after Prime Minister Modi said violence in Manipur is continuously declining and the schools have reopened in most part of the state, and efforts are being made to ensure a return of complete peace. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Modi said the Centre was working with the state government and others to restore normalcy in the state. In his reaction to the remarks, Jairam Ramesh said, "Today in the Rajya Sabha, after months of absolute silence on the issue, the non-biological PM made the astounding claim that the situation in Manipur is normal." "In actuality, the situation is still tense as the MP from Inner Manipur pointed out in the Lok Sabha on 1st July. And the non-biological Pradhan Mantri has still not visited Manipur since it erupted on the night of May 3rd, 2023 - nor has he met with the political leaders of the state. The President's Address too was silent on the issue," he said.

MP Budget focuses on infrastructure development, women and tribal welfare

PTI ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday presented its budget for FY 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs 3.65 lakh crore, marking substantial allocations for infrastructure development and initiatives for women and tribals, amid din by Congress over a nursing college "scam". Finance Minister Jagdish Devda described the budget as "sarvparshi" (all-inclusive), announcing no new taxes during its presentation in the state legislative assembly. The assembly session, however, saw disruptions from Congress members who demanded the resignation of former medical education minister Vishvas Sarang over the nursing college "scam" and sought the setting up of a House committee of members of all parties. "The budget for the year 2024-25 aims to double its size in the next five years, with increased capital investment in roads, irrigation, electricity, quality health facilities, attracting investments for employment generation, and promoting good governance," Devda stated amidst din created by Congress members. Speaking to reporters after the Budget presentation, Devda condemned the conduct of the opposition in



the House. The budget proposes an outlay of Rs 3.65 lakh crore, marking a 16 per cent increase from the previous year. Significant allocations include Rs 26,560 crore for the women and child development department, up 81 per cent from the last fiscal. Capital expenditure is expected to rise by 15 per cent compared to the previous year, amounting to 4.25 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product. The fiscal deficit in 2024-25 is estimated to be 4.11 per cent of the GSDP, the minister said. Allocations have also been enhanced for infrastructure from Rs 49,009 crore in the previous fiscal to Rs 53,460

crore, urban and rural development from Rs 39,326 crore to Rs 44,588 crore, Scheduled Tribe sub-plan (Rs 40,804 crore), and Scheduled Caste sub-plan (Rs 27,900 crore). The 'Ladli Behna Yojana', the BJP government's flagship scheme under which eligible women are paid Rs 1,250 per month, receives Rs 18,984 crore, while Rs 15,509 crore is earmarked for establishing government primary schools and Rs 9,258 crore for middle schools. The agriculture sector allocation has been raised from Rs 22,732 crore in the previous FY to Rs 26,126 crore. Devda highlighted plans to double the budget size in the

coming years, citing improvements in per capita income and poverty alleviation efforts. "The per capita income in the state has gone up to Rs 1.42 lakh in 2022-23 from Rs 13,465 in 2003-2004," he said. Devda, citing Niti Aayog data, reported a notable reduction in poverty with 2.30 crore people lifted out of it over the past decade. The budget allocates 15% for infrastructure, 13% for health, 11% for education, and 7% for agriculture, with 8% each designated for loan repayment and interest. The 'Ladli Laxmi Yojana' has benefited 48.03 lakh women since its inception, while other provisions include constructing Sant Ravidas memorials in 30 districts and a Rs 500 crore provision for infrastructure related to the 2028 Simhashta congregation in Ujjain. Additionally, cultural and religious tourism initiatives like the "Shri Krishna Pathy Yojana" to identify and develop the route covered by lord Krishna in Madhya Pradesh and "Ram Path Gaman Yojana" were emphasised, alongside a Rs 341 crore allocation for establishing "Vedant Peeth". While Devda was reading the budget speech, many MLAs from the Opposition entered the well of the House raising slogans over the nursing college scam.

Notably, the CBI is probing the alleged irregularities in the functioning of several nursing colleges that lacked infrastructure while some existed only on paper. Before Devda could complete his speech, which remained inaudible amid the din, the opposition members led by Singhar staged a walkout from the House and sat on a dharna in front of Mahatma Gandhi's statue in the assembly complex. Ahead of the Budget speech, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had said appropriate time was given to the Opposition for raising the issue on Tuesday and they should participate in the budget presentation as per the House tradition. Legislative Affairs Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya said the assembly proceedings will run as per the rules and traditions of the House and the opposition should raise their grievances through an appropriate procedure. Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar said the issue (nursing college scam) was raised by the opposition on Tuesday after the relaxation of the House rules. However, the opposition members ignored Vijayvargiya's suggestion and kept raising slogans in the well of the House. After standing for a while before the speaker's podium, the opposition members squatted on the floor of the well.

Assam Govt keen to develop clean source of coal for industries, says Chief Secy

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam government is keen to develop the state as a sustainable and environmentally clean source of coal for relevant industries, Chief Secretary Ravi Kota said. Kota said this while reviewing coal projects in the state with chairman and managing director of Coal India Limited (CIL) P M Prasad. The state government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, is also exploring ways to maximise exploration and utilisation of coal resources to accelerate economic growth, to reduce import of coal and to help in employment generation, Kota said while reviewing the progress of the ongoing projects of the North East Coalfields India Limited (NECIL) with Prasad. A delegation of senior CIL officials, led by Prasad, called on the chief secretary. At present, one coal mine in Margherita sub-division in Tinsukia district, under NECIL is actively extracting coal with an annual production of two lakh metric tonnes of coal. The production is likely to increase to three lakh tonnes per annum very soon and efforts are being undertaken to expand the same to 15 lakhs tonnes (1.5 mn tonnes) per annum, he said. "To achieve the same, coordinated action of the revenue and disaster



management, environment and forest, and mines and mineral departments of Assam with NECIL will be undertaken. It is anticipated that the increased production of coal will not only meet the requirements of state-based industries but also increase the revenue to the state exchequer significantly, Kota said. The chief secretary said that to improve the livelihood of the mining workforce of the state through targeted CSR activities, Coal India authorities may identify schools and hospitals in the areas of mining and work on infrastructural development wherever required. The concerned district administrations will provide necessary assistance as and when CIL shares the proposal in this context. Highlighting the sporadic incidents of illegal mining activities, the chief secretary suggested that the CIL authorities in coordination with the respective district administrations must mitigate such incidents by considering area-specific issues like coal intake by locals residing near the extraction areas.

BRS MLA booked for obstructing Govt officials on duty

PTI ■ KARIMNAGAR (TELANGANA)

A case was registered against BRS MLA P Kaushik Reddy for allegedly obstructing the District Collector and other government officials from discharging their duties in Karimnagar district, police said on Wednesday. The MLA from the Huzurabad constituency was booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which came into force from July 1 and he perhaps became the first public representative in the state to be booked under the new law. Kaushik Reddy, who had staged a protest during the Zilla Parishad General Body meeting here on Tuesday, "restrained" District Collector Pamela Sathpathy and others officials from discharging their duties, they said. "Demanding immediate action against an official, the BRS legislator sat on the floor in the Zilla Parishad meeting hall when the District Collector was about to leave the conference hall," a police official said. The Collector told the legislator that she would enquire into the allegations (against the official). Dissatisfied with the reply of the Collector, he "obstructed" her from doing duty, police said. On a complaint by the ZP Chief Executive Officer Srinivas, a case under Section 221 (obstruction of public servant) and Section 126(2) (Wrongful restraint) of BNS was registered against the BRS MLA on Tuesday, police added.

Assam floods: 11 wild animals drown in Kaziranga National Park

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Eleven animals, mostly hog deer, have drowned while 65 other animals have been rescued from floodwaters in Kaziranga National Park in Assam, an official said on Wednesday. Forty-two hog deer, two otters and sambars each and a Scops owl have been rescued, the official of the national park said. Of the 233 forest department camps in the Eastern Assam Wildlife Division, 173 have been inundated by gushing floodwaters, up from 167 on Tuesday, he said. In the Agorotoli range of the national park, 24 of the 34 camps have been inundated, while 51 of 58 camps in the central range, 37 of 39 in Bagori, 13 of 25 in Burapahar and seven of nine in Bokakhat range are under floodwaters. Altogether nine camps have been vacated by forest personnel so far, including two in Agorotoli, three in Bokakhat, two in the central range and one each in Biswanath and Nagaon wildlife divisions. The Forest department employees, including security personnel, stay in the camps inside the national park to conduct patrolling for the protection of



flora and fauna. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reviewed the situation in the national park on Tuesday and directed the authorities to take adequate precautions, including regulation of vehicular traffic on NH 715, to ensure that wildlife is not harmed. Meanwhile, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) have been imposed to restrict the movement of vehicular traffic on NH 715 passing through the national park. Experts pointed out that floods are essential for the preservation and rejuvenation of the ecosystem of the Kaziranga National Park as Brahmaputra's overflow and increase in the level of water not only revitalises the grasslands but the excess water flow also flushes out the aquatic weeds and unwanted plants.

Five held for clash between BJP, Cong workers in Ahmedabad; two FIRs filed

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Police arrested five persons in Gujarat's Ahmedabad on Wednesday, a day after workers of the BJP and Congress hurled stones at each other outside the opposition party's state headquarters here on Tuesday during a protest against "anti-Hindu" remarks made by Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha. Deputy Commissioner of Police Shivam Verma said two FIRs were registered at the Ellisbridge police station regarding the clash and five persons were arrested on Wednesday. Five policemen, including an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), were injured in the stone-pelting by both the sides outside Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan, Congress's state headquarters near Ashram Road in Paldi area of the city. While one FIR was registered against nearly 450 workers of both - Congress and BJP, another was registered against Congress workers on a complaint given by the youth wing of the BJP's Ahmedabad unit, Verma said. Both the FIRs were registered under relevant sections of the



Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for offences, including unlawful assembly, rioting, endangering life or personal safety of others and causing hurt to an on-duty public servant. "Five police personnel, including an ACP, were injured in yesterday's incident. We have registered two FIRs - one based on a complaint given by a policeman, and another by city BJP's youth wing. Five persons, who might be associated with any of the party, were already arrested by us. CCTV videos revealed that they were involved in the

violence," said Verma, DCP (Zone 1) of the city police. The DCP said police did not take into consideration party affiliation while making arrests. In the first FIR, registered based on a complaint given by injured police constable Karmraj Bhagvatsinh, Congress' Leader of Opposition in the BJP-ruled Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC), Shehzad Khan Pathan and two women leaders of the opposition party - Pragati Ahir and Hetaben Parikh - were named in the FIR. Along with them, police have named a mob comprising around 250 Congress workers and 200 BJP workers as accused in the FIR. As per the FIR, it was Congress workers who first charged towards BJP workers after being incited by some Congress leaders. When police tried to stop them, the mob started throwing stones and thick wooden sticks towards the other side. After the attack, the BJP workers also engaged in stone pelting, said the FIR, adding that the complainant was rushed to hospital after a stone hit his head. Apart from him, two other police constables, a Home Guard and an ACP received injuries during the clash. Around 2.30 pm on Tuesday, the BJP's Ahmedabad unit announced that the party's youth wing will hold a demonstration outside Congress office in the evening against Rahul Gandhi's remarks in Hindus. Upon learning about the protest, the city police had deployed its personnel to thwart any violence. After the clash, the police detained several persons from both sides and brought the situation under control.

ED questions TV actors in fraud forex trading app case



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday recorded the statement of two television actors here as part of a money laundering investigation linked to the operations of an "illegal" online forex trading platform that is alleged to have duped investors to the tune of Rs 500 crore, official sources said. The sources said actors Krystel Dsouza and Karan Wahi were called for questioning in order to elicit information about some payments being made for promotions of the app named OctaFx which also had a website - www.Octafx.Com. The statements of the two have been recorded as the ED is investigating this case under the provisions of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said. Another TV actor and model Nia Sharma has also been summoned, the sources said. It is understood that the agency wants to understand the operations of the platform and these actors may not be seen as wrongdoers or accused. The money laundering case of the ED stems from a Pune Police (Shivaji Nagar police station) FIR filed against the app and its promoters who are alleged to have duped numerous investors by luring them with high returns. The federal agency had earlier said that the app (OCTAFX) and its website were "not authorised" by RBI to deal in forex trading. It had said that the platform was widely promoted on social networking sites and is following referral-based incentive models for acquiring users. "It has emerged in the investigation that multiple accounts of different Indian banks were being shown to investors/users on OctaFx trading app/www.Octafx.Com

for collecting funds in the guise of facilitating forex trading. "It was found that OctaFx has manipulated trade activities and information shown on its platform ultimately resulting in net loss to the traders," the ED alleged in a statement after it conducted raids against the company and its promoters in April in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Delhi. These accumulated funds, after "defrauding" these investors/users, were transferred to multiple e-wallet accounts or to bank accounts of dummy entities, it claimed. "This way, OctaFx India Pvt Ltd, OctaFx, and their entities have cheated investors in the guise of forex trading thereby earning a profit of more than Rs 500 crore from the Indian region," the ED said. A portion of these funds, as per the agency, were "layered" through a web of complex transactions with the help of shell entities and remitted abroad to its related entities in the garb of bogus freight services, import of services, etc. The agency had claimed that a network of chartered accountants and professionals, who gave fake certificates of remittances and facilitated bank accounts/companies for layering of such funds, was involved in running this platform. The entire process of reflecting account numbers of dummy entities, managing the funds collected in these accounts and diversion of the same were being managed and operated by owners of OctaFx group entities based in Spain, Russia, Georgia and Dubai, the agency said. It said OctaFx hired several Indian individuals working in Spain/Russia for operating the trading platform. It has attached crypto currencies, bank deposits and gold coins worth Rs 35 crore in this case till now.

Amaravati will be rebuilt by restoring investor confidence: Andhra CM

PTI ■ AMARAVATI (ANDHRA PRADESH)

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday vowed to start rebuilding Amaravati by restoring investor confidence and reconstructing its brand image, after crossing all the hurdles set in its path allegedly by the erstwhile YSRCP regime. Releasing a white paper on the state of the greenfield capital city conceptualised during the TDP government between 2014 and 2019, the Chief Minister said he will tell everything about Amaravati to the Centre and move in a fast and time-bound manner to execute it. "Rebuilding Amaravati would have already started from yesterday and officials were given instructions. Crossing all the legal hurdles, we will go ahead," said Naidu.

Jailed radical preacher Amritpal likely to take oath as MP on July 5

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH/AMRITSAR

Jailed radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh, who recently won the Khadoor Sahib parliamentary seat in Punjab, is likely to take oath as Lok Sabha member on Friday. The chief of the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit, who is currently lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail along with nine associates under the National Security Act, has been granted a four-day parole to enable him to take oath, officials in Amritsar said. Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa, an Independent MP from Faridkot, said Amritpal Singh is likely to take oath as MP on July 5. "I went to meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at his residence in Delhi on Wednesday. He said the oath will be administered on July 5," Khalsa told PTI over



phone. He also said that clearances and permissions from various quarters to enable Amritpal Singh to take oath have come. "I understand that he will be flown in from the prison for taking oath, which will be in the private chamber of the Speaker," he said. Khalsa said the sole purpose of his meeting the Speaker

on Wednesday at the latter's Akbar Road residence in the national capital was regarding Amritpal Singh's oath taking issue. About parole, Deputy Commissioner-cum District Magistrate, Amritsar, Ghamshyam Thori told PTI, "Amritpal Singh has been granted parole for up to four days or less beginning 5th July with certain conditions

that has been communicated to Jail Superintendent Dibrugarh." In response to another query about the parole, Thori said in a brief statement, "...Granted by District Magistrate, Amritsar, after authorisation by the Home Department." According to Rajdev Singh Khalsa, a lawyer of Amritpal Singh who meets him in jail, said he (Amritpal), through the Dibrugarh jail superintendent, had recently sent a letter to the Amritsar deputy commissioner, who in turn forwarded it to the state government for necessary clearance to allow the jailed preacher to take oath. His temporary release was sought under Section 15 of the National Security Act. Having fought the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as an independent, Amritpal Singh won from the Khadoor Sahib Lok Sabha seat after he

defeated Congress candidate Kulbir Singh Zira. He won by a margin of 1,97,120 votes. Amritpal Singh, who styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was arrested in Moga's Rode village on April 23 last year following an over a month-long manhunt. The Khalistan sympathizer had escaped the police net in Jalandhar district on March 18, switching vehicles and changing appearances. The Punjab Police had launched the crackdown after the February 23 Ajnala incident last year in which Amritpal Singh and his supporters, some of them brandishing swords and guns, broke through barricades and barged into the police station on the outskirts of Amritsar city, and clashed with police for the release of Lovepreet Singh Toofan, one of his aides.



Vocal for Local Recognition for Local Products

Nestled in the lap of nature and rich in cultural heritage, Uttarakhand is a major center for handloom, handicrafts, medicinal wonders, and food products. Under the guidance of the country's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, Uttarakhand's remarkable traditions and abundant natural products, becoming a center of creativity and simplicity, attracting tourists from India and around the world. Continuous efforts are being made under the leadership of the young Chief Minister, Pushkar Singh Dhama, to give new recognition to the state's unparalleled handloom weaving art and develop weavers.

Many significant steps are being taken by the double-engine government to promote handloom and handicrafts, coarse and nutritious grains, silk, eco-textiles, bamboo bottles, and natural products in Uttarakhand. The skilled artisans of Uttarakhand create excellent and popular products with their nimble fingers and deep understanding of traditional techniques. This amazing craft skill is a testament to them.

The dedication of the weavers to preserve their heritage shows how they proudly present their ancestors' incomparable knowledge to the world. The talented artisans of Uttarakhand create magnificent products through their exquisite art. Every product they make reflects incredible creativity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama are always with them to keep up their spirit.

The fertile soil and favourable climate of Uttarakhand yield abundant fresh produce and unique ingredients. From aromatic spices to food products, the taste of each product is mesmerizing. The delicious cuisine offers an unforgettable taste experience to the tourists visiting here.

Uttarakhand is a state in India where you can see the vibrant heritage of excellent craftsmanship. You can enjoy the unique flavours of traditional dishes and also discover those natural food products that have been nurtured and preserved for generations.

"House of Himalayas further strengthens our concept of 'Vocal for Local and Local to Global'"

Narendra Modi

"Our Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji laid the foundation of House of Himalayas and with his support & guidance, it has become an Umbrella brand & is growing day by day. With this initiative, local products of Uttarakhand have got a new identity and their demand is increasing from different parts of the country. Through this, women self-help groups (SHGs) of the state are getting financially empowered consistently. House of Himalayas will not only empower women financially, but it will also prove to be a hub of the state's development."

Pushkar Singh Dhama
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand Handloom and Handicrafts: A Rich Tradition

The handloom sector is one of the main symbols of India's cultural heritage. In the Himalayan states, Kashmir Valley's Pashmina, Himachal Pradesh's Kullu and Kinnauri, and Uttarakhand's handloom sarees are prominent. Handicrafts and handloom are ancient arts of Uttarakhand. The state's craftsmanship has been rich since ancient times. For centuries, it has been a major source of livelihood for the local people. After the state's formation, recognizing the immense potential for new employment opportunities in this sector, the government established a separate body called the Uttarakhand Handloom & Handicraft Development Council (UHHDC).



UHHDC has also partnered with the famous e-commerce site Amazon, through which handicraft products worth lakhs of rupees have been sold so far, giving these products an international recognition.

Uttarakhand Handloom and Handicraft Development Council (UHHDC)

- Established as an agency of the Uttarakhand government to inspire, guide, and organize the state's artisans.
- It is a registered society set up by the government to act as the apex body for the overall development of handloom and handicrafts.
- Its purpose is to promote handicrafts in the state and create sustainable employment opportunities.
- 'Himadri' has been established as a brand under the registered trademark of UHHDC and as a mark of quality and genuine craft products of the state.
- Genuine handmade products are sold under the 'Himadri' brand name through UHHDC emporiums.
- Under the Himadri banner, Uttarakhand's handloom and handicraft products are displayed at craft markets, Delhi Haat, international trade fairs, Surajkund Mela, and other exhibitions, by artisans in markets. Currently, Himadri showrooms are in New Delhi, Dehradun, Uttarkashi, Haldwani, Haridwar, and Uttarakhand Sadan.
- Additionally, as the government's nodal agency, UHHDC organizes several craft fairs/exhibitions/promotions from time to time.

Kulath (Horse Gram)

This pulse is widely grown in Uttarakhand's soil and is known locally as Kulath or Gahat. It is a very popular 'dal' (pulse) in Uttarakhand, renowned for its medicinal properties that provide relief from arthritis and kidney stones. The whole grains are soaked, then fried or boiled to make dal or soup. It is cultivated at an altitude of 1200 meters to 1800 meters above sea level.

Local Name: Gahat,
Botanical Name: Macrotyloma uniflorum,
Variety: VI Gahat - 1



Black Soybean

Black soybeans, or Bhatt, are extensively cultivated in Uttarakhand. They are a rich source of protein and iron. A very popular dish made from it is a soup prepared by boiling it with other pulses like Gahat and chickpeas. The soup is cooked with rice flour in an iron skillet to make an almost oil-free, iron-rich soup.

Local Name: Bhattmas, Kalabhata, or Bhatt,
Botanical Name: Glycine Max,
Nutritional Content: Water 8.1g, Protein 43.3g, Fat 19.25g, Iron 11.5mg, Calcium 240mg, Carbohydrates 20.9g, Phosphorus 690mg, Fiber 3.7g, Vitamins A and B



Rajma (Kidney Beans)

Uttarakhand is home to over a hundred varieties of kidney beans or Rajma, extensively grown by marginal farmers as a cash crop throughout the state. They can be boiled, baked, or made into dal. To make dal, the whole grains are soaked, then fried or boiled. It is cultivated at an altitude of 1000 to 2000 meters above sea level.

Local Name: Rajma, Kemi,
Botanical Name: Phaseolus Vulgaris, Varieties: Pusa Parvati, Jampa Arka Komal, Pant Anupama, Pantbean 2.
Nutritional Content: Water 12.0g, Protein 22.9g, Fat 1.3g, Iron 6.8mg, Calcium 260mg, Carbohydrates 60.6g, Phosphorus 410mg



Nutritious Grains



Micro-nutrient-rich grains have been a major component of Uttarakhand's diet since ancient times. The high nutritional value of these grains are now gaining worldwide Recognition. These micro-nutrient-rich grains have a tremendous ability to grow in dry, rocky soil, and they produce a high amount of straw, which is beneficial for local livestock.



Ragi
Ragi is used in the form of flour. It is mixed with some amount of wheat while kneading the dough and eaten as chapati. It is commonly eaten in winters. Now, it is being used to make bakery products, baby food, and other baked derivatives.
Local Name: Mandua,
Botanical Name: Eleusine Coracana,
Nutritional Content: Water 13.1g, Protein 7.3g, Fat 1.3g, Calcium 344mg, Carbohydrates 72.0g, Vitamins A and B, Calories 328, Iron 6.4mg

Uttarakhand Bamboo and Fiber Development Board: Bamboo and Nettle Products



Nettle Fiber Lamps
Traditional artisans from the state of Uttarakhand, located at the foothills of the Himalayan mountain range, make lamps from bamboo and nettle grass. Made from Himalayan nettle fiber fabric found in the Uttarakhand Himalayas, these lamps are excellent at spreading light with the warmth of nature, giving any indoor space a soft look.

Bamboo Bottles

We are promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable lifestyle products made from bamboo. These bamboo bottles are launched with an elegant high-quality real bamboo cover and insulated stainless steel interior.



Himalayan Nettle Eco-Textile

Girardinoladiversifolia Uttarakhand Himalayas

Himalayan Nettle: Himalayan nettle is a perennial plant found at an altitude of 1200 to 2900 meters above sea level in the temperate and subtropical Himalayan zones. It is mainly found in the outskirts of Uttarakhand villages as well as in high-altitude, moist broadleaf forests. People have been wearing clothes made from nettle fiber for thousands of years. However, with the arrival of synthetic and other fibers in the market, nettle lost its popularity. Recognizing the potential of this fiber, the Uttarakhand Bamboo and Fiber Development Board is promoting environment friendly natural fiber as a livelihood option for the hill people, especially the Bhotiya community of Uttarakhand, who are preparing various products from nettle fiber. The characteristics of nettle fiber make it very different from other fibers, with unique properties such as:

- Its fibers are useful for making fabrics with both warm and cold thermal properties.
- These fibers are used to make antimicrobial, antibacterial, and fire-resistant fabrics.
- Useful as a resistance to reduce wrinkles.

By using nettle fiber products, you not only adopt quality products but also participate in a holistic mission that empowers artisans supporting the environment, promoting sustainable eco-fabrics and Earth's biodiversity, while assisting thousands of marginal artisans and tribal communities in rural areas.



Doon Silk: The Finest Silk of Uttarakhand

Doon Silk, a brand under Uttarakhand Cooperative Silk Federation (UCRF), is a driving force in revitalizing the traditional silk weaving of Uttarakhand. The Doon Silk brand places great emphasis on producing handloom products using natural fibers such as silk, wool, and cotton. Bichhua (nettle) and hemp are also used, which do not harm our environment and ecosystem. Through Doon Silk, the aim is to provide employment to over 6,000 farmers, reelers, weavers, artisans, and dyers in Uttarakhand. These products are being exported to markets in European and American countries, receiving tremendous response there. They guarantee 100% purity to customers and are available at incredible prices. In the domestic markets, there is a high demand for silk sarees, coats, stoles, and shawls made from natural fibers. Additionally, the demand for these products is rapidly increasing overseas.

Introduction to HOUSE OF HIMALAYAS



The Government of Uttarakhand has been constantly working towards opening multiple avenues of rural livelihoods through various schemes and programs. Uttarakhand houses innumerable natural products that are high on nutrition with very little chemical footprint. While a few private players have tapped into this section in market, majority consumer remain unaware of the same. Looking at this particular caveat, various departments

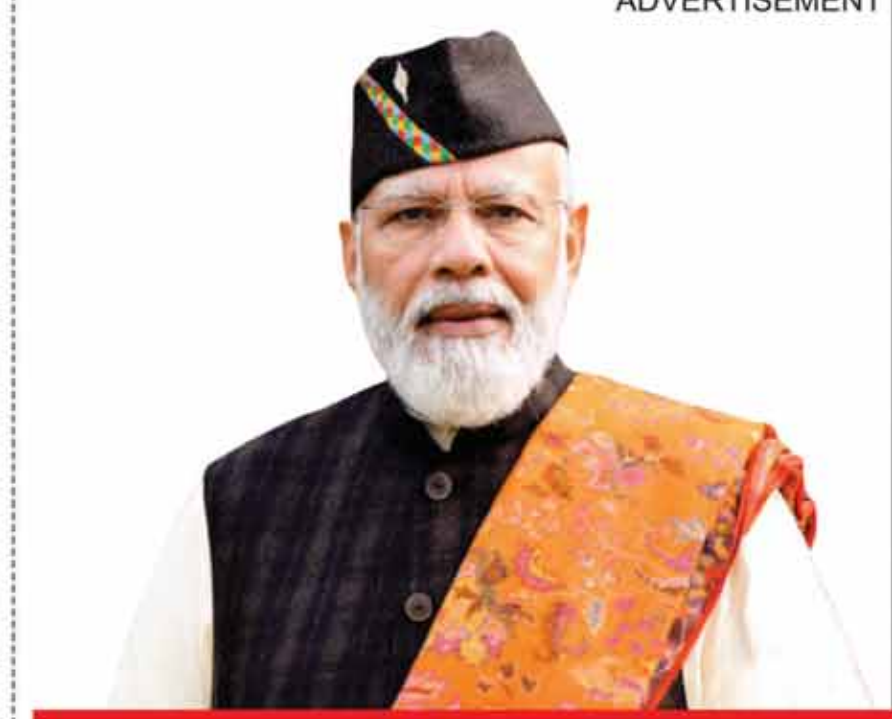
under the state government launched their respective brands to sell these pure, authentically produced goods. A few brands are namely - Hilans, Himadri, Himanya, Havepure, Gramyashree, Organic Uttarakhand etc. The objective was to increase sales of these products developed by SHGs, Artisans, Individual Entrepreneurs & Community based Organisations etc. and support them in becoming self-sufficient. For reasons like little access to larger customer base, quality assurance, guided method of running the businesses and a lot of overlapping in products in those mini-brands (created by the departments) - these smaller initiatives failed to see the light of success as expected. Thus, to promote all Uttarakhand products of distinct identity and enhanced commercial prospect, India's one-of-a-kind state government-initiated project - House of Himalayas was launched by the Prime Minister on 8th December 2023. House of Himalayas is to act as an umbrella brand for all products made in vicinity of the Uttarakhand state. The idea also lauds the concept of "Vocal for Local and Local for Global".

Key Differentiators

The umbrella brand is setup to leverage all the existing brands in the state and strengthen Himalayan livelihoods by increasing sales and improving the quality of products, better branding and packaging and create a line of premium products for National and International market. The below mentioned elements differentiates House of Himalayas from any other brand:-

- Premium Quality:** The products would stand out for their uncompromising quality and superior craftsmanship, setting them apart from mass-produced alternatives found at local fairs and markets.
- Authenticity Guarantee:** With a focus on authenticity and traditional techniques, our products offer a genuine experience that cannot be replicated by generic items found at local markets. Our products would undergo stringent quality control measures and hold certifications that attest to their superior quality, providing consumers with confidence and peace of mind in their purchase.
- Embracing Diversity:** We celebrate the rich tapestry of diversity that defines the Himalayan region, embracing the multitude of cultures, traditions, and perspectives that weave together to form the vibrant fabric of our brand. We amplify the voices of marginalized communities, rural women entrepreneurs by providing platforms for their stories to be heard, their talents to shine, and their contributions to be recognized and celebrated.
- True Community Impact:** By supporting our brand, consumers contribute to positive social impact initiatives within local communities, making a meaningful difference beyond their purchase.
- Transparent Sourcing:** The brand would offer complete transparency regarding the sourcing of materials and production processes, ensuring that consumers can trust

- the integrity of our products.
- Sustainability Focus:** We would prioritize sustainable sourcing and production practices, distinguishing our brand as a responsible choice for consumers who value ethical consumption.
- Holistic Brand Experience:** The Brand would provide a holistic brand experience that extends beyond the product itself, encompassing elements such as immersive storytelling, educational content, or experiential events, enriching the consumer journey.



"The foundation for building a developed India in the 21st century rests on two primary pillars: first, pride in our heritage, and second, relentless efforts towards progress. Today, Uttarakhand is strengthening both these pillars. This decade will be Uttarakhand's decade of growth."

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Key Impact Envisaged

The Umbrella brand would elevate the Himalayan origin products meeting global quality standards, advocating the Honourable Prime Minister's vision "Vocal for Local, Local to Global" campaign to bolster Himalayan livelihoods for sustainable development and community empowerment, with a particular emphasis on cultivating women entrepreneurs and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit To elevate Himalayan origin products meeting global quality standards, advocating the "Vocal for Local, Local to Global" campaign. We are targeting the transformation of 5,00,000 households, 50000 SHGs by 2030 into economically independent entities.

In addition to this quantitative impact the brand would have a multi fold qualitative impact on various social indicators, some of them are listed below:

- Increasing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the state.
- Strengthening livelihood of Women in the state and especially in rural areas.
- Promotion of Circular Economy.
- Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals.
- Uplift socio- economic situation of rural families by eradicating multi-dimensional poverty.
- Providing access to quality and decent jobs through the supply chain of the brand across the state.

OUR PRODUCT PORTFOLIO CONSISTS OF PREMIUM QUALITY & LOCATION SPECIFIC PRODUCTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE OF UTTARAKHAND LIKE:-

Pulses - Munsyari Rajma, Harshil Rajma, Horse gram, etc
Millets - Barnyard Millet, Finger Millet & Amaranthus etc
Bakery- Millet based bakery products.
Handicraft products.





www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Innocent lives lost

Stampede at a satsang in Hathras kills at least 121, highlighting the urgent need for stronger regulations

In a tragic and devastating incident in the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh, a stampede during a satsang resulted in the deaths of at least 121 people. Although the exact cause of the mishap will be determined after a detailed investigation, eyewitness accounts reveal that the stampede occurred when devotees surged forward to seek blessings from Narayan Sakar Vishwa Hari, also known as Bhole Baba. The devotees rushed to touch Bhole Baba's feet and attempted to gather soil from his path, a customary practice that led to the chaos. Many people fell into a nearby drain. Some eyewitnesses reported that after the satsang concluded, many followers rushed toward Bhole Baba to touch his feet or catch a glimpse of him as he departed in his car. People wanted to get his *darshan* and collect soil from the road on which his car left the venue. As the satsang ended, people started leaving in groups. Due to the rain, many slipped, and others fell on top of them, leading to a crushing cascade. Others maintain that people started rushing out due to the humidity when the incident occurred, and many followers, most of whom were women, felt suffocated.



The incident exposes many disturbing facts, ranging from the negligence of the administration to the unchecked influence of godmen over innocent people. Bhole Baba is reportedly absconding. First of all, the number of attendees far exceeded the permitted limit. The chief sewadar (organizer) of Baba's program estimated an attendance of around 80,000 people, but the actual number was significantly higher. Indeed, this breach of the permitted capacity likely exacerbated the situation, leading to overcrowding in a venue that was inadequate. Now, after this horrific incident, the government is in damage control mode. Compensation for the deceased has been announced, and the Chief Minister is expected to visit Hathras. Additionally, a team has been set up to investigate the cause of the incident. However, in all probability nothing will change and that this incident will soon be forgotten like many before. As we mourn the loss of 121 lives and support the injured and their families, it is imperative to learn from this tragedy and implement effective measures to prevent such incidents in the future. We must prioritise safety, preparedness, and responsible management to ensure the safety of the people. Moreover, shouldn't there be a check on the activities of mushrooming godmen who exploit people's faith and endanger their lives? Many such godmen become so powerful that they are able to dictate terms to the administration and have considerable political clout which gives them power. However, the lack of awareness among people and their sense of helplessness contribute to the proliferation of these godmen who thrive on the ignorance and innocence of the people.

PICTALK



Farmers carry paddy saplings for plantation in an agricultural field, in Nadia

Pandemonium in Parliament

As the Modi Govt navigates a new power dynamic, the increased presence and assertiveness of the Opposition suggest a challenging path ahead

The 18th Lok Sabha has the potential for positive functioning. The Modi government said they wanted consensus. Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought agreement and criticised the Opposition for causing problems. Modi stated that in his third term, his Government would aim to build consensus. The Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, also emphasised the importance of the Opposition's role in representing the 'voice of the people' in the House. But at the start of the session, they couldn't agree on important issues. Congress leader Sonia Gandhi wrote in an editorial recently in an English daily that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "Preaching consensus, provoking confrontation."

Sonia Gandhi criticised Prime Minister Modi for not acknowledging the electoral outcome and for promoting confrontation over consensus. She expressed disappointment with the first few days of the 18th Lok Sabha, pointing out that there's no sign of a changed attitude from the Prime Minister. The 18th Lok Sabha is a significant shift in Indian politics, marking the first time in a decade that Modi is leading a Parliament from a less dominant position. This shift in power dynamics requires him to navigate a coalition and contend with a more assertive opposition. The Modi government now relies on crucial support from two key allies - JD(U) and TDP. This means the NDA allies could significantly influence the Government's plans and actions, a departure from the substantial majority the BJP enjoyed in 2019 and 2014. The increased presence of the Opposition in various parliamentary panels is likely to generate greater engagement. The first session of the current Lok Sabha began with a strong Opposition asserting its rights. Before the session started, there was a dispute over the appointment of BJD M.P Bhartruhari Mahtab as the pro-tem Speaker to administer. The Congress and the INDIA



bloc members felt that Congress MP Kodukkunil Suresh, elected eight times, should have been given the position. However, the BJP argued that they followed the rules. Mahtab was elected to the House seven times in succession, while Suresh lost two elections. This appointment is significant as the Speaker plays a crucial role in the Indian parliamentary system as the head of the Lok Sabha, responsible for maintaining order, conducting debates, and ensuring the House's smooth functioning. Secondly, Rahul Gandhi said he would back Om Birla, the NDA candidate, but only if the Deputy Speaker position, usually given to the Opposition, was assured. While Thambi Durai of the AIADMK, a BJP ally at the time, served as the Deputy Speaker from 2014 to 2019, the position remained vacant from 2019 to 2024. Article 93 states two Lok Sabha members will be selected as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Om Birla has been re-elected as the Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha, bringing continuity and stability to the House. After being congratulated, the newly elected Speaker took out a paper and read a resolution against the 1975 Emergency imposed by

SOME OPPOSITION PARTIES THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL SPEECH TO A JOINT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT IGNORED THE COUNTRY'S MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS. ALSO, THE OPPOSITION CALLED FOR REMOVING THE SENGOL, WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD INSTALLED WITH MUCH FANFARE BEFORE THE ELECTION

late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This surprising move caught many off guard and caused tension with Congress, as the Emergency was declared on the same date in 1975. This led the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, to lead a group to the Speaker to express their objection to a political statement from the chair. Fourthly, some opposition parties thought the president's inaugural speech to a joint session of Parliament ignored the country's most serious problems. Also, the Opposition called for removing the Sengol, which the Prime Minister had installed with much fanfare before the Election. Fifthly, Rahul and other Opposition MPs proposed discussing the leakage of the NEET question paper first. The Speaker, however, insisted that a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, a significant issue, should be held first. The first week's confrontation shows despite the decrease in numbers, the BJP is unlikely to change its working methods. An energised opposition will also be belligerent. The proceedings in Rajya Sabha also saw disruptions and adjournments as Opposition members raised slogans demand-

ing a discussion on the NEET question paper leak issue. There was also a heated argument between the Chairman and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. The functioning of the House lies with the Speaker, a position of utmost importance in maintaining order and ensuring fair debates. The Rajya Sabha Chairman presides over the Upper House. A functioning House is necessary and a prerequisite for a healthy democracy. The need for constructive cooperation between the Government and the Opposition cannot be overstated. The House functions effectively in addressing the pressing issues facing the nation. Both sides must recognise the truth and collaborate to make Parliament more organised. After all, the Government is accountable to Parliament. The parliamentary system emphasises collective responsibility, accountability, and flexibility. As former President Pranab Mukherjee said, its functioning is based on Debate, Dissension, and Decision.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CYBERCRIME ON THE RISE

Madam — Despite warnings, people are losing huge amounts of money to cyber criminals via stock market investments and online purchases. Fraudsters generally target the middle-aged and the elderly but youngsters are not spared. People are lured by attractive advertisements on social media platforms like WhatsApp, telegram, Instagram and facebook. When innocent citizens are asked to pump money through websites, they fall in line because the "profit accrued by similar investors" is prominently displayed in the common group. Furthermore, the fraudsters "train" the investors in stock market intricacies. Unsuspecting investors are unaware that another victim's money is transferred to his/her "account" to show profit. Duped investors sense something is amiss when they are asked to cough up a substantial commission and when their genuine queries go unanswered or are vaguely shrugged off. However, only when the scamster swindles the hard-earned money out of a person does the latter go to the cyber police. Since most states, if not all, have cyber crime helplines, it is vital to report the fraud very quickly because the cheaters are known to waste little time in hoodwinking the law. It is always a good practice to ask SEBI or RBI licence from the opposite party. Fake websites can always be checked. Sharing one-time password(OTP) is never a good idea.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

RAHUL GANDHI MUST INTROSPECT

Madam — Rahul Gandhi's recent speech in Parliament was nothing short of a disgraceful spectacle. His attempt to lecture on Hinduism was an insult to the intelligence of the nation. By clumsily parroting platitudes about Hindu philosophy, Gandhi not only displayed his profound disconnect from

Tragedy strikes Hathras



More than 100 people died and several others were injured in a stampede at a religious congregation in a village in Hathras district on Tuesday, 2 July, police said. Senior Superintendent of Police, Etah,

Rajesh Kumar Singh said the incident occurred at a 'satsang' in Pulrai village. The people had gathered large numbers for the event. The stampede occurred due to overcrowding, Sikanara Rao police station SHO Ashish Kumar said. Victims, dead or unconscious, were brought to the Sikanara Rao Trauma Centre in trucks and other vehicles. The bodies were laid outside the health centre as people milled around them. One video clip showed a woman crying, sitting among five or six bodies in a truck. Another picture showed a man and a woman lying lifeless in another vehicle. Eyewitness Shakuntala Devi said that the stampede took place while people were leaving the venue at the end of the 'satsang'. With this the tragedy struck at the Hathras.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CONCERNS ON NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

Madam — The editorial on the three new criminal laws(2-7-24) is welcome. In the name of extending justice, the government has hurried through at every stage keeping all democratic norms aside. The Bills were introduced after suspending around 140 opposition members in the parliament and were passed with the least discussion. Such an important Bill should have been placed before the public for widespread discussions and debates and the opposition members who are also elected by the people should have been involved in the process, besides consulting the luminaries in the field. Nothing is done. How such a law is going to ensure justice? Moreover, it may take quite a long time for all those in the legal field to get themselves familiarised with the new versions. It looks to be a case of smashing a mountain to catch a small rat.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Modernising Govt IT: Imperative shift to a multicloud future



SRINIVASCHARY T

This will ensure that services are not only delivered effectively but also in a cost-efficient and secure manner as it bolsters cybersecurity

From cybersecurity threats to unprecedented data management complexity to systems outages, outdated IT hinders the government's ability to provide important services in the safest and most efficient manner possible.



Our technology infrastructure should receive the same attention and investment as our roads, bridges, energy, and broadband infrastructure. Instead, current policies deter government IT leaders' ability to choose the best solutions to meet modern challenges. Public agencies are too often using outdated technology and face too many barriers to effectively modernize their systems. With modern technology and data availability, the government will be able to better track life-threatening illnesses, while policymakers would be armed with relevant data to chart robust policies for prevention and treatment. According to a Deloitte research report, BFSI sector is also investing more on cloud to transform systems.

Federal and state agencies have been slowly upgrading IT infrastructure over the past decade by shifting to a public cloud computing model. This is primarily driven by the promise of increased efficiency, lower costs, and improved continuity to enhance the services they offer to the public. While many government organizations have taken advantage of the flexibility public cloud computing offers, given privacy, compliance and security concerns, this approach does not work in every situation. It is critical that IT leaders have flexibility to choose the most cost-effective solutions. Government agencies should consider a multicloud by design approach,

where you use cloud services from multiple public and private cloud providers. While a single-cloud strategy might seem simpler, it limits service offerings and often commits organizations to a single vendor, which often costs more in the end.

A multicloud approach to cloud computing is used for better data control, allows access to the best services from each provider, and offers more flexibility as IT leaders can optimize workload placement based on workload requirements. While government agencies - and ultimately taxpayers - that adopt multicloud approaches can also have greater control over cost, which is critical at a time when research firm IDC estimates that nearly two-thirds of organizations are spending more on cloud than initially budgeted. Policymakers need to make this multicloud modernization process a reality by investing in the technology modernisation fund allowing government agencies to replace legacy equipment with upgraded multi-

cloud computing solutions that will ensure agencies can provide critical services quickly and securely. This will require that all agencies conduct multicloud computing readiness assessments through an evaluation of current IT infrastructure, processes, and policies to determine the best path for adoption. The assessment should look at things like are the agency's applications considered cloud-enabled, what is the cost of migration, do cloud computing solutions meet security and compliance requirements, as well as what is the impact on civil service employees. We cannot fight off cyberattacks and provide the best services possible in the digital age with inadequate and outdated IT infrastructure. Adopting a multicloud approach will help securely manage critical data, cut costs, and allow for our government to use the solutions that are most effective to meet our citizens' needs. (The writer is Lead Solution Architect, Dell Technologies India; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

UNDERSTANDING THE DIVINE HAND

Recognise and reciprocate God's boundless efforts by embracing dharma



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We don't give credit to God, because we take it for granted that Creation will go on. How about a business? We are all aware that it has limited longevity, however long it may run. But Creation, which is God's business runs and runs. Why? Because God keeps it going. Just picture this. There are many nuclear-armed countries; some of whom have crazy leaders. How does God prevent an all-out nuclear war? Simple; God has access to our hearts. He knows what we are thinking. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 13.2) And He knows how to mould it if His Creation is at risk. God is fully alert all the time; there is no chance of a slip-up. And we may be thinking that God is sitting somewhere or even sleeping. If this task undertaken by the Lord was not too much, just imagine being available to all eight billion of us all the time. You pray and God has to respond appropriately, if at all warranted. Why? Because most of the prayers are ridiculous like a student, having not studied all year, who prays for passing.

How does God achieve this task? Lord Krishna explains, "Having limbs on all sides; having eyes, head and mouth on all sides; having ears on all sides, God is situated in this world pervading all. (13.13) God does it in His unmanifest form. (9.4) He doesn't have to be doing it in gross form like we perceive someone to do. God is different from us, very different. If this task is not onerous enough, God ensures that we are justly rewarded and yes, punished also. Justice is always done, and no one is rewarded at the expense of another. Imagine two teams playing and their supporters fervently praying for victory. Who wins? The team with the right karmaphalas of course, i.e. what was destined. We don't know how it was arrived at but be sure that this was the right result.

Yes, God responds to prayers, but only to those who deserve it. And He knows who deserves it; more praying is not sufficient. One must pray and also qualify for a favourable result. If we wish to know what is required to qualify for God's kripa (favour), God has given detailed instructions in bonafide scriptures like the Bhagavad-Geeta. Additionally, God is very keen to guide, us if we pray sincerely for it. Picture our requesting for guidance from a local if lost. What does the local do? He does his best



to help us. God is not different; He helps. God is very much in the picture to safeguard good people from demons, as there is always a tussle going on between divine and demonic forces. God sides with the divine forces without infringing dharma, as was done in the Mahabharata War and during Lord Ramachandra's incarnation; the Lord killed Ravana among many other demons. Not only big killing, God takes care of all big tasks as Karta (doer) for His devotees.

How do you think Arjuna was able to kill/maim big warriors? Because God controls all the relevant five factors for success; nobody else has this control; we can control only ourselves. The place of action is determined by circumstances. Similarly, the instruments at our disposal are limited, for example, a doctor is hampered if all the right medicines are not readily available. Our efforts are also limited because we are limited by our health, etc. And the providence is surely not in our control. (18.14) God has no such infirmities.

God is always very busy. Not only engaged, but God is very carefully engaged in action. Why? Because men follow His lead, God is the most superior entity. As pointed out earlier, God has taken upon Himself many tasks; I have pointed out only a few. What is the message of this article? That we should become aware of God's enormous contribution to our well-being if we choose to take His shelter and follow His instructions, especially dharma. What does God want in return from us? That we should work actively towards our progress and help and serve others so that they do likewise. God wants us to be useful just as God is. (The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Wake-up call against rising plastic pollution

International Plastic Bag Free Day, observed annually on July 3, aims to raise awareness about the escalating crisis of plastic pollution



SRIRAJ KOTA



The International Plastic Bag Free Day is celebrated on Jul 3 every year. The awareness created due to observance of this day helps put focus on the threat of the silently growing footprint of plastic pollution. This is essential given the fact that plastic pollution, especially of Single Use Plastics (SUP) has now permeated all aspects of the environment. Today SUP and plastic microfibre pollution can be found from the highest point to the deepest part of the earth. The influx of 45,000 trekkers per year to Mt. Everest has unfortunately ensured that microplastic pollution can now be found in snow samples close to the peak of the world's highest mountain. Similarly, relentless marine traffic and indiscriminate disposal of garbage into the oceans has resulted in high microplastic pollution across the seas including in The Mariana Trench, Earth's deepest point in the Pacific Ocean, more than 11 km deep from mean sea level. As humanity achieves this dubious distinction of spreading litter to virtually all corners of the planet, India unfortunately is firmly at the forefront of plastic pollution spree. The figures speak for themselves. According to the Plastic Overshoot Day report by Swiss non-profit EA, Earth Action states that global plastic waste generation has risen by 7.11 per cent since 2021. The world is estimated to have generated 220 million tons of plastic waste this year, 70 million tons of which will end up polluting the environment. India is not far behind. India ranks 3rd globally contributing 5.5 KT of SUP and ranked ninety-fourth with per capita single-use plastic waste of 4 kg per year. The much-publicised SUP ban in India addresses only 11 per cent of the entire gamut of SUP plastic waste. India is among the twelve countries responsible



THE VARIOUS WATER BODIES IN THE COUNTRY ARE RIFE WITH MICROPLASTIC CONTAMINATION. IN THIS REGARD, INDIA CAN TAKE A LEAF OUT OF THE INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY GERMANY. WASSER 3.0 IN GERMANY HAS PERFECTED THE PROCESS OF NOT ONLY REMOVING MICROPLASTICS BUT ALSO MICRO-POLLUTANTS FROM WATER

for 60 per cent of the planet's mismanaged plastic waste. With a population of more than 1.44 billion, India generates 26,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day. This is the equivalent of approximately 26,000 small cars.

Unfortunately, only 8 per cent of this plastic is recycled. The Swiss report also states that India is poised to release 391,879 tonnes of microplastic into water bodies by the end of 2024. Second only to China. With abysmal conditions such as these, India's grip on plastic pollution can at best be described as feeble. The efforts to rein in the runaway plastic pollution have to begin at the grassroots level.

The International Plastic Bag Free Day focuses on the same by increasing awareness about the harmful impact of plastic bag usage and pollution. Additionally, stress is also laid on encouraging individuals, businesses, and organisations to adopt sustainable alternatives for SUP products. The special day urges governments across the world to step up policy changes and introduce radical systemic solutions to reduce plastic use and waste.

The current statistics of plastic pollution in India demand serious and innovative solutions that look beyond the traditional answers such as simple unsorted recycling of plastic, landfilling or co-processing.

The need of the hour is ultra-innovative remedies that deliver scalable and sustainable results in

record time. While India continues to construct a circular economy that reduces plastic waste, the focus must now be firmly shifted to handling the plastic pollution problem on large scale basis. As a part of this India must set up large-scale waste sorting facilities that can use artificial intelligence-based algorithms to automatically sift through various types of plastic waste and identify the same.

This as compared to traditional recycling methods can speed up the process of recycling and therefore increase the quantum of plastic recycled at the facility in one shift. This in turn can ensure that the facility can sort and recycle an entire district's monthly plastic waste within a week. An example in this regard is Sweden's plastic waste sorting facility called Site Zero which can handle up to 200,000 tonnes of plastic packaging every year, more than any other facility in the world, and enough to deal with the whole country's household plastic packaging waste. Similarly, microplastic pollution in water is a major concern.

The various water bodies in the country and the seas are rife with microplastic contamination. In this regard, India can take a leaf out of the innovative initiative taken by Germany. Wasser 3.0 in Germany has perfected the process of not only removing microplastics but also micro-pollutants from water—that too without any filters.

The process followed is called "Agglomeration Fixation" which clumps microplastics together on the surface of the water after which they are simply skimmed off. The process is simple, scalable with no side effects and can be applied to a variety of water bodies be it freshwater, seawater or even wastewater. Furthermore, the science of biochemical research can be leveraged to access plastic-degrading enzymes that can degrade and consume plastic waste in record time. This can go a long way in accelerating a year's plastic waste recycling activity to a few months.

With the aid of science, and artificial intelligence (AI) software the possibilities of innovative plastic pollution combat options are endless. AI aided by satellite support for instance can help India clean up its seas on a large-scale manner, special software-driven clean-up technologies can dredge up decades of plastic and other pollutants thereby providing a chance of survival for the delicate marine life. Plastic is in our everyday life and diet as well.

A World Wildlife Fund study has revealed that an average human being ingests 5 gm of plastic every week. It is time to cut the growing footprint of this harmful substance to size in the interests of mankind and the environment. So next time we reach for that plastic bag, let us not.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Unveiling the leadership legacy of Narendra Modi: A definitive exploration

A new book, 'Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi,' offers a profound examination of Modi's leadership journey

Last ten years have been dominated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs. An outsider as he would call him has made deep inroads into the Indian politics as also into the hearts and minds of the millions of Indians who adore him for his unwavering determination and fulfil his promise of making India a developed nation. His leadership is indeed exemplary and has provided the country with a sense of purpose and confidence.

A new book delving into the leadership qualities of Narendra Modi is a treat. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi, authored by the distinguished development scholar Dr R Balasubramaniam, offers an



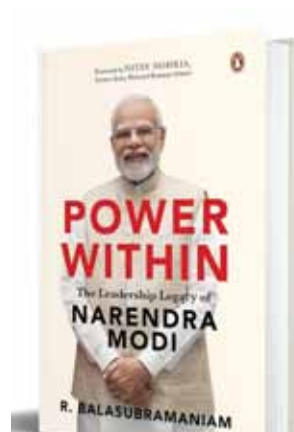
MADHU SEN

in-depth exploration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership journey, meticulously capturing his contributions to India's socio-economic landscape. Launched amidst notable dignitaries such as former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, NASSCOM President Debjani Ghosh, and Prof. B Mahadevan from IIM Bengaluru, the book is a testament to PM Modi's significant impact on the nation's

development, particularly in the realm of digital public infrastructure.

Dr. Balasubramaniam, renowned for his pioneering work with rural and tribal communities, brings a unique perspective to the narrative. He contrasts Western trait-oriented leadership approaches with Indian practice-oriented philosophies, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics. This blend of perspectives provides a nuanced view of Modi's fifty years in public life, from his formative years to his tenure as Prime Minister, underscoring the enduring qualities that have defined his leadership.

The book is particularly compelling in its discussion of PM Modi's role in the digital trans-



formation of India. As highlighted by Amitabh Kant during the launch, under Modi's leadership, India has achieved an astounding 130 billion fast

payment transactions annually. This achievement, stemming from initiatives such as the 100 Digital Melas in 2017, reflects Modi's relentless and meticulous approach to enhancing digital public infrastructure. Kant's insights, drawn from his tenure as NITI Aayog CEO, provide a vivid illustration of Modi's forward-thinking vision and commitment to digital inclusion.

Dr. Balasubramaniam captures these achievements through a series of poignant anecdotes and testimonies from Modi's colleagues, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The narrative paints a vivid picture of a leader dedicated to self-discovery and service, striving to uplift the nation through innovation and hard work. The

author's detailed exploration of Modi's leadership style, juxtaposing it with both Western and Indic leadership frameworks, offers valuable lessons for aspiring leaders and public servants.

His work encapsulates wisdom on leadership and its true essence. He suggests that, "exercising leadership is a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to the lives of others. And such an opportunity to express leadership crosses our paths every day. What is required is the sensitivity to recognize purpose when it emerges and the courage to act on it as a labour of love."

Notable figures such as Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, and Falguni Nayar, Founder and CEO of

Nykaa, have praised the book for its thought-provoking insights and its ability to shift perceptions on leadership. Mahindra hails it as a work that will "undoubtedly change perspectives and perceptions on powerful leadership," while Nayar emphasizes its relevance in understanding the dynamics that have propelled India to new heights.

Power Within is more than a biography; it is a guide to understanding the essence of leadership. Dr. Balu's reflections on the nature of leadership, emphasizing the importance of sensitivity to purpose and the courage to act, resonate deeply.

His portrayal of leadership as a labor of love, a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to others, is a pow-

erful message that underlines the entire narrative.

The book is a must-read for anyone interested in leadership, public service, and the transformative journey of one of India's most influential leaders. Dr. Balasubramaniam's nuanced portrayal of Narendra Modi's legacy provides not just a look at the man behind the political figure, but also a roadmap for those aspiring to lead with purpose and integrity. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi promises to be an essential addition to the library of anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of impactful leadership.

(The writer is a senior journalist and an arts critic; views are personal)

India's services sector growth rises in June: PMI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's services sector growth quickened in June from May's five-month low, amid a stronger rise in new orders and an unprecedented expansion in international sales, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index rose from 60.2 in May to 60.5 in June, pointing to a sharp expansion in output.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"Activity growth in India's service sector accelerated in June, with the index rising by 0.3 ppt (percentage point) to 60.5, led by an increase in both domestic and international new orders. This encouraged services firms to increase their staffing levels at the fastest pace since August 2022," said Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Demand strength and rising intakes of new business were cited as the key determinants of growth. New orders received by Indian service providers continued to increase in June, extending the current sequence of expansion to nearly three years.

There was also a record expansion in international orders. Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the US were all cited as sources of new work from abroad.

Positive client appetite



encouraged service providers in India to recruit additional staff at the end of the first fiscal quarter. Staffing levels increased at the fastest pace since August 2022, as short-term and permanent staff were taken on to support pipelines of new work.

On the price front, service providers recorded a moderate increase in their average expenses due to higher food, fuel and labour costs. The pace of inflation was nevertheless the weakest in four months. Subsequently, selling prices also rose at the slowest pace since February.

Going ahead, service providers remained confident of a rise in business activity over the course of the coming 12 months, with nearly 23 per cent of panellists expressing optimism.

"Input costs rose at a moderate pace, resulting in a softer uptick in output charges in June. Overall, service providers remain confident about the year ahead business outlook,

Food services market in India to reach ₹10 lakh crore by 2030: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The food services market in India is expected to reach up to Rs 10 lakh crore by 2030 with the addressable customer base estimated to expand to up to 45 crore, according to a report.

The online food delivery segment is estimated to grow at 18 per cent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) and penetration is set to rise from 12 per cent in 2023 to 20 per cent by 2030, said the report titled 'How India Eats' by Bain & Company and Swiggy.

The food services market in India, which encompasses dining out and ordering in, is currently valued at Rs 5.5 lakh crore. The market is poised to grow at 10-12 per cent annually over the next seven years, reaching Rs 9 lakh crore to Rs 10 lakh crore by 2030, it said.

"This growth trajectory will be driven by robust fundamentals, including an expanding customer base, growing consumption occasions, and a rise in supply. Additionally, online food delivery is expected to grow faster at (around) 18 per cent CAGR, contributing 20 per cent to the overall food services market by 2030," the report said.

Swiggy Food Marketplace CEO Rohit Kapoor said the Indian food services market, especially food delivery, has witnessed buoyant growth over the last few years.

"Higher incomes, digitisation, improved customer experience, and an inclination to try new experiences have all contributed to this growth," he added.

Upbeat about the growth in the coming years, Kapoor said China has four times the number of restaurants per million urban population compared to India and the study highlights this headroom.

Bain & Company Partner and co-author of the report Navneet Chahal said the Indian food services market is at the cusp of transformation and the sector's dynamic nature, characterised by shifting consumer behaviours, digitisation, and regional diversity, offers immense growth potential.

"As we look toward the next decade, with an estimated growth rate of 10-12 per cent annually, exciting opportunities loom on both the demand and supply fronts. By 2030, the market is poised to serve an additional 110 million customers, gradually shifting eating out from a special event into a convenient lifestyle," she said.

The addressable customer base for the Indian food services market is expected to expand by 11 crore, growing from the current 32 crore to 34 crore to approximately 43 crore to 45 crore by 2030.

"This surge will be supported by macroeconomic tailwinds, including rapid urbanisation and a rise in affluence," the report said.

The study pointed out that approximately 70 per cent of food services consumption as of 2023 is concentrated in the top 50 cities and among upper-middle and high-income segments, which are expected to remain demand hotspots in the medium term.

Sebi notifies institutional mechanism for brokers to prevent market abuse

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has notified an institutional mechanism that requires stock brokers to put in place systems for detection and prevention of market abuse.

Before this, there were no specific regulatory provisions that cast responsibility on brokers to have a system to prevent market abuse.

Under the institutional mechanism, broking firms as well as its senior management will be accountable for detection and prevention of fraud or market abuse, by setting up robust surveillance and control systems, according to a notification.

Further, brokers need to frame appropriate escalation and reporting mechanisms. Sebi has also listed out probable instances of fraud or market abuse which a broker's system needs to be equipped to monitor. The probable instances can include creation of misleading appearance of trading, price manipulation, front running, pump and dump, insider trading and mis-selling and unauthorised trading, including facilitation of 'mule accounts'.

In its notification dated June 27, the stock broker will have to inform details pertaining to detection of any suspicious activity to the stock exchanges within 48 hours from such detection.

Further, they will have to submit a summary analysis and action taken report on instances of suspicious activity, fraud and market abuse or a 'nil report' where no such instances were detected, on a half-yearly



basis to the stock exchanges. "Any deviation in adherence to internal controls, risk management policy, surveillance policy, policy for onboarding of clients along with the proposed corrective actions for such deviation shall be placed before the appropriate Committee, Board of Directors or such other equivalent or analogous bodies of the stock broker at regular intervals and such deviations shall also form a part of the report to be submitted by the stock broker to the stock exchanges," Sebi said.

The stock broker will have to establish and implement whistleblower policy providing for a confidential channel for employees and other stakeholders to raise concerns about suspected fraudulent, unfair or unethical practices. The policy should establish procedures to ensure adequate protection of whistleblowers.

Also, the regulator has tightened rules to curb trading through the mule accounts.

In its notification, Sebi said that transactions through mule accounts for indulging in manipulative, fraudulent and unfair trade practice shall be and shall always be deemed to have been included in PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) norms.

Mule account is a trading account maintained with a stock broker or a demat account or bank account linked with such trading account, which is controlled by another person.

To give these effects, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has amended stock brokers and PFUTP rules that became effective from June 27.

Tyre makers facing severe crunch in domestic natural rubber availability: ATMA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association on Wednesday said its members are witnessing a 'severe crunch' in the availability of domestic natural rubber and it may disrupt production unless supply issues of the raw material are addressed.

Despite high prices of natural rubber (NR), its availability has shrunk, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) said, expressing apprehension that some "sections of natural rubber producing interests or trade are withholding the material in anticipation of an increase in the NR prices worsening the availability".

The "tyre industry has been

experiencing tightness in domestic availability of natural rubber for some time. However currently a severe crunch is being witnessed despite the fact that NR prices have touched a multi-year high. The paucity of natural price needs to be addressed at the earliest so that tyre production processes are not disrupted," ATMA Director General Rajiv Budhreja said in a statement.

The Rubber Board had estimated the total domestic natural rubber stock available in the country at 3.7 lakh tonnes at the start of the current fiscal, it said, adding that "unfortunately, the visibility of such a high stock to support domestic demand is not there".

India faces high debt, but sustainable for now: NCAER director

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At nearly 82 per cent of AGDP, India's public debt is very high, but the country doesn't face debt sustainability issue on account of high growth rate and higher share of local currency debt, NCAER Director General Poonam Gupta has said.

Participating in an event organised by NCAER, Gupta said India's high debt levels are sustainable for now because of higher real or nominal GDP and as most of



the debt is held in rupee. The states together hold one-third of the total debt, and in the 'business as usual' situation, their debt levels will only increase further over the next five years, Gupta said.

"In a handful of states like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Debt-to-GDP ratio could increase by 50 per cent," Gupta said, adding that the states, including the most indebted ones, also don't face sustainability issue as they have implicit guarantee of the Centre and as states cannot hold debt in foreign currency

is similar for all and in fact more indebted states hold longer maturity and pay little premium.

"More prudent states need a better deal. They are de facto subsidizing the more indebted states. The Finance Commission may reward such states for their fiscal prudence, and incentivize the profligate ones to become fiscally more responsible," Gupta said.

Participating in the discussion on "States' Fiscal Challenges", M Govinda Rao, Councillor, Gujarat, cited "proliferation of subsidies for electoral gains" as one of the reasons for rising debt of the states.

Pointing to the Centre's overall responsibility of control of debt and stressing the need for a different approach, he said, "interest payments of profligate states are still taken as legitimate."

As of 2022-23, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar are top three most indebted states, while least indebted are Odisha, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

DigiPivot 5.0 to be launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the fifth consecutive year, Avtar, a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Solutions firm, has teamed up with Google India and the Centre for Executive Education at the Indian School of Business (ISB) to launch DigiPivot 5.0. This initiative focuses on empowering women through free skill development in the digital marketing field. The move aims to provide career opportunities to women.

Dr Saundarya Rajesh, Founder-President of Avtar Group, underscored the transformative potential of

Rupee falls 4 paise to close at 83.52 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 4 paise to settle at 83.52 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices.

Forex traders said the Indian rupee depreciated on strength in crude oil prices, which touched a two-week high on Tuesday. However, a firm tone in domestic markets and favourable macroeconomic data cushioned the downside.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.51 and hit the intraday high of 83.49

and a low of 83.56 against the American currency during the session.

It finally settled at 83.52 (provisional) against the dollar, 4 paise lower than its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee depreciated 4 paise to settle at 83.48 against the US dollar.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on softening of the US dollar and rise in global risk sentiments. Strength in the domestic markets may also support sentiments," said Anuj Choudhary — Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

"However, elevated crude oil price and FII outflows may cap sharp upside. Traders may take cues from ADP non-farm employment, weekly unemployment claims, ISM services PMI, Challenger job cuts, trade balance and factory orders data from the US. Investors may remain cautious ahead of FOMC meeting minutes," Choudhary said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.10 per cent lower at 105.61.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.09 per cent higher at USD 86.32 per barrel.

In the domestic equity market, Sensex hit the historic 80,000-mark and Nifty scaled a fresh lifetime high. The 30-share BSE Sensex finally ended the day 545.35 points, or 0.69 per cent, up at 79,986.80 points.

Herbal beverage Pio aims to disrupt MNC-dominated soft drink market

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Move over multinational cola giants, there's a new 'Made-in-India' fizz in town! The CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) has introduced 'Pio', a revolutionary herbal beverage aiming to shake up the competitive soft drink market.

Free from artificial sweeteners and caffeine, 'Pio' blends time-tested traditional herbs with modern nutritional science, offering a healthier alternative that is poised to redefine refreshment in keeping with consumer's taste.

"This drink represents a healthier alternative to conventional sodas, reflecting the country's commitment to fostering indigenous, health-conscious food and beverages



functional attributes," said NBRI Director Ajit Kumar Shasany.

"Based on traditional knowledge, we selected certain herbs. Extracts of herbs like liquorice (Glycyrrhiza

commonly known as 'mulethi', heart-leaved moonseed (giloy), Ashwagandha, punarnava (Boerhavia diffusa), common grapevine, and cardamom have been used in the product," he added.

"These extracts are blended with carbonated water in such a way that the drink tastes like any other synthetic drink available in the market. Sugar mixing is kept on a minimum level to tackle the bitterness of plant-based extracts," he said.

The NBRI Director added that Pio had no alcohol, cocoa, and other synthetic chemicals and has been successfully evaluated for its efficacy.

"The product is a unique blend of modern nutraceutical concepts with traditional knowledge in the soft drink category where the product is fortified with medicinal plants having colour and taste similar to synthetic beverages," Shasany said.

"The herbal plant extract used in the drink has hepatoprotective, antioxidant, immuno-enhancing, cardio-tonic, diuretic and digestive properties. The technology and process of the soft drink has also been patented," he said, adding that the technology to manufacture this herbal soft drink has been transferred to a private company.

Sandip Vyas, managing director of the private firm now overseeing 'Pio's production, expressed confidence in its potential to disrupt the competitive soft drink market.

"Having conducted comprehensive tests to ensure production efficiency and efficacy at the high-tech labs of the NBRI following intensive research, 'Pio' is all set to become a preferred choice among consumers seeking healthier beverage alternatives."

BABA FARID UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, FARIDKOT BFU-24/14

VACANCIES

Online applications are invited w.e.f. **06/07/2024 to 31/07/2024** from eligible candidates through University website i.e. www.bfuhhs.ac.in for the recruitment of 120 Staff Nurse under Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot. For eligibility, terms & conditions & other information visit university website i.e. www.bfuhhs.ac.in

Sd/ REGISTRAR

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR (EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECH)

Tel No.: (0240)2333536-40 Address: Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
Fax No.: (0240)2331213 Municipal Corporation, Executive Engineer (Mech)
Head Office : Town Hall, Pin No.4311
E-Tender Call CSMC (For Help)
Mob No : 9764999780
No.CSMC/Mech/448 /2024 Dt. 02/07/2024

Corrigendum

Ref: Tender ID No. 2024-AMCA-998054-1

As per the reference, tender called for Fabrication & supply of 70 Mtr. Hydraulic Platform for fire fighting and rescue operation with 10 years CSMC (01 No.). Regarding this tender corrigendum is published on www.mahatenders.gov.in portal. Rest of the condition remains unchanged.

Executive Engineer (Mech)
Municipal Corporation
Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

कार्यालय प्रधान महाप्रबन्धक (आर)
उ.प्र. राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण,
ए-1/4, लखनऊ, कानपुर

ई-निविदा सूचना

एलएडआर सुविधा किता जाता है कि प्राधिकरण को निम्नलिखित प्रस्तावों में निम्न औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों को विस्तृत विकास एवं विद्युत अनुसंधान एवं रस-संशोधन कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/प्राधिकरणों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत विद्युत लाइसेन्सी एवं अनुसंधान केन्द्रों/कर्मों से ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है जो दिनांक 06.07.2024 को अपरान्ह 4.00 बजे से दिनांक 24.07.2024 को अपरान्ह 5.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है निविदा को दिनांक 25.07.2024 को अपरान्ह 04.00 बजे खोला जायेगा। निविदादाता द्वारा राज्य पत्रों की मूल प्रतियां दिनांक 29.07.2023 को सायं 5-00 बजे तक कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है। ई-निविदा को माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाने वाली निविदा सम्बन्धी विवरण निम्नवत् है-

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत रु. (लाख में)
1.	Upgradation of Street Light & High Mast with 3 year AMC at Bhara Pachpera, Distt-Pilibhit	100.18

नोट- 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में समस्त कर चरित्व दरे अंकित करें। जी.एच.टी. अलग से भेजें होंगी।
2. विद्युत कार्यों हेतु निविदादाता को निविदा अपलोड करते समय 'विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग' उ.प्र. शासन, लखनऊ में श्रेणी 'क' अनुमोदित लाइसेन्स अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा।
निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी प्राधिकरण की [website:www.onlineupsida.com](http://www.onlineupsida.com) पर स्थित ई-लिंक एवं यूपीएलकी [website:http://etender.up.nic.in](http://etender.up.nic.in) पर देखी जा सकती है।
चरित्व प्रबन्धक (यु.) विद्युत उ.प्र. शा.औ.वि.प्रा.कानपुर

Chopra says Paris Diamond League was not part of his competition calendar

PTI ■ SAARBRUCKEN, (GERMANY)
Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Wednesday clarified that Sunday's Paris Diamond League was never a part of his competition calendar this year. The statement came after a media report stated that Chopra pulled out of the event due to the adductor niggle that has been troubling him for the past couple of months. The 26-year-old took to 'X' to say that there was no question of a withdrawal when he had not even entered his name. "Hello, everyone. Just to clarify: the #ParisDL wasn't part of my competition calendar this season, so I haven't 'withdrawn' from it. I'm focusing on getting ready for the Olympic Games. "Thanks for your understanding and support, and wishing all the athletes competing all the best! #RoadToOlympics," Chopra



He was exempted from last week's National Inter-State Championships, which was a mandatory event for all Indian athletes, by the Athletics Federation Of India. The AFI said the relaxation was given to him due to the

short turnaround time between the domestic event and the Diamond League on July 7. "We have made it very clear that every athlete will compete in India at the Inter-State Championships," AFI president Adille Sumariwalla

had said, "But Paris Diamond League is clashing with the Inter-State Championships and we feel that Paris Diamond League will be very important for him (Neeraj) before the Olympic Games therefore he is the only guy who has been

given special permission to participate in the Federation Cup," he added. However, Chopra had indicated last month that his schedule will be decided according to the state of his body. "We had a discussion that I would play in the

National Inter-State Championships (June 27-30) and it's going to be held in Panchkula in Haryana but it was very near to the Paris Olympics," Chopra had said. "Since I was playing in Doha which is near to India. Moreover, there is Paris Diamond League (on July 7) between National Inter-State and Olympics. So, we decided to compete here (Federation Cup)," Chopra had said. "Further competition schedule will be decided later according to situation and my body. Otherwise, I will go to Paris from there (after competing in Turkey)." Chopra, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian to win a track and field medal at the Tokyo Olympics, had won the gold at the at the Paavo Nurmi Games last month. Following this, he had opened up about his adductor niggle which has affected his season, saying he will consult "different doctors" after the Paris Olympics.

Much-improved Netherlands beats Romania 3-0 to reach first Euros quarterfinals in 16 years

AP ■ MUNICH

The Netherlands could be peaking at just the right time. The Dutch team reached its first European Championship quarterfinal in 16 years with a 3-0 win over Romania on Tuesday after its best performance by far at Euro 2024. Cody Gakpo broke the deadlock in the 20th minute and substitute Donyell Malen scored two late goals to send the Dutch to their first quarterfinal in the tournament since 2008. "I think the whole performance today was outstanding and that's what we need to have a chance to continue in this tournament," coach Ronald Koeman said. "This is the level. If you go down in that level, then we don't reach the final."



The Netherlands had missed a plethora of earlier opportunities to add to the lead and captain Virgil van Dijk also hit the woodwork. It was nevertheless a much-improved display compared to its disappointing group stage performance, which ended in a 3-2 loss to Austria. Koeman's side could get a quick rematch in Berlin on Saturday if Austria beats Turkey in the final round of 16 match later Tuesday. "Sometimes it's difficult to explain why you play bad," Koeman said. "Even today, the start was difficult. They were really aggressive. But finally we found our ball position. "What we created was good football... Maybe one critical point was that it took too long to score the second one. ...It's difficult to explain why one time you play badly and the next time you are really sharp from the beginning." It was nevertheless a match

to remember for Romania and its loud mass of yellow-clad fans, who have lit up the tournament. It was only the second time Romania had qualified for the knockout stage at a European Championship and it did so as group winner. The bouncing yellow wall at one end of the stadium gave its team such a magnificent send-off - singing and applauding the players long after the final whistle - that it was almost as though Romania had won the game. "Today we ended a great story, which we started two years ago. We continued that story here in Germany along with the fans of the national team," Romania coach Edward Iordanescu said. "The team gave a great effort, but there is some sadness. "We wanted more, but we gave our all. Thank you to my lads, the supporters and Romanians everywhere in the world who supported us." Romania had dominated possession until Gakpo's goal, but never really tested Netherlands goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen. Instead the opener came when Xavi Simons surged forward before finding Gakpo on the left. The Liverpool forward cut inside the blue-haired Andrei Rău and fired into the near bottom corner.



No Messi in Argentina's Olympic soccer squad

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Lionel Messi won't be in Argentina's squad at the Olympics starting later this month in Paris. Coach Javier Mascherano included four World Cup winners in the squad he announced Tuesday, including striker Julián Álvarez and defender Nicolás Otamendi. The 37-year-old Messi, who has struggled with injuries this year, is now playing at the Copa America, aiming to defend the continental title he won in 2021. That victory served as a springboard for Argentina to lift the World Cup in 2022. Messi won the gold medal at Beijing in 2008 in his only Olympic campaign. The Olympic men's soccer tournament is for under-23 teams, but three older players are allowed on each squad. Mascherano, who won the Olympic gold medal as a player in 2004 and '08, will add goalkeeper Gerónimo Rulli, Otamendi and Alvarez to his squad after Copa America is finished. Midfielder Claudio Echeverri, a recent signing for Manchester City from River Plate, will also join. Argentina will play two friendlies in France before its Olympic soccer tournament opener against Morocco on July 24.

Colombia draws Brazil 1-1 and will play Panama in quarterfinals while Seleção face Uruguay

AP ■ SANTA CLARA (US)

Daniel Muñoz scored the tying goal in the first-half stoppage time, and Colombia won its first-round group at the Copa America with a 1-1 draw against Brazil that extended its unbeaten streak to 26 games. Colombia goalkeeper Camilo Vargas saved Brazil's final chance on a shot by Andreas Pereira in the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time. Colombia plays Panama in a quarterfinal on Saturday at

Glendale, Arizona, while Brazil fell into what appears to be a more difficult game against Uruguay later that night at Las Vegas. Los Cafeteros, who finished with seven points to Brazil's five, had back-to-back scoring chances in the 84th minute but couldn't capitalize. Brazil went ahead in the 12th minute when Raphinha launched a left-footed free kick into the upper right corner of the net just above the outstretched hand of Vargas. The Brazilian winger jumped



and pumped his fist as the seasoned Seleção struck first on a blazing-hot night at Levi's Stadium, home of the NFL's San Francisco 49ers.

Players put on an entertaining show in the Group D finale, with Brazil's Bruno Guimarães calling Colombia "a stone in our shoe" in the lead up to Tuesday. What was expected to be a tense, physical, foul-filled match more than lived up to that hype featuring five yellow cards as a sea of jerseys the same color representing both countries packed the seats - once the fans finally got inside, that is. Some scanning equipment became very hot and slowed down the process. A crowd of 70,971 attended the

game, and the 24 group-stage games drew 1,115,400 for an average of 46,475. The Bay Area is facing an excessive heat warning and the temperature at kickoff was 98 degrees - though about half the field on one sideline was shaded. In the eighth minute, James Rodríguez had Colombia's best early chance when he hit the bar on a left-footed shot on a direct free kick from outside the penalty area He had another shot in the 16th that sailed high.

Gunok's wonder-save at Euro 2024 sparks Turkish celebrations

AP ■ LEIPZIG (GERMANY)

A moment of Mert Gunok's brilliance sparked celebrations for Turkish fans and a big exclamation from Austria rival Michael Gregoritsch, who described it as one of the best saves he'd ever seen. Goalkeeper Gunok pulled off one of the saves of the European Championship deep into injury time on Tuesday to secure Turkey's place in the quarterfinals. He leaped instinctively into a full-stretch dive to his right to palm away a close-range header from Austria's Christoph Baumgartner four minutes into stoppage time, preserving his team's 2-1 win and preventing the round-of-16 match from going into extra time. "I think that's one of the best saves I've ever seen live on the field," Gregoritsch said. "You have to give credit to the Turkish goalkeeper because I think it was extremely difficult to stop.



Unbelievable, really." Austria coach Ralf Rangnick was asked if the goal reminded him of England goalkeeper Gordon Banks' famous stop to deny Pelé at the 1970 World Cup. "True," he replied. Later, Rangnick rued the save, saying he was sure that if the ball had gone in, Austria would have gone on to win the match. "With Gordon Banks in

goal, that was the last chance that we had," the German coach said. It was Gunok's fourth big save of the game, including a one-on-one situation against Marko Arnautovic. It meant Merih Demiral's two goals were enough to send Turkey through to a quarterfinal against the Netherlands in Berlin's Olympiastadion on Saturday.

30 swimming prospects to get training at IIS for Olympic & Asian Games glory

PTI ■ BELLARY

As many as 30 "high-potential" swimmers have been identified for training as part of a newly-launched 'Mizuho Elite Programme' at the Inspire Institute of Sports here to prepare them for the 2026 Asian Games and the 2028 Olympic qualifiers. Inspire Institute of Sports has entered into a partnership with Mizuho Bank for this. The two entities have identified swimming as one of the key sports which can be developed at the grassroots level and announced a partnership to support 30 swimmers. Launched in 2023, the IIS Swimming Programme features two state-of-the-art pools, and promises technical coaching, competition exposure, and support in sports science, strength and conditioning, nutrition, education, mental



health, and residential facilities. Talented young swimmers Maana Patel, Kushagra Rawat, Ishaan Mehra, Astha Choudhury, Ashmitha Chandra, and Bikram Changmai are part of the programme. Maana Patel said the partnership will go a long way in helping them realise

their potential. "I am grateful to be a part of such a programme. Mizuho has been generous in their donations, which has allowed us to participate in various competitions globally, buy heating plant and other various training equipment for the pool," she said. Parth Jindal, Founder of IIS,

echoed the sentiment. "It energises our mission to make India a sporting superpower. Their belief in our swimming programme is inspiring, and I am excited for the future," he said. "Mizuho's support will significantly raise our standards. Our rapid growth and success promise a transformative impact on Indian sport," Rushdee Warley, CEO of IIS, added. Mizuho, a leading global bank with over 28 years in India, operates five branches and four entities, including Mizuho Bank and Mizuho Securities. Piyush Agarwal, Senior Managing Director & Head - Corporate & Institutional Banking (India) at Mizuho, said, "We believe India, with its youthful population, deserves a place on the global podium. Sports build essential skills like resilience and teamwork, and we hope to inspire many through this initiative."

Vondrousova is 1st defending woman Wimbledon champ out in first round since 1994

AP ■ LONDON

Marketa Vondrousova became the first defending women's champion at Wimbledon to lose in the first round the next year since 1994, eliminated 6-4, 6-2 by Jessica Bouzas Maneiro at Centre Court. Vondrousova was a surprise title winner at the All England Club 12 months ago, the first unseeded woman to claim the trophy at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament. Now she enters the books in another — and less-wanted — historic way. The only other time in the sport's Open era, which dates to 1968, that a woman went from a championship at Wimbledon to an immediate exit a year later was when Steffi Graf was defeated by Lori McNeil 30 years ago. "I was happy to be back on the Centre Court," Vondrousova said. "It just didn't go as planned today." Vondrousova was seeded No. 6 this time, but the left-hander, who was the runner-up at the 2019 French Open and a silver medalist at the Tokyo Olympics three years

ago, was never quite able to demonstrate her full game Tuesday. She appeared to still be suffering after-effects from a fall during a tuneup tournament on grass in Berlin last month that hurt her hip. "I was a bit slower, maybe. I was a bit scared," Vondrousova said. "But credit to her. She was playing a good match, too. I didn't feel at my best, (but) she didn't give me many points for free." How big a deal was this for Bouzas Maneiro? She is competing in a Grand Slam tournament for only the third time and came into the day with an 0-2 record at those events. Bouzas Maneiro also had never won a match at a tour-level grass tournament and never beaten an opponent ranked in the top 10. "This is one of the most important moments in my life, in my career, here in this sport. This is amazing," said Bouzas Maneiro, a 21-year-old from Spain who is ranked 83rd this week, equaling her career high. "I was like, I have no pressure. Just enjoy the moment, enjoy the



tournament. Just trying to be free playing, and I did it, so I'm happy for that," she said. Vondrousova added to the series of past major title winners dropping out of the singles

brackets within the first 30 hours of action at Wimbledon this year - although others did so without playing a point. Earlier Tuesday, Andy Murray pulled out of singles because he

decided he wasn't able to compete a little more than a week after having surgery to remove a cyst from his spine. His final appearance at Wimbledon, which he won in 2013 and 2016, will

come in doubles alongside his older brother, Jamie. Two seeded women who both have been ranked No. 1 and own two Australian Open championships apiece, No. 3 Aryna Sabalenka and No. 16 Victoria Azarenka, withdrew on Monday before their first-round matches because of shoulder injuries. Sabalenka was the pre-tournament favorite to take the women's title, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. Intermittent rain delayed matches on the outside courts more than once Tuesday, and the retractable roofs at Centre Court and No. 1 Court were shut to allow play in those two stadiums. No. 6 seed Andrey Rublev lost, while winners on Day 2 included No. 1 Iga Swiatek, 2022 champion Elena Rybakina and No. 5 seed Jessica Pegula among the women, and seven-time champion Novak Djokovic, No. 4 seed Alexander Zverev and No. 7 Hubert Hurkacz among the men. For Djokovic, his 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win against qualifier Vit Kopriva was the first match since having

surgery to repair a torn meniscus in his right knee on June 5. "Obviously started a little bit more cautiously, I would say. I didn't really maybe go for certain shots 100% ... (in) the first set," said Djokovic, who wore a gray sleeve on his right knee. "I played, I think, just enough to win confidently in straight sets. I felt like as the match progressed, I moved better." The initial signs of trouble for Vondrousova on Tuesday came right away: She double-faulted three times in the very first game and got broken to trail 1-0. "My serve wasn't so good today," Vondrousova said. "Overall, I think, I wasn't at my best." She would wind up with seven double-faults, part of her total of 28 unforced errors, twice as many as Bouzas Maneiro in a match that lasted only a little more than an hour. "I'm surprised with myself, honestly. At the beginning, I was a little bit nervous, but then ... The atmosphere was so nice," Bouzas Maneiro said. "I was comfortable here playing, and I was like at home."

GILL-LED TEAM INDIA LANDS IN HARARE FOR T20IS AGAINST ZIMBABWE

PTI ■ HARARE

A young Indian cricket team led by skipper Shubman Gill and with National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman as coach arrived here to play a five-match T20 International series against Zimbabwe beginning July 6.

The team was seen exiting the airport with their luggage in a video posted by Zimbabwe Cricket on X. The entire squad had departed from Mumbai on Tuesday, while Gill, who was a travelling reserve with the T20 World Cup side in the Americas, arrived here from New York after a break.

"We welcome T20 World Cup champions India," wrote ZC on Tuesday night in a post on X.

Young top-order batter Riyan Parag, who will be making his India debut in the series, said in a video posted by BCCI that he had a childhood dream of travelling like this (with the national side).

"The feel of donning India jersey, travelling with the side is different. Coming from Assam, I had this dream of playing for India. Really happy. There will be a special connection for Zimbabwe when I play my first match. "That will be a special moment for that ground and myself, which would be very sacred," he said.

"After misplacing my passport, to phones, we are finally here after a 20 hour journey. Now, really looking forward to the tour," Parag added.

Another newcomer, medium pacer Tushar Deshpande, said the feeling of being in the national setup is "slowly sinking in and it's like a dream come true for me. Playing for the country is a very special thing."

"Travelling with the team is the most important and getting to know them, knowing the atmosphere of the team and most important for me is the fun we have during travel," added



Deshpande. Big-hitting left-hander Abhishek Sharma said from the day he started playing cricket, he had only one dream, which was to play for the country.

"I know if I continue working hard, I will get an opportunity but I didn't know I will get it outside India in Zimbabwe. "I got a call from (skipper) Shubman after my name was announced in the squad. Everyone has been giving me so much of affection. For me it was a very big thing," added Sharma.

"When I reached home after my name had been announced, I saw my family members giving interviews. So, I think, that was one moment I will always remember," he said.

India will play their opening match against the Sikandar Raza-captained Zimbabwe on July 6 at the Harere Cricket Ground. The remaining four games will also be played at the same venue. The series will conclude on July 14.

T20 World Cup travelling reserves Sanju Samson and Yashasvi Jaiswal along with all-rounder Shivam Dube were slated to join the Zimbabwe-bound group but are stranded in Barbados due to hurricane Beryl.

Sai Sudharsan, Jitesh Sharma and Harshit Rana were on Tuesday named as replacements for trio in the Indian squad for the first two matches of the series.

Samson, Jaiswal and Dube along with the other senior players will be arriving in India aboard a charter flight on Thursday morning. The players will later be felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

Pacer Khaleel Ahmed and batter Rinku Singh, travelling reserves for the T20 World Cup, are also currently in Barbados.

The BCCI has not named replacements for the duo even though they are in the squad for Zimbabwe series.



Markram was brave, tactically astute while leading South Africa in T20 World Cup: Smith

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Aiden Markram was 'brave' and 'tactically astute' while leading South Africa to their first-ever appearance in the final of the T20 World Cup which they narrowly lost to India last week at Barbados, said former skipper Graeme Smith on Wednesday.

South Africa had a near-perfect campaign in the T20 World Cup under Markram's captaincy with their only defeat coming in the final when India pipped the Proteas by seven runs.

"Aiden was particularly good during the tournament. He was tactically astute, had good plans and was brave enough to make the big calls and then get all his players to commit to it," said Smith in a media release.

"We have, of course, seen Aiden captain in this manner before over the course of the past two SA20 seasons, leading the Sunrisers Eastern Cape to back-to-back championship titles, but now he has transferred this experience to the international arena," added Smith, who is SA20's league commissioner.

Smith said SA20, in its two seasons so far, has been able to prepare the South African cricketers to be ready for

Hardik Pandya becomes first Indian to occupy top spot in ICC T20I all-rounders' rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Hardik Pandya rose two places to become the first Indian to occupy the number one spot in the ICC's T20I all-rounders' rankings on Wednesday, as the country's cricketers improved their standings following their title-winning performance in the just-concluded World Cup.

The 30-year-old, who handed telling blows to South Africa in the T20 World Cup final on July 29 by dismissing half-century Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller in his 3/20 effort, climbed up two places to go level with Sri Lankan star Wanindu Hasaranga as the top-ranked men's T20I all-rounder.

Following a topsy-turvy IPL where he was the target of fans' boos as Mumbai Indians' new captain, Pandya turned it around in style in the T20 World Cup in the USA and the Caribbean.

Pandya made impactful cameos down the order with the bat and made breakthroughs with the ball when the team needed him to. He finished with 144 runs at a batting strike-rate of over 150 and also took 11 wickets in the tournament.

His best performance came in the final when he triggered a dramatic South African collapse after the Proteas needed 30 runs from 30 balls with Klaasen in full flow.

Pandya gave the decisive blow by dismissing Klaasen in the first ball of the 17th over. He went on to bowl the tense final over and defended 16 runs to help India pip South Africa by seven runs and win their second T20 World Cup title.

BIG MOVER BUMRAH

India's star fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who won the Player of the Tournament award at the T20 World Cup for his 15 wickets, moved up 12 spots to be just outside the top-10. He's at 12th, his highest position since the end of 2020.

There were other movements in the top 10 of the T20I all-rounders' rankings, with Marcus Stoinis, Sikandar Raza, Shakib Al Hasan and Liam Livingstone rising by one spot each.

Mohammad Nabi moved down four spots to go out of the top five.

In the T20I bowling rankings, South Africa's Anrich Nortje rose seven places to a career-best second spot to be just behind top-ranked Adil Rashid with 675 rating points.



Praggnanandhaa draws with Bogdan-Daniel, Alireza shines in Superbet Classic chess

PTI ■ BUCHAREST

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by lowest ranked Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania in the sixth round of the Superbet Classic tournament, a part of the grand chess tour here.

Mohammad Alireza Grandmaster Alireza Firouzja shined with his moves against Wesley So of the United States.

With the World Championship on his mind, India's D Gukesh seemed to keep in reserve his real weapons and signed for peace with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France.

Praggnanandhaa tried his hand against the ever-solid Nimzo Indian defense. But it was an off day for the Indian who was confidently breached by the Romanian.

Bogdan-Daniel matched Alireza's performance in the grand chess tour. He was at his best and crawled back with his second win of the tournament to be in striking distance of tournament leader Fabio Caruana of the United States.

With just three rounds remaining in the USD 350000 prize money tournament, Caruana seems to be sitting pretty at the top, with three aspirants in Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Alireza in pursuit.

Satwik-Chirag eyeing great things at Paris Olympics after cracking service variation challenge

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has "cracked" the service variation challenge and is focussing on "comprehensive physical and mental conditioning" to ensure peak performance at the upcoming Paris Olympics.

Satwik, 23, and Chirag, 26, have been troubled by the wide variations of tumble, spin and wide serves that their opponents, mainly the Koreans and Indonesians, have employed against them during the recent tournaments.

Chirag said they have addressed the "new challenge" and remains confident of negotiating it during the Paris Games.

"Regarding serve variations, they are a new challenge, but placing complete importance on that wouldn't be right," Chirag told PTI in an email interview.

"There was a time when we struggled with receiving them, but we eventually cracked it. We know what to do, we've been practicing, and we're confident we'll come out strong at the Olympics to counter that."

The current world number 3 pair had narrowly missed out of a quarterfinal berth in the last Olympics when despite winning two of their three group matches, the duo couldn't qualify for the knockout stage as it was settled on the basis of the number of games won and lost.

"The experience of playing in the Tokyo Olympics has been invaluable in our preparation for the Paris Games. Competing at such a high level has taught us crucial lessons about handling pressure, staying focused, and adapting to different playing conditions," Satwik said.

Chirag added: "The intensity and atmosphere of the Olympics are unparalleled, and having been through it once, we now have a better understanding of what to expect and the initial jitters of being at the Olympics for the first time are also not going to be there."

"Additionally, winning the French Open has naturally given us a significant confidence boost."



In the last couple of years, the duo worked its way to become the world number one after a series of sensational performance, including winning the Commonwealth Games gold medal, a bronze at the World Championships in 2022, and gold in the Hangzhou Asian Games.

They also played a crucial role in India's epic Thomas Cup win in 2022. Satwik and Chirag have won the French Open and Thailand Open this year after reaching the finals at the Malaysian Super 750 and India Super 750.

"As the Olympics draw closer, our approach is becoming more focussed and strategic. We're fine-tuning every aspect of our game to ensure peak performance when we step onto the court in Paris," Satwik said.

"This includes developing specific game plans for our potential opponents by studying their strengths and weaknesses in detail, concentrating on targeted drills, and enhancing our on-court positions and shot selections."

"We are taking a holistic approach to our preparations. We're in a good rhythm and are

eagerly looking forward to be back at the Olympics. Comprehensive physical and mental conditioning is at the heart of our preparation."

The duo has been troubled sometimes by the left-right combinations such as Korean Seo Seung-jae and Kang Min-hyuk and Danish Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen but Chirag feels they don't have any problem against any particular pair. "I can't really pinpoint a specific pair that we find particularly tricky to play against. On any given day, if a pair plays well, they can pose a challenge. However, I believe that if we play at our best, we can beat anyone," he said.

"So, there's no specific pair or lefty-righty combination that particularly affects us. That said, all our competitors in the Olympics will be quite good..."

On expectations and handling pressure at the big-ticket event, Satwik said: "We understand Olympics is the greatest, biggest tournament there is and naturally there are hopes and wishes from each Olympic-bound athlete.

INDIAN RAILWAY CATERING AND TOURISM CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of India Enterprise - M In Rating)
CIN : L14893DL1999GO11707

IRCTC invites:-

- Open E-Tender: IRCTC/CO/Statutory Compliance/2023-24 for Implementation of Statutory Compliance Management Application Software. Pre-Bid Meeting: 19.07.2024 at 11:30 hrs through V.C. Last Date for submission 30.07.2024 upto 12:00 hrs. E-Mail: mcibec@irctc.com.
- Open E-Tender: IRCTC/RN/PREFORMS 500 ml/ABH/2024 for Supply PET Preforms 500 ml at Rail Near Plant Ambernath (Maharashtra) for a period of two (02) Years. Last Date & Time of online Submission: 11.07.2024 upto 15:00 hrs. E-Mail: ggmr@irctc.com.

For details visit www.irctc.com for 1-2, www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC for 1 and GeM Portal for 02. Tender document downloading & participation can be done on website www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC for 1 and GeM Portal for 2.

In case of any corrigendum/addendum issued on the above advertisement, it will be published only on IRCTC's website www.irctc.com for 1-2 and www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC for 1 and GeM Portal for 02.

Office Address: IRCTC IT Floor, Station House, B-148, Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110 001, Tel: 011-23312834, Fax: 011-23312233
ecatering.irctc.co.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata - 700020.
CIN No: L65190G1999APL021012, www.icicibank.com

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA). A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, at their last known addresses. However, it has not been served and are therefore being notified by way of this Public Notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower/Guarantor/ Loan Account Number & Address	Description of Secured Asset to be enforced	Date of Notice sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Buddhi Ram Dubey/ Sangita Dubey/ Mlg 1/90, Kabir Nagar, Tehtibandh Bindrawangarh, Talsi Raipur District Raipur Chhattisgarh Raipur - 492039/ LBPRP00004302473	Plot No. M.I.G. V/21, Phase 1, Kabir Nagar, Chhattisgarh GRIH Nirman Mandali, Kabir Nagar Housing Board Vajna, Kharsa No. 129, 720 (Part), Ward No. 02, Ramkrishna Parmanand Ward, Mouza Jorval or Hirapur, P.H. No. 35, R.N.M. Raipur-1, Tahsil and District Raipur, Chhattisgarh (Addressing an area of 108 Sq. Mtr. i.e. 1162.08 Sq. Ft. Along With 800 Sq. Ft. Constructed Area on The Ground Floor	May 14, 2024 Rs. 27,54,617/-	06-05-2022

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower/s and/or guarantor/s (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: July 04, 2024
Place: Raipur

Sincerely, Authorised Signatory
For ICICI Bank Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Home Finance
Registered Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400051.

Corporate Office: ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri Kurla Road, J.B. Nagar, Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 059.
Branch Office : 1st floor, Indira Tower, A-26, Zone II, Main Road Vyapar Vihar Bilaspur (C.G.) 495001
Branch Office : Crescent Plaza, Unit-H4, 2nd Floor, Near Swaroop, Talkies, Station Road, Durg, Chhattisgarh-491001

The following borrower/s has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ("ICICI HFC") and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor / (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent / Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1	Kartik Ghanta (Borrower), Santoshi Ghanta (Co-Borrower), Adarsh Chowk Gondapara Ke Pass Chhattisgarh Adarsh Chowk Gondapara Ke Pass Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001. LHBSR00001505866	Na Ph No 31 Kharsa No Part of 15b/76 Mouja Lingyadih Vikashkhand Bilha Rnm Bilaspur Teh Dist Bilaspur 495001 Bilaspur 15b/76 Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001. Bounded By North: Plot No.1(Seller) 2, South: Plot of Mr. Moh Nahak, East: Approach Road, West: Approach Road.	18-06-2024 Rs. 2134423.82	03/06/2024
2	Kartik Ghanta (Borrower), Santoshi Ghanta (Co-Borrower), Adarsh Chowk Gondapara Mandi Ke Pass Chhattisgarh Adarsh Chowk Gondapara Mandi Ke Pass Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001. LHBSR00001505867	Na Ph No 31 Kharsa No Part of 15b/76 Mouja Lingyadih Vikashkhand Bilha Rnm Bilaspur Teh Dist Bilaspur 495001 Bilaspur 15b/76 Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001. Bounded By North: Plot No.1 (Seller) 2, South: Plot of Mr. Moh Nahak, East: Approach Road, West: Approach Road.	18-06-2024 Rs. 242323	03/06/2024
3	Rajendra Ramteke (Borrower), Savitri Ramteke (Co-Borrower), Bakhtawar Chaa Gali No 5 Tulsiip 16 Rajnandgaon Rajnandgaon Rajnandgaon Chhattisgarh 491441. LHDRG00001519524	Na Part Of Kharsa No 116/32, And Mixed Kharsa No 27/1/18, 27/2/20, Ph.no. 34, Molpur, Ward No 08, Mohala Ramnagar Ward, R.n.m. Molpur, Tehsil and District Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, Rajnandgaon Na Rajnandgaon Chhattisgarh 491441. Bounded By North: House of Mrs. Sevali Sahu, South: Open Land of Mr. Thakurji, East: Gali, West: Agriculture Land Of Mr.	18-06-2024 Rs. 32170	03/06/2024
4	Rajendra Ramteke (Borrower), Savitri Ramteke (Co-Borrower), Tulsiipr Beisde Railway Line Ward No 16 Rajnandgaon Rajnandgaon Chhattisgarh 491441. LHDRG00001519525	Na Part Of Kharsa No 116/32, And Mixed Kharsa No 27/1/18, 27/2/20, Ph.no. 34, Molpur, Ward No 08, Mohala Ramnagar Ward, R.n.m. Molpur, Tehsil and District Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, Rajnandgaon Na Rajnandgaon Chhattisgarh 491441. Bounded By North: House Of Mrs. Sevali Sahu, South: Open Land of Mr. Thakurji, East: Gali, West: Agriculture Land of Mr.	18-06-2024 Rs. 102467.94	03/06/2024

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantor/s (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: 04.07.2024 | Place : Bilaspur, Rajnandgaon
Authorised Officer, ICICI Home Finance Company Limited