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MONEY 10

AUTOMOBILE RETAIL SALES
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IT IS A GOOD THING
THAT EVERYONE IS
PERFORMING: GIL
12 SPORTS

Assam CM's warning: Post 2015 arrivals in the State to be deported

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said anyone coming to Assam in 2015 or later will be deported back to their country of origin.

"We will deport those who have come after 2015. Only eight persons have applied so far who came before 2015 for CAA. Out of these applicants, only two have proceeded to attend interviews with relevant authorities," the CM said at a Press conference in Guwahati to share the insight into the implementation of the Citizens' Act.

The Centre on March 11 implemented the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 CAA by notifying the rules, four years after the law was passed by Parliament to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who came to India before December 31, 2014, and stayed here for five years.

"We conducted outreach programmes in the Barak valley and approached many-Hindu Bengali families and asked them to apply for citizenship under CAA. However, they refused to do so. The Assam Chief



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma addresses the media, in Guwahati PTI

Minister's statement comes after he stated that the citizenship act will be "completely insignificant" in Assam due to a low number of applications.

Himanta said anybody (according to CAA) who has come to India before 2015, they have the first right to apply for citizenship. "If they don't apply we will lodge a case for them. So this is a statutory instruction," the CM said on a strong note to carry forward implementation of the CAA.

Based on the rules of the Citizenship Amendment Act, migrants belonging to six religious minorities — Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain,

Parsi, and Christian from neighbouring countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan will be allowed to stay in India as citizens if they entered the country before December 31, 2014.

Sarma claimed that most of the Hindu-Bengali families, who were not included in the final draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), told him that they possessed necessary documents to prove their Indian citizenship and preferred the FT route than applying through the CAA.

Asked whether the Assam Government is dropping cases in Foreigners Tribunals (FT) against Hindu-Bengalis,

Sarma clarified, "This is misleading. We cannot drop any case. We are simply advising that before initiating a case, individuals should apply through the CAA portal. Even if a case is filed, there won't be any outcome because these people are eligible for citizenship." The Chief Minister said he will request the Advocate General to flag the issue of CAA so that FTs can give time to people whose cases are going on to apply for citizenship under the newly implemented law.

"I can't give a direction to court to pause while deciding the citizenship cases. The FT judges themselves have to decide and they know the latest situation," he added.

Asked about such a low number of applications in CAA, Sarma said the Opposition myth that 15-20 lakh Bangladeshis will get citizenship in Assam has been busted completely.

"In the anti-CAA movement, five Assamese youths lost their lives. So they made the sacrifice to prevent only these eight people! This abysmally low number of eight applications, of which only two turned up for interview, is a bit surprising for us also," he added.

BJP numbers dip in Rajya Sabha, Party eyes bypolls for renewed strength



File Photo: PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

BJP's tally in the Rajya Sabha has dipped below 90 for the first time in many years but the ruling party at Centre with its NDA partners is looking forward to gain berths in the Upper House by-elections to fill the existing vacancies in forthcoming weeks.

The current strength of the Rajya Sabha is 226 with the BJP having 86 followed by 26 of the Congress and 13 of the Trinamool Congress (TMC). There are currently 19 vacancies.

Interestingly, after a decade without a Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha due to a shortage of numbers, this position has now been filled with the appointment of Rahul Gandhi, as the party improved its score in the

recently concluded general elections. The Rajya Sabha is heading in a similar direction, with the Congress struggling to maintain the numbers necessary to keep the status of LoP for its party chief, Mallikarjun Kharge.

After the election of party leaders KC Venugopal and Deepender Singh Hooda to the Lok Sabha and their subsequent resignation from the Rajya Sabha, the Congress strength in the Upper House too has come down to 26, just one more than the minimum 25 members required to qualify for the post.

For this grand old party strategically made its old timer Kesava Rao to quit the RS berth from the BRP party who joined Congress last week which is the party's plan to improve its tally in

the Upper House to retain the post of LoP for incumbent Kharge. This has caused a vacancy from Telangana, which will be filled up by the Congress given its numbers in the State Assembly.

According to sources, Congress is trying to get more members from other parties from Telangana and Karnataka to resign and get them elected on its ticket.

While the BJP-led NDA is confident of winning two seats each in Bihar, Maharashtra and Assam and one each in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tripura due to their numerical superiority over the Opposition, the four new nominated members are also expected to be pro-treasury benches whenever the Government names them.

Sensex, Nifty sing on an all time high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty closed at new record high levels on Monday following buying in PSU bank shares and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 145.52 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at a new record high of 80,664.86. During the day, it advanced 343.2 points or 0.42 per cent to hit a high of 80,862.54.

The NSE Nifty rallied 84.55 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,586.70. During the day, it surged 132.9 points or 0.54 per cent to hit a new record peak of 24,635.05.

Among Sensex shares, State Bank of India was the biggest gainer, rising by 2.55 per cent after the bank announced a hike in MCLR-based lending rates for various tenors. NTPC, UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors, Maruti and ITC were the other major winners.

Pollution Centres down shutters, hike not Under Control

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Around 600 Pollution Under Control Centres (PUC) across 400 petrol pumps in the national Capital will remain closed starting Monday in response to a protest call by petrol dealers and pump owners following the Delhi Government's proposed hike in pollution certificate charges.

The closure call of PUC by the Delhi Petrol Dealers' Association (DPDA) comes amid tussle with the Government for not revising the PUC checking rates according to the demand of the association.

The association of petrol dealers claimed that while the rates for PUC certificates were not increased from the last 13 years, last week, there was a very nominal increase in the rates by the Delhi Transport Department.

While announcing the decision on Thursday, Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said, "In response to the long-pending demands of the Delhi Petrol Dealers Association and to keep up with the rising costs of pollution checking services, we have decided to revise the rates.

This revision is necessary to ensure that pollution checking stations can continue to operate efficiently and provide quality services to the



View of a petrol pump, in New Delhi, on Monday. Around 600 Pollution Under Control (PUC) centres across 400 petrol pumps in the national Capital will remain closed from Monday in response to a protest call by petrol dealers and pump owners Pioneer photo

public. We remain committed to maintaining Delhi's air quality and ensuring that all vehicles meet the required pollution standards

Stating that the association has decided to go ahead with the strike as the running of PUC centres have become unviable, DPDA president Nischal Singhania said, "There are 400 petrol pumps

in Delhi and all of them have petrol PUC centres. Some of them also have diesel PUC centres, which takes the count to around 600 PUC centres," he added.

President of All India Petroleum Dealers Association Ajay Bansal claimed that the nominal increase in the rates are not justified by the Government.



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump reacts as he is surrounded by US Secret Service agents at a campaign rally, in Butler AP/PTI

US Secret Service Spooked

AP ■ MILWAUKEE

Former President Donald Trump has arrived in Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention a day after he was targeted in an attempted assassination at a campaign event.

Trump's airplane touched down Sunday, the day before the four-day event kicks off with thousands of Republicans coming together to formally elect him as their 2024 presidential nominee.

The shocking scenes of violence at his Saturday campaign rally that injured his right ear, killed a spectator and injured another set a dark backdrop for the convention, which is typically four days of party pageantry, political speeches, policy platforms and the presidential

nominee's keynote address. The attack on Trump has put a heightened focus on safety and security of the event.

The former president said in a social media post earlier Sunday that he was going to delay his trip by two days because of the attempted assassination "but have just decided that I cannot allow a shooter, or potential assassin, to force change to scheduling, or anything else.

Republican National Convention starting on Monday which will nominate him as the party's candidate for the November 5 presidential election.

In one of his first interviews since the incident, the 78-year-old former president told conservative US media that he felt that he had been saved "by luck or by God".

SC agreeable to hearing pleas on key Central laws

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider a suggestion for setting up a constitution bench to hear pleas challenging the validity of passage of laws like the Aadhaar Act by the Modi Government as money bills allegedly to bypass the Rajya Sabha where it was in a minority. The BJP currently has 86 MPs and the ruling NDA 101 in the 245-member Rajya Sabha where the majority mark is 123.

The passage of Bills like the Aadhaar Act and even amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) as money bills, apparently to circumvent the Rajya Sabha when the NDA did not have a majority there, has been at the centre of a major political and legal row. Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh is one of the petitioners who have challenged the passage of the Aadhaar Act of 2016 as money bill under Article 110 of the Constitution.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal told a bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Monday that the pleadings are complete and the petitions needed to be listed for hearing.

Sibal said since the matter is already there in the list of scheduled constitution bench



File Photo

hearings, such a bench should be created on a priority basis. "I will take the call when I form the constitution benches," the CJI told him.

Later in the day, the Congress welcomed the top court's decision agreeing to consider setting up a constitution bench to hear the pleas. The party hoped a final verdict would come before Chandrachud retires in November this year.

Earlier, the top court had said it would constitute a seven-judge bench to consider the issue of validity of passage of laws like the Aadhaar Act as a money bill.

A money bill is a piece of legislation which can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha cannot amend or reject it. The Upper House can only make recommendations which may or may not be accepted by the Lower House. A bench headed by the CJI

had earlier said all pending seven-judge bench matters will be listed on October 12 last year for procedural directions.

In November 2019, a five-judge bench of the apex court had referred to a larger bench the issue of examining the validity of the passage of the Finance Act, 2017 as a money bill.

"The issue and question of Money Bill, as defined under Article 110(1) of the Constitution, and certification accorded by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha in respect of Part-XIV of the Finance Act, 2017 is referred to a larger Bench," it had said.

The five-judge bench had then struck down in entirety the rules governing the appointment and service conditions of the members of various tribunals that formed part of the Finance Act.

Earlier, another bench of the top court, while upholding the constitutional validity of PMLA, had kept the issue of passage of the amendments to it as a money bill open for adjudication by a larger bench. In the Aadhaar judgement, the top court had upheld the validity of passage of the law as a money bill.

However, Justice Chandrachud, the present CJI, had penned a dissenting judgement and called designating the Aadhaar legislation as a money bill a "fraud on the Constitution".

Nepal okays Oli as PM

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

KP Sharma Oli on Monday was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the fourth time to lead a new coalition Government that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the Himalayan nation.

The leader of Nepal's largest communist party was appointed as Prime Minister on Sunday by President Ram Chandra Paudel to lead the coalition Government with the Nepali Congress (NC), the largest party in Parliament, apart from other smaller parties.

Oli, 72, succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' who lost the vote of



Newly elected Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli is being sworn in by president Ram Chandra Paudel, unseens, at the Presidential residence in Kathmandu, Nepal PTI

confidence in the House of Representatives (HoR) on Friday, leading to the formation of the new Government.

Sport Icons draw ire, not applause

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a controversial incident, as former cricketers Harbhajan Singh, Suresh Raina, Yuvraj Singh, and Gurkeerat Mann face backlash and a police complaint for allegedly mocking people with disabilities (PwD) in a video posted on Instagram, a battery of individuals and players within the community have stepped forward to vehemently condemn the sports' icons 'disgraceful' act.

As the video, where they mimicked physical disabilities while recreating actor Vicky Kaushal's dance step from the song "Tauba Tauba", sparked widespread condemnation, one of the

sports icons under the scanner Harbhajan Singh has issued an apology amidst calls for accountability and sensitivity.

Arman Ali, the executive director of the National Centre for Promotion of Disabled People (NCPEDP) who filed the complaint in the afternoon with the SHO of the Amar Colony police station in a strongly worded statement said it is "disgusting to see India's top cricketers mocking disability. Shameful and atrocious behaviour from those who are idolised by masses. Shame on them..." Alongside the cricketers, the complaint also names



Sandhya Devanathan, Vice President and Managing Director of Meta India. It accuses Instagram, owned by

Meta, of violating the Information Technology Act, 2000, for allowing such content to be uploaded and

shared. Authorities at the Amar Colony police station stated that the complaint will be forwarded to the cyber cell for further investigation. Para-badminton star Manasi Joshi, a former world number one in her category, minced no words as she directly addressed Harbhajan Singh, who is Rajya Sabha Member from Aam Aadmi Party also and Suresh Raina on social media Instagram, criticizing them for mocking the gait patterns of people with disabilities.

"Wanted more responsibility from the stars that you all are, please do not mock the gait patterns of people with disabilities. This isn't

funny...this isn't legendary. "You don't know how much harm your behaviour can do. The appreciation you're getting from people around is appalling to see. This reel of yours is going to encourage that it is ok to make fun of the walking patterns of people with disabilities for a few laughs. "More young children with disabilities will be bullied by using this reel. If any of you athletes would have done responsible community service in disability space area, you all would not have come up with this reel. I'm scared how the PR agencies of these athletes approved this reel for public platform," Manasi rued.

GTB Hospital shooting: Two arrested, hunt for other accused on

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police arrested two people on Monday in connection with the fatal shooting of a 32-year-old man inside a ward in the GTB Hospital by an unidentified person.

According to the police, the accused have been identified as 20 year old Faiz from Loni in Uttar Pradesh and Farhan from Chauhan Banger area in Delhi, but said they might not have been involved in actual firing of shots Sunday evening. The mastermind behind the attack is one person namely Faheem, alias Badshah Khan.

They said the Faiz and Farhan were allegedly involved in providing a motorcycle to four accused who went to the hospital. The four accused reached the GTB Hospital on that motorcycle, the police said. One of the four entered the ward number 24 and shot fires at the patient, killing him at the hospital bed.

"We are interrogating them (Faiz and Farhan) and will take their police remand to



know about the one who shot the person (patient). Our teams are working round the clock to nab rest of the accused. They will be nabbed soon," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Surendra Choudhary said.

The attackers had gone to the hospital to kill a gangster, a rival of the Hasim Baba gang who was also shot at by some people on June 12 and was admitted in the same wards for some time, on the instructions of Faheem but they shot dead Riyazuddin who was lying on

the bed opposite to him. Police also said the shooters had proper instruction on how they can escape from the hospital after committing the crime. "On Sunday, the GTB Enclave police registered a case of murder on the statement of Tarranum Malik. She told police that her brother Riyazuddin was fired upon by an unknown person inside ward number 24 of the GTB Hospital, where he was undergoing treatment," DCP Choudhary said. The officer further said that the

video footage from the cameras near the have been obtained. The CCTV footage from cameras on the ground floor was also obtained which show four people entering the hospital emergency gate.

"Multiple teams were formed to investigate the case and to nab the accused. Teams identified the people in the footage based on inputs. Their social media handles were also obtained and their mobile numbers were checked. We checked the call details and some more suspects were identified," said the DCP. Police said that after checking call details, Faiz was arrested from Laxmi Garden area in Loni of Uttar Pradesh. "During interrogation, Faiz revealed that one Faheem alias Badshah Khan is the mastermind of the incident. Faiz and his two brothers -- Faujaan and Moin Khan -- usually meet Faheem who is an associate of the Hasim Baba gang and works for the gang," said the DCP, adding that one more suspect Farhan (whose age is not yet known) was also nabbed from Chauhan Banger area.

Hospital's resident doctors go on indefinite strike

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Resident doctors of Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital in Delhi's Dilshad garden area went on an indefinite strike on Monday morning a day after a patient was shot dead while a doctor was treating him but left the emergency services operational. Meanwhile, a delegation from the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) met with Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj in the presence of senior health officials of the city government.

According to doctors of the Delhi government-run hospital, three doctors were present in ward 24 when the assailant pushed aside a doctor and shot Riyazuddin. Members of the Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) began the strike at 9 am on Monday but emergency services are operational.



Ranjan Dimri

RDA president Nitesh Kumar said that the strike is being led by junior doctors with the support of the Delhi Nursing Federation and other associations. The protesters raised slogans, demanding improvement in the security situation at in hospital. The medical professionals at the hospital are attending to only emergency patients, while the outpatient department, laboratories and other departments are closed, a member of the RDA said. Another mem-

ber said, "We are arranging everything for the association so we can stay on strike until our voices are heard by the administration department and the government." He said the RDA will stand resolute over their safety demands. Meanwhile, during the meet with the delegation from FAIMA, Bharadwaj assured of robust security measures to create a safer working environment for doctors and benefit patient care. The delegation was led by the National

Chairman and accompanied by the National General Secretary and Chief Advisor. Bharadwaj took note of the grievances raised by the FAIMA delegation and addressed all the concerns while assuring that he will implement measures to heighten the security of the hospitals. He stated that there will be installation of metal detectors at the emergency entries of hospitals, deployment of two armed guards at the emergency entries of major hospitals. Further he stated that he will request the Police Commissioner for the assignment of one police constable on duty round the clock. He stated that he will review of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the hospitals and promised to look after the installation and maintenance of CCTV cameras at hospitals with proper functioning.

Senior BJP leaders protest at AAP-supported discom offices against tariff hike

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Delhi BJP leaders and workers on Monday protested at 14 major offices of AAP supported power discoms in different parts of the city against the Power Purchase Agreement Charge (PPAC), Pension Surcharge, Meter Charge and Load Surcharge which are making the electricity bills hefty. State BJP President Virendra Sachdeva accused the AAP government of looting the Delhiites and said "In the name of electricity surcharge, the Arvind Kejriwal government has continuously cheat-

ed the people of Delhi." The protesters raised slogans of 'Kejriwal Delhiwalo ko lootna band karo' and 'PPAC and pension surcharge wapis lo' while carrying posters which had written 'Delhi sarkar ka janta se jhoot aur bijli company ki loot'. He alleged that the Delhi government is in connivance with power companies and has been looting Delhi for the last 10 years. "Every consumer who is paying electricity bill, more than 50 per cent of the money is going into the pockets of Arvind Kejriwal and power companies in the name of sur-



charges," he claimed. Sachdeva accused Kejriwal of imposing the PPAC on the people of Delhi and said, "At the behest of Kejriwal government, the electricity companies are collecting pensions of their retired employees from the consumers of Delhi in the name of pension trust, whereas giving pension is the job of the electricity company and not the people of Delhi." He added that as long as the loot will continue so will the protest of BJP. Delhi BJP MLAs Om Prakash Sharma, Abhay Verma and Anil Bajpai said that while we are participating in the Jan

Sangharsh started by the state BJP against the rigging of electricity bills, we will also raise this issue of loot of the public in the Monsoon Session of Delhi Vidhan Sabha. South Delhi BJP MP Ramveer Singh Bidhuri addressed the protesting workers and said, "Arvind Kejriwal came to power with the promise of auditing the accounts of power companies but today the Delhi government and power companies are seen to be equal partners in looting the electricity bills of the public." West Delhi BJP MP Kamaljeet

Shrawat addressed the protest organised outside KV Grid Sub Station at Najafgarh and said, "Arvind Kejriwal ruled Delhi for the last 10 years by just telling lies and during this time he has looted the pockets of the people of Delhi in the name of electricity bills." New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj addressed the protest led by District President Sunil Kakkar outside 33 KV Substation building at Karol Bagh and alleged that in the last few years a worrying partnership is visible between the Kejriwal Government and private Discoms.

Tihar jail authorities refute AAP's claims 'Kejriwal's health deteriorating' in prison

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the Tihar jail authorities and AAP leaders being at loggerhead regarding the health of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the prison authorities on Monday said Kejriwal lost only two kg in prison and that he was being regularly monitored by an AIIMS medical board, refuting the AAP's claims that his health is deteriorating and has lost 8.5 kg in jail since his arrest.

In a report sent to the Delhi government's Home Department, the Tihar administration shared Kejriwal's vitals and said that the narrative created by AAP ministers and leaders "confuses and misleads the public". "He has not lost 8.5 KGs weight in jail, as is being touted by AAP Ministers, MP and others," it claimed. The report by the jail authorities stated that Kejriwal weighed 65 kg when he first came to prison on April 1 and 66 kg between April 8 and 29. When he returned to prison on June 2 after a 21-day bail, his weight was 63.5 kg.



"On July 14, his weight was 61.5 kg. So, effectively, he lost 2 kg," the report stated. It stated that while he has been eating home-cooked food in jail, he has been returning food sent from his home routinely since June 3, from the very next day that he came back to jail after election campaigning. "It may be noted that in his earlier stint in jail, he was deliberately eating food that would spike his sugar levels," it said. A medical board of AIIMS has been constantly monitoring the chief minister and his wife Sunita Kejriwal remains in regular touch with the board, the report stated. The

prison administration said in its report that the AAP's narrative with "false information and ulterior motive" was intended to "browbeat" it. The blood pressure and sugar levels and weight of the accused is regularly being monitored and he is provided adequate treatment for all his ailments and is regularly having home-cooked food thrice a day. "These facts are brought on record in the light of the media vilification being carried out by vested interest groups," it said. Meanwhile, senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh alleged the BJP was playing with Kejriwal's life. "It

is a crime to "leak" someone's medical report and there should be a probe into this," he said.

Even the medical report "leaked" by the Tihar jail authorities to the media states that he lost weight and suffered multiple hypoglycemia episodes in prison, he said. "Something untoward might happen someday and he (Kejriwal) could slip into a coma. Since his custody, his blood sugar has dropped below 50 mg/dL on five occasions in the night," the AAP MP claimed. Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21 in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the Delhi government's now-scraped excise policy 2021-22. He was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in a corruption case related to the alleged scam from Tihar jail on June 26. The chief minister was granted interim bail by the Supreme Court on Friday in the money laundering case but he remains in jail in the CBI case.

Kejriwal having home cooked food lacking nutritional value to get bail: Sachdeva

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Monday accused the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of deliberately having food made from his home that lacks nutritional value to show medical weakness to get bail. "Whenever a court date is around AAP leaders start their rhetoric statement that there is risk to Arvind Kejriwal's life and he is facing medical issues like high sugar and weight loss," Sachdeva alleged, adding that these rhetoric will not work. Further, the Delhi BJP president stated, "This rhetoric now holds no value in the eyes of the people of Delhi and by raising these frivolous issues AAP leaders make a joke of their party leader Arvind Kejriwal." He questioned the AAP leaders on saying such things despite the food for Kejriwal coming from his own home. "People want to ask Sanjay Singh, Atishi and other AAP



leaders that Kejriwal eats three meals all cooked and coming from his home and his medicines are provided as per directive of the Supreme Court of India based on the advice of his own selected doctors. Kejriwal just lives behind the walls of Tihar Jail everything he consumes eats comes daily from his home," he claimed while stating that despite the fact that Kejriwal is eating everything from his home and yet facing weight loss then it means Kejriwal's home cooked food lacks proper nutrition. "Lack of nutritional value in Kejriwal's home cooked food means it's being done intentionally show medical weakness to get bail," he said.

Kejriwal Government continuously increasing electricity prices: Vijender

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former BJP Delhi President Vijender Gupta along with hundreds of BJP workers protested against the massive hike in the Power Purchase Adjustment Charge (PPAC) by the Delhi Government. He accused the Kejriwal Government of being in collusion with electricity companies and said that by benefiting these companies, the AAP Government is involved in transactions worth crores of rupees, and in return, the electricity companies are looting the common people of Delhi. Protesting outside the Tata Power-DDL in Bawana, Gupta said that the Kejriwal Government is continuously increasing electricity prices under the names of PPAC, various charges, pension surcharges, and fixed charges. Gupta added that the Kejriwal Government, synonymous with corruption, is setting new records of scams. He mentioned that while Kejriwal is in jail due to the liquor scam and is hiring the most expensive lawyers with public money to secure his bail. The money that was meant to



solve Delhi's problems and provide services to the people is being spent illegally on lawyers, courts, and extravagant facilities. Further attacking Delhi Government over waterlogging, Gupta said while the public is already struggling with the water crisis, they are now facing waterlogging and severe traffic jams in most areas due to rains. Due to the negligence of the Delhi Government, the barrage of the Munak canal broke, flooding several blocks of Bawana JJ Colony with three feet of water. Gupta highlighted that while the Delhi Jal Board is in debt of Rs 72,000 crore, the DTC's condition has deteriorated due to the bus procurement scam. Additionally, the government-funded colleges in Delhi are on the verge of closure.

South Delhi MP Bidhuri addresses workers' conference in Bijwasan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

South Delhi BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri addressed a workers' conference in Delhi's Bijwasan area ahead of the legislative assembly election in the national Capital and said that after securing a third term for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led NDA government at the center, it is now time to give BJP a chance in the city. He claimed that only BJP can fulfill the dream of making the capital a world-class city. While addressing the party workers, Bidhuri said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has implemented welfare schemes across the country, but the Kejriwal government has deprived Delhi of these benefits. The Delhi government is deeply corrupt and has failed on every front." The former Leader of

Opposition (LoP) in the Delhi assembly urged the workers to work hard to ensure BJP's victory in the upcoming assembly elections next year to free the city from this government while requesting Delhi residents to give BJP a chance so that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of making Delhi a world-class city can be realized. The program was presided over by former MLA Satprakash Rana. Bidhuri thanked Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and Delhi Development Authority Vice Chairman Subhashish Panda for approving a fund of Rs 1,000 crore for the development of Delhi's villages. "Development work has begun in Bijwasan with a budget of Rs 30 crore, and similar projects will be initiated in other villages in the coming days," he stated.

Massive fire breaks out in Mayur Vihar cafe, one fireman injured

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A massive fire broke out at a cafe in east Delhi's Mayur Vihar and also gutted several shops on the building's upper floors. A fireman has been reportedly injured in the matter. The blaze, which erupted at the cafe located on the building's ground floor on Sunday night, spread rapidly and engulfed stores on first and second floors. An official of the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said that the fire is under control but three to four fire tenders are still at the location and the cooling process is underway. "We received a call regarding fire at a cafe and school uniform store at 11.40 pm on Sunday in Phase 2 and Pocket B of Mayur Vihar area," the official said. "We rushed 25 fire tenders to the spot. One fireman was rescued from the terrace of the building," he said. DCP



East Apoorva Gupta said, "Two brothers Amar Preet Singh and Suman Jeet Singh, who have three shops on first and second floors, had shut down their shops at 9.30 pm and went home. At about 11.30 pm, they were informed by some locals regarding the fire in their shops, after which they alerted the Pandav Nagar police station." A fireman has been injured in the incident as he slipped

and fell while trying to douse the fire. The fire erupted in the cafe on the ground floor and spread to the remaining two floors, she added. The SHO of Police Station Pandav Nagar along with local police staff is also present at spot. The DCP further said the fire is now under control but is yet to be doused completely, adding that the cause of fire has not been ascertained so far.

Trial run of Delhi Government's mohalla bus service has commenced, says Gahlot

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said that the trial run of the Delhi government's mohalla bus service commenced on Monday on two routes. At a press conference, he said there will be 2,080 buses under the scheme. Of these, 1,040 will be operated by the DTC and the rest by DIMTS, the minister said. "In a major step to enhance last-mile connectivity in the national capital, the Kejriwal government has commenced the trial of Mohalla Bus service. The trial, commencing today, will continue for seven days and currently operates on two routes: Pradhan Enclave Pushta to Majlis Park Metro Station, and Akshardham Metro Station to Mayur Vihar Phase-III Paper Market," Gahlot said, adding that the trial will go on for a week and based on the learnings and feedback we will roll



Ranjan Dimri

out the scheme in two to three weeks. The minister added that the bus is equipped with six battery packs with a total capacity of 196KW, providing a range of 200+ km with an opportunity charging of 45 minutes. These nine-meter Mohalla buses have 23 passenger seats and a standing capacity of 13 passengers, he said. "The Mohalla buses have

been coloured green for easy passenger identification. Additionally, 25 per cent of the seats (six seats) are pink, reserved exclusively for women passengers," he further stated. Fare in these buses will be the same as AC buses of the Delhi Government and women can avail free rides on these buses through pink passes.

CBI searches premises of ex-Chairman, others in CGPSC recruitment scam

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The CBI on Monday searched the houses of former Chairman, Secretary and Controller of Examination of the Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission (CGPSC) in Raipur and Bhalai in the alleged CGPSC recruitment scam.

The raids were conducted following charges that family members and relatives of officials and ruling party politicians were appointed in the district collectorate in 2020-22, CBI spokesman Ramesh Chandra Joshi said. The agency had



registered an FIR against then CGPSC chairperson Taman Singh Sonwani, Secretary JK Dhruv and others for alleged nepotism. The CBI alleged that

Sonawani's son Nitesh was allegedly selected as Deputy Collector, his elder brother's son Sahil as Deputy SP and his sister's daughter Sunita Joshi as Labour Officer.

The wife of his son Nisha Kosale was selected as the Deputy Collector and his brother's daughter-in-law Deepa Adil as District Excise Officer.

It was alleged that then CGPSC Secretary (Dhruv) got his son (Sumit) selected as the Deputy Collector.

The agency alleged that children and relatives of senior officers of the then Chhattisgarh government as well as politicians were selected in merit list.

Malaria positivity rate drops to 0.51 pc in Chhattisgarh

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The positivity rate of malaria in Chhattisgarh has declined from 4.60 to 0.51 percent due to the efforts of the Health Department and public awareness, an official statement said on Monday.

As per the annual parasite index, from the first to the ninth phase of the malaria eradication campaign 2020-23, the positive rate has fallen from 4.60 percent to 0.51 percent.

The tenth phase of the campaign concluded in July 2024. Under this, 16.97 lakh insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs) were distributed across 22 districts.

Dantewada, Bijapur and Narayanpur districts of Bastar division account for about 62



percent of malaria cases. There has been a 50 percent reduction in cases in the Bastar division, from 16.49 percent to 7.78 percent. In the first half of 2024, 1,660 cases were reported in Bastar district, 4,441 in Bijapur, 1,640 in Dantewada, 259 in Kanker, 701 in Kondagaon district, 1,509 in Narayanpur district and 1,144 in Sukma.

CM reviews flagship schemes in marathon meetings



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Monday reviewed the progress of flagship schemes in Chhattisgarh.

A senior said the Chief Minister held one-to-one meetings with officials and took stock of the progress of different schemes.

The marathon meetings went on in the Mantralaya till the late

Sai told the officials that at any cost, the negligence in works related to the public will not be tolerated.

Sai told the officials to complete the works within the stipulated time limit without any laxity. Sai told the officials that at any cost, the negligence in works related to the public will not be tolerated.

Retired IAS officer Anil Tuteja, two others jailed



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR/MEERUT

A court in Meerut in Uttar Pradesh on Monday sent retired IAS officer Anil Tuteja and two others to 14 days judicial remand linked with supply of fake holograms to distillers in an alleged liquor scam in Chhattisgarh, a government lawyer said.

Tuteja was presented before the court by the Special Task Force of Uttar Pradesh who are probing a cheating, forgery and criminal conspiracy case in Greater Noida regarding an ED probe into the scam.

Farmers urged to insure crops under PMFBY by July 31

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has urged farmers to insure their crops under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana by July 31 to be eligible for relief from crop losses due to natural disasters, an official communique said on Monday.

Farmers can insure their main crop, paddy (irrigated and non-irrigated) as well as

other crops like maize, urad and kutki.

The scheme provides relief for losses caused by adverse weather conditions, drought, floods, inundation, hailstorms and other natural disasters.

The Agriculture Insurance Co of India, HDFC and Bajaj General Insurance have been authorized to implement this scheme in various districts.

Modi has emerged as global leader: Sai



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Monday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for crossing 100 million followers in social media handle X (formerly Twitter) and said that he has now emerged as a global leader. Modi has surpassed followers of US President Joe Biden, Sai said.

Sai said on X: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a new



milestone as he became the most followed global leader on the social media platform X with over 100 million followers."

Modi too had exulted in a post on his social media handle commenting that "A hundred million on @X! I'm happy to be on this vibrant medium and cherish the discussion, debate, insights, people's blessings, constructive criticism, and more. "Looking forward to an equally engaging time in the future as well," he said.



A glimpse from the 'Shala Pravesh Utsav' being held at a school in Chhattisgarh's tribal dominated village in Sukma on Monday. Forest Minister Kedar Kashyap was the chief guest.

Tribals in C'garh dying of malaria, diarrhea: Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Congress in Chhattisgarh on Monday charged that tribals in the state are dying of malaria and diarrhea and the BJP government was a mute spectator.

PCC chief Deepak Bajj said in a statement that the state government's laxity in providing health facilities was causing the death of tribals in Bastar and Kawardha regions because of malaria and diarrhea.

One tribal died of malaria at Bhopalpatnam in Bijapur district of Bastar region while five Baiga tribes died of diarrhea like symptoms at Sonwahi in Kawardha district, he said.

There is no arrangement of clean drinking water at Sonwahi village and the entire village is under the grip of malaria and diarrhea, he alleged.



Even after the death of five persons, the state government was not serious and was trying to hide the incidents, he said.

The Haat Bazar clinics conducted by the previous Congress government had earlier brought to halt the menace of malaria and diarrhea but now the BJP government was not serious over the

"Even after the death of five persons, the state government was not serious and was trying to hide the incidents"

issue, he said. "It was unfortunate that the Sai government halted the health schemes of the erstwhile government," he said.

Custodial remand of four in fake holograms extended

ACB/EOW special judge Nidhi Sharma Tiwari granted Anurag Dwivedi, Amit Singh, Deepak Duari and Dileep Pandey's remand till July 18.

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A special Anti-Corruption Bureau/Economic Offences Wing (ACB/EOW) court here on Monday sent four persons to four days custodial remand for the supply of fake holograms to distillers in an alleged liquor scam.

ACB/EOW special judge Nidhi Sharma Tiwari granted Anurag Dwivedi, Amit Singh, Deepak Duari and Dileep Pandey's remand till July 18, ACB/EOW Deputy Director (Prosecution) Mithlesh Verma said.

They were presented before the court after the expiry of their remand.

The ACB/EOW nabbed the first three men, who burnt some duplicate holograms in 2022 on the instructions of Anwar Dhebar, and Arvind Singh amid fears of a raid by the Enforcement Directorate, which is probing the alleged liquor scam of 2019-22 in the state.

Pandey, the Chhattisgarh Head of Noida-based Prizm Holography Security Films Pvt Ltd, was apprehended on July 10 following the statements of these three.

The fake holograms were allegedly made in a firm in Noida

in Uttar Pradesh. The anti-graft agency has named several Congress leaders and firms in its FIR registered in January this year.

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कार्यालय कलेक्टर जिला दक्षिण बस्तर, दन्तेवाड़ा (जिला निर्माण समिति)

मैनुअल पद्धति निर्वाह आमंत्रण सूचना :-

निविदा विज्ञापन क्र. 01 / जि.नि.स. / लो.नि.वि./24-25 दन्तेवाड़ा, दिनांक 10/07/2024

एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अन्तर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु मैनुअल निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (₹. लाख में)
1	आस्था-2 स्कूल भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	38.14
2	आस्था-2 कन्या छात्रावास भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	41.98
3	आस्था-2 बालक छात्रावास भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	41.37
4	सक्षम-1 भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	29.65
5	सक्षम-2 छात्रावास भवन एवं मेस का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	38.36
6	आस्था-1 स्कूल भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	49.86
7	बी.पी.ओ. कॉल सेंटर भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	34.90
8	डी.ए.सी. मुख्यमंत्री मॉडल स्कूल भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	46.15
9	कन्या शिक्षा परिसर छात्रावास भवन के भू-तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	23.29
10	नव गुरुकुल गर्ल्स हास्टल भवन गीदम का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	19.77
11	पोलीटेक्नीक बॉयस हास्टल भवन गीदम का भू-तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	22.31
12	पोलीटेक्नीक बॉयस हास्टल भवन का प्रथम तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	19.60
13	पोलीटेक्नीक बॉयस हास्टल भवन का द्वितीय तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	35.59
14	एकलव्य खेल परिसर छात्रावास भवन के भू-तल, प्रथम तल एवं द्वितीय तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	49.86
15	आस्था-1 कन्या छात्रावास भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	49.68
16	आस्था-1 बालक छात्रावास भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	49.14
17	ओडिटरियम भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	37.97
18	कन्या शिक्षा परिसर छात्रावास भवन के द्वितीय तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	16.22
19	कन्या शिक्षा परिसर छात्रावास भवन के द्वितीय तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	42.10
20	नवगुरुकुल कन्या छात्रावास भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	22.64
21	कस्तूरबा गांधी विद्यालय के भू-तल एवं प्रथम तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	13.38
22	100 सीटर आर.एम.एस.ए. छात्रावास भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	13.88
23	शासकीय आई.टी.आई. बालक छात्रावास भवन के प्रथम तल का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	28.63
24	शासकीय मॉडल स्कूल छात्रावास भवन का जीर्णोद्धार कार्य।	18.08
	कुल 24 कार्य	782.55

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्यों की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी कार्यालयीन अवधि में कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। साथ ही यह जानकारी विभागीय वेबसाइट <http://pwd.cg.nic.in> के "Live Tender" Tab पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

कार्यालय अभियन्ता लो.नि.वि., दक्षिण बस्तर संभाग, दन्तेवाड़ा

G-242501099/5

कार्यालय कलेक्टर जिला दक्षिण बस्तर, दन्तेवाड़ा

2. उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्यों की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी कार्यालयीन अवधि में कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

3. प्रत्येक कार्य हेतु निविदा प्रेषण करने की अन्तिम तिथि 23-07-2024 है।

नोडल अधिकारी
जिला निर्माण समिति शाखा
(का.अ.लो.नि.वि.)
दन्तेवाड़ा

G-242501078/5

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SC issues notices to pvt parties on NTA pleas to club all cases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notices to private parties on a batch of pleas filed by the National Testing Agency (NTA) seeking transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts on the NEET-UG row to the top court to avoid multiplicity of litigations. Earlier, a vacation bench had on June 14 issued notices to the parties on similar pleas by the NTA. The NTA had submitted that several pleas seeking cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Under Graduate (NEET-UG), 2024 over allegations of question paper leak and other malpractices are pending in several high courts. Advocate Vardhaman Kaushik, appearing for the NTA, urged a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala on Monday that the fresh batch of pleas be also transferred to the apex court as they pertained to the same issue. "Issue notice and tag," the bench said, adding that these pleas will also be taken up together with the pending petitions on the NEET-UG row on



July 18. The NTA also urged the bench to stay the pending proceedings in various high courts. The CJ said once the Supreme Court has issued notices on transfer petitions, the high courts, procedurally, do not proceed with the hearing. The bench asked the NTA counsel to bring this to the notice of the high courts concerned. The top court was hearing as many as five petitions seeking transfer of cases from various high courts to it. Earlier, the bench had on July 11 adjourned till July 18 the hearing on a clutch of other petitions seeking cancellation, re-test and probe into alleged malpractices in the conduct of NEET-UG, 2024 as the responses of the Centre and the NTA were not received by some parties. The bench had also said it has

received a status report from the CBI on the progress made in the probe into alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam. In an additional affidavit filed in the apex court on July 10, the Centre had said data analytics of the results of NEET-UG 2024 was conducted by IIT Madras which found there was neither any indication of "mass malpractice" nor a localised set of candidates benefiting from it and scoring abnormally high marks. The government's assertion assumed significance in view of the observations made by the top court on July 8 that it may order a re-test if there were large-scale malpractices in holding the exam on May 5. The Centre's affidavit had said experts from IIT Madras have found that the marks distribution follows the bell-shaped

curve that is witnessed in any large-scale examination indicating no abnormality. A bell curve describes the shape of data conforming to a normal distribution. The NTA had also filed a separate additional affidavit on the similar lines and said it has carried out an analysis of distribution of marks at the national, state and city level.

While hearing the pleas on July 8, the top court had observed that the sanctity of the examination has been "breached". Saying that a re-test may be ordered if the entire process was affected, the bench had sought details from the NTA and the CBI, including the timing and manner of the alleged paper leak, besides the number of wrongdoers to understand the extent of irregularities claimed by the petitioners. Over 23.33 lakh students had taken the test on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including in 14 cities overseas. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country.

PM pays tributes to Kamaraj, hails his visionary legacy



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid tributes to former Congress President K Kamaraj, a towering leader of his era who hailed from Tamil Nadu, and said his contribution to sectors like education remains unparalleled. "Remembering Thiru K. Kamaraj on his birth anniversary. He is widely respected for his visionary leadership and efforts to uplift the poor. His contribution to sectors like education remain unparalleled. We reiterate our commitment to fulfil his ideals and build a society that is just and compassionate," Modi said in a social media post. Born in 1903 in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, Kamaraj went on to become its chief minister and is credited for introducing several welfare measures to help the poor. He later became the national president of the Congress and was considered a deft organisational leader. 12

Support to Pacific islands' quest for progress our responsibility: Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India considers supporting the Pacific islands' quest for development as its responsibility, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday. In his brief remarks at an event, Jaishankar also said the Islands in the Pacific are not "small Islands" but rather "large Ocean countries" and that India is privileged to be their partners.

"We consider it our responsibility to support the Pacific Islands in their quest for sustainable development. Climate change, natural disasters, poverty alleviation and healthcare are common challenges that we need to address together," he said. "India is always ready to do more with our Indo-Pacific partners," he added. Jaishankar's remarks came at a virtual ceremony that saw India signing a MoU for implementation of four community development projects in the Marshall Islands. "I am glad that these projects cover areas, including a community sports centre in Ailuk Atoll, airport terminal on Mejit Island, community centres at the Arno and Wotje Atolls. These would surely provide better infrastructure to the



people of Marshall Islands," he said. The External Affairs Minister said India and the Republic of the Marshall Islands share a long history of friendly bilateral relations, which has expanded over the years, including under the aegis of the Forum of India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC). The FIPIC has emerged as a major framework for cooperation between India and the Pacific Island nations. "I would like to recall what my Prime Minister said at the third FIPIC summit. The Islands in the Pacific are not 'small Islands' but rather 'large Ocean countries'," he said. Jaishankar also referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of

India's "concrete" commitments to the Pacific Islands at the third FIPIC summit. "I am glad to witness the progress in achieving them. We are also working on the proposals regarding desalination units and dialysis machines for the Republic of Marshall Islands," he said. The External Affairs Minister said India recognises the priorities and needs of the Pacific Island nations. "Healthcare and related infrastructure, quality and affordable medicines, wellness and lifestyle, centres of excellence, education and capacity building, development of SME sector, renewable energy and clean water facilities all these are some of the focus areas of our cooperation," he noted.

PM, leaders congratulate new Nepalese PM Oli

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated K P Sharma Oli on his appointment as Prime Minister of Nepal and said he looked forward to working closely with him to further strengthen the friendship between the two countries. Oli, the leader of Nepal's largest communist party, was appointed Nepal's Prime Minister for a fourth term on Sunday to lead a new coalition government that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the Himalayan nation. Oli, 72, succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' who lost the vote of confidence in the House of Representatives on Friday, leading to the formation of the new government as per Article 76 (2) of the Constitution. Congratulating Oli, Modi said in a social media post, "Look forward to working closely to further strengthen the deep bonds of friendship between our two countries and to further expand our mutually beneficial cooperation for the progress and prosperity of our peoples." The Congress also extended its wishes to Oli and said



every Indian looks forward to further strengthening the bonds of cooperation between the two countries for a brighter future. In a social media post, president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "On the behalf of Indian National Congress, we extend our best wishes to Shree K P Sharma Oli, on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Nepal." As close neighbours, India and Nepal share unique ties of friendship and partnership characterised by deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture, he said. "Every Indian looks forward to further strengthening the bonds of mutual cooperation for a brighter future," Kharge said.

IFS Vikram Misri takes over as India's Foreign Secretary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seasoned diplomat Vikram Misri, widely regarded as an expert on China and national security, assumed charge as India's new Foreign Secretary on Monday. Misri, a 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service officer (IFS), who was serving as the deputy national security advisor, succeeded Vinay Kwatra. The 59-year-old assumed charge of the key position at a time India is looking to navigate various geo-political challenges, including its frosty ties with China following the lingering eastern Ladakh border row and the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar congratulated Misri on assuming his new responsibility. "Congratulate Foreign Secretary @VikramMisri as he assumes his new responsibility today. Wish him a productive and successful tenure," he said in a social media post. Misri served in various capacities at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in the Prime's Office and in various Indian missions in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. He has the rare distinction of serving as private secretary to three Prime Ministers, Inder



Kumar Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi. As per norms, Misri is set to have a minimum tenure of two years as the foreign secretary. "Vikram Misri assumed charge as Foreign Secretary today. #TeamMEA extends a warm welcome to Foreign Secretary Misri and wishes him a successful tenure ahead," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a social media post. Before he was appointed as the deputy NSA, Misri served as India's ambassador to China from 2019-2021. Misri is believed to have played a key role in talks between

India and China after tensions flared significantly following the Galwan Valley clashes in June, 2020. The ties between the two countries nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. In his illustrious career, Misri also served as India's ambassador to Spain (2014-2016) and Myanmar (2016-2018) besides having stints in many Indian missions, including Pakistan, the US, Germany, Belgium and Sri Lanka. Misri was born in Srinagar and

Indian Coast Guard ship rescues two Olive Ridley turtles



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship Kamla Devi successfully rescued two Olive Ridley turtles entangled in ghost nets approximately 35 nautical miles southeast off the coast of West Bengal on Saturday, officials said here on Monday. The Olive Ridley turtles are classified as endangered species and are protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. Giving details, ICG officials said while on routine patrol in the Bay of Bengal, the crew of ICGS Kamla Devi promptly responded and executed a rescue operation, ensuring the safe release of a mother-child turtle duo that were badly entangled in discarded fishing nets. This operation underscores

the Indian Coast Guard's unwavering commitment to marine protection adhering to their motto "Vayam Rakshamah": "We Protect". Over the years, the ICG has saved numerous endangered species and demonstrated its unwavering commitment to marine protection. During the nesting period from 01 Nov 23 to 31 May 24, under "Operation Olivia" the ICG rescued 24 Ridley turtles, further showcasing their dedication. These species play a vital role in maintaining the health of marine ecosystems, making their preservation crucial. By safeguarding these vulnerable marine creatures, the ICG continues to demonstrate its dedication to preserving marine biodiversity and ensuring the health of our oceans

Shah calls Chief Ministers, takes stock of flood situation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday spoke to Chief Ministers of Assam, UP and Gujarat to take stock of situation caused by floods there and assured of all possible assistance and support of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). Shah's call to Assam chief minister took place as flood situation remains grim there affecting common people. Death toll has risen to more than 90 and more than 5 lakh people across 18 districts are reeling under the deluge, with Assam's Cachar being the worst-hit district. The flood-affected districts in Assam include Cachar, Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karimganj, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, and Sivasagar. Also, 1,342 villages under 52 revenue circles are still under water and the flood waters submerged 25367.61 hectares of crop area in Assam. The water level of the Brahmaputra River is flowing above the danger level mark at Neamatighat, Tezpur and Dhubri while the Burhidighing River is flowing above the danger level mark at Chenimari (Knhowang), Disang River at



Nanglamuraghat. Over 58,000 people are still taking shelter in 172 relief camps and distribution centres in 13 districts. 2,83,712 domestic animals were also affected by the deluge. The situation in Uttar Pradesh, especially in the eastern and central regions, is also under observation after an increase in the water levels of several rivers following incessant rains impacting around 18 lakh people in more than 900 villages. As per officials, nearly 18 districts, including Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, Kushinagar, Shravasti, Balrampur, Lakhimpur Kheri, Barabanki, Sitapur, Gonda Siddharth

Nagar, Moradabad, Bareilly and Basti in Uttar Pradesh were affected by increased water level. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath earlier conducted an aerial survey of the affected districts and directed the officials to provide all possible assistance to the affected people. Due to heavy rain in the Valsad district in Gujarat, many low-lying areas have been inundated, and the national highway was also flooded. Teams from disaster cells were deployed to drain the water from these areas. Additionally, the heavy rains caused the water level in Madhuban Dam to rise.

Congress slams BJP for allegations against Rahul, decries 'cheap politics'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday slammed the BJP for its allegation that Rahul Gandhi encouraged violence against Prime Narendra Modi, saying "cheap politics" should not be played on the issue of security of leaders.

The BJP on Sunday had targeted the Leader of Opposition following the assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump. "Third Time Fail Rahul Gandhi has often encouraged and justified violence against Prime Modi, who he has lost election to, several times now. How can India ever forget how Punjab Police, then under the Congress, deliberately compromised PM's security, when his convoy was left stranded on a fly-over," BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya had said. Hitting back at the BJP, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said, "cheap politics should not be played on the issue of security of leaders. The Congress party lost Mahatma ji to Right Wing terrorists. We lost two Prime Ministers at the hands of ter-



rorists. We lost our entire Chhattisgarh leadership to Left Wing terrorists, under the watch of the BJP government." Prime Modi and the entire BJP has been instigating people against the leadership of the Congress party by "spreading vitriolic" lies against Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and the entire family, he alleged. "He (Modi) also mysteriously withdrew their SPG security," Khera said. Donald Trump survived an attempt on his life when a young gunman fired multiple shots at the former US president at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, injuring his right ear.

Indian warships, USS Theodore Roosevelt conduct joint exercise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Navy's frontline warships carried out a mega military exercise with the Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group of the US in the Indian Ocean, demonstrating the growing strategic congruence between the two sides in the key maritime domain.

The USS Theodore Roosevelt is a Nimitz-class, nuclear-powered, aircraft carrier of the US Navy. A carrier battle group or carrier strike group is a mega naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by a large number of destroyers, frigates and other ships. The Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group operated alongside forces from the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean on July 12, the US embassy said in a read out. The wargame came amid increasing concerns among democratic countries over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the larger Indo-Pacific region. The Indian Navy's deployment included guided missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam and replenishment ship INS Aditya. "This joint maritime activity advanced interoperability between the two major defence partners and underscores their



shared commitment to upholding a free and open Indo-Pacific," the embassy said. The US and Indian military forces focused on improving shared maritime domain awareness and information sharing, enhancing replenishment and logistics interoperability and improving combined air-to-air capabilities, it said. "Participating units include the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, Carrier Air Wing 11, and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Daniel Inouye," it said. The USS Theodore Roosevelt is currently operating with carrier strike group nine after conducting this joint maritime

activity in the 7th Fleet area of operations. The 7th Fleet is the US Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The Indian Navy routinely participates alongside US Navy units in multilateral exercises across the Pacific, including Southwest Asia and littoral Africa. "In addition to the group sail, the Indian Navy is also operating in leadership roles with the US Navy and other allies and partners in the ongoing Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2024 exercise in Hawaii," the US readout said.

Goa Assembly adjourned twice

As BJP MLA seeks breach of privilege motion for statement on Speaker

PTI ■ PANAJI

The Goa Assembly was adjourned twice on Monday after a BJP MLA moved a breach of privilege motion against a Congress legislator over the latter's statement about the Speaker. A commotion started on the floor of the House before the Question Hour when the monsoon session began. BJP MLA Daji Krishna Salkar moved a breach of privilege motion against Congress's Altono D'Costa for making statements against Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar. D'Costa had on Friday told reporters that the Speaker had rejected his resolution demanding political reservation for the Scheduled Tribes community in the assembly. Salkar on Monday moved the motion, after which Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao questioned how the statement amounted to a breach of privilege. He said, "Nothing stops us from moving a resolution. How is it a breach of privilege?" Chief Minister Pramod Sawant



claimed D'Costa's statement to the media was an insult to the Speaker, and he must tender an apology. When commotion prevailed, Tawadkar initially adjourned the House for half an hour. When the session resumed, the ruling benches reiterated their demand for a breach of privilege motion and the House was again adjourned for half an hour. Talking to reporters, Goa Forward Party MLA Vijai Sardesai said the disruption of the House by the ruling benches was a systematic move to avoid the Question Hour. Sardesai said that he and Congress MLA Carlos Ferreira had tabled a question on the National Education Policy (NEP) that would have exposed the State Government.

Thousands of devotees pull chariots of sibling deities

PTI ■ PURI

Thousands of devotees pulled the chariots of sibling deities — Lord Jagannath, Devi Subhadra and Lord Balabhadra — on the 'Bahuda Yatra' or return car festival on Monday. Though the pulling of chariots was slated to start at 4 pm, it began ahead of the schedule amid chants of 'jai Jagannath' and beating of cymbals. Devotees start pulling Lord Balabhadra's chariot 'Taladwaja' at 3.25 pm and Devi Subhadra's 'Devadalan' at 4 pm. Pulling of Lord Jagannath's chariot

'Nandighosh' began at 4.15 pm. The chariot pulling started after Puri's titular king 'Gajapati Maharaj' Divya Singha Deb performed 'cheerapahanra', a ritual during which he swept the three chariots with help of golden broom by sprinkling scared water. The deities left the Jagannath temple on July 7 during the Rath Yatra and reached Gundicha temple, considered their birthplace. They stayed there for a week and on Monday are now returning to the Jagannath temple. This journey is known as the 'Bahuda Yatra'.



Earlier, the trinity was ceremonially taken to their respective chariots from the Gundicha Temple in presence of lakhs of devotees. A total of 180 platoons (1 platoon comprises 30 personnel) of police force and 1,000 officers were deployed to maintain law and order and crowd management during the 'Bahuda Yatra'. Additional Director General of Police (Law & Order) Sanjay Kumar said adequate security arrangements have been made and the entire temple town is under CCTV surveillance. Around five lakh people are expected to congregate for the festival.

Necessary steps needed to develop Ayodhya: Yogi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said necessary steps should be taken to develop all municipal corporations, including Ayodhya, as 'solar cities'. The UP CM conducted a review of the current status of power generation, transmission and distribution in the state. UP Energy Minister A K Sharma was also present in the meeting which focused on the ongoing efforts and future plans. Senior officials

and engineers of the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) and all Discoms (distribution companies) were in attendance, the UP government said in a statement. Adityanath informed that there is considerable enthusiasm for the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijlee Yojana, with over 18 lakh people having registered for the programme. It is important to promote this scheme widely and encourage more individuals to take part in this, he added.

The UP CM directed to complete the process of land acquisition for the proposed solar parks in Jhansi, Lalitpur, Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, Chitrakoot and Jalaun expeditiously, the statement said. Speaking on this occasion, Adityanath said, "Under the leadership of the honourable Prime Minister (Narendra Modi), the state has achieved the goal of 'Sabko Bijli-Nirbhadh Bijli' (uninterrupted supply of electricity to all) in the last seven years. Electricity now reaches every village and majra, ensuring

equitable distribution without any VIP culture. "It is gratifying that currently, electricity is supplied without discrimination. Especially during the intense heat, additional efforts were made to ensure convenience for the public, with round-the-clock electricity provided statewide from March 15 to June 30," the chief minister said. He said in addition to various hydropower projects, 22 thermal projects are successfully operational in the state and they are located in Anpara, Haridwar, Obra, Parichha and Jawaharpur.

AI cameras installed in K'taka Assembly

To record arrival, exit time of MLAs, duration of presence



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Artificial Intelligence-enabled cameras with facial recognition technology have now been installed in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly that will record arrival and exit time of members, as well as the duration of their presence in the House. KGF Congress MLA Roopakala Shashidhar was the first legislator to be recorded by the cameras on arrival at the Assembly for the monsoon session, which began today as the new system became operational. The first MLA to be captured exiting was Tiptur's Shadakshari of Congress. Speaker U T Khader noted that there is a practice of recognising MLAs who come early to the Assembly before the quorum bells are rung and their names are read out in appreciation by the Chair. "Some senior legislators like Araga Jnanendra, Basangouda Patil Yatnal (of BJP) and some senior Ministers had made a request that some legislators, despite coming a bit late, sit through the proceedings till six or eight (PM), but no one takes note of it and it is an injustice," the Speaker said. He added: "So, for the first time we have installed Artificial Intelligence

cameras, which will take note of — what time a member arrives and leaves, and for how long he or she was present in the Assembly. Information regarding this comes to the Assembly Secretary's system by the end of the day. There will be data." According to officials, the initiative is part of the effort to improve attendance of legislators and their participation during the session. Meanwhile, aimed at giving a facelift to the Vidhana Soudha, the seat of state legislature and secretariat here, gates at the west entrance of the Assembly hall has been renovated in the first phase, replacing iron grilles with a large and carved grand rosewood door. It was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah today along with a plaque having the preamble of the constitution. The Speaker said: "there is national and international respect for our Vidhana Soudha building. National and international level delegations and tourists come to Vidhana Soudha. It is our duty to make it look good and respectable from both inside and outside. This is the first phase, more work has to be done, I seek your (members) suggestions."

Bhujbal meets Sharad to discuss Maratha quota, OBC protest issues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra minister Chhagan Bhujbal on Monday met NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar at his residence here and sought his intervention into the Maratha quota issue and objections over it by OBC leaders. Speaking to reporters later, Bhujbal said had a meeting with Pawar for nearly one-and-a-half-hours and the latter told him that he would discuss the matter with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and other leaders in the next two days. Bhujbal, an OBC leader who belongs to the rival NCP led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, met former Union minister Sharad Pawar at his 'Silver Oak' residence in Mumbai. The visit came a day after he veiled attack at Sharad Pawar for the opposition's boycott of an all-party meeting on the Maratha quota issue. eaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), which comprises the Congress, NCP (SP) and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), did not turn up at the all-party meeting convened by CM Shinde on July 9, claiming the opposition was not taken into confidence on the Maratha reservation issue. Bhujbal on Sunday claimed the opposition leaders stayed away from the meeting on July 9 "after a phone call from



Baramati at 5 pm". Notably, Baramati Lok Sabha constituency in Pune district is the bastion of 83-year-old veteran politician Sharad Pawar. Activist Manoj Jarange has been demanding reservation for the Maratha community under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. Some OBC activists recently held an agitation, seeking an assurance that their quota will not be affected. After the meeting on Monday, Bhujbal said Sharad Pawar told him he would discuss the ongoing deadlock over Marathas demanding their inclusion in the OBC category for quota with CM Shinde and other key leaders in the state. "I requested Sharad Pawar to look into this matter because the situation in the state, particularly in some districts, is very tense. The division between the Marathas and OBCs has reached such a level

that they are not even going to each other's hotels for having food," he claimed. "Pawar has agreed to take the initiative and discuss the issue with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and other important leaders in the state," said the NCP leader, who has also been opposing Maratha quota under the OBC category. Bhujbal also reminded Sharad Pawar of his decision, when he was the CM of Maharashtra, to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations in the state which offered the OBCs reservation in education and in the election to local governing bodies. "When Pawar was the chief minister of Maharashtra, he had resolved the issues of OBCs in the state. Now, the situation demands his intervention again. Pawar also told me that he needs a couple of days to get better as he is not feeling well," Bhujbal said.

Shah congratulates Indore for setting tree plantation world record

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has congratulated Indore for setting a Guinness World Record of "the most trees planted by a team in 24 hours" and said Mother Earth is smiling at the city. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday said that Indore, already the cleanest city in India and MP's economic capital, has now achieved the world record of planting more than 11 lakh saplings in a single day. Yadav in a post on X shared the Guinness World Records certificate and pictures of receiving it. Earlier on Sunday, Union minister Shah participated in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign and planted a sapling in Indore. "Congratulations, Indore! The city of Indore has set a surreal world record by planting 12 lakhs saplings in a day under PM Shri @narendramodi Ji's campaign 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'. They have set an example that will be followed by millions in the years to come. Mother Earth is smiling at Indore," Shah said in a post on X late Sunday night. Prime Minister Narendra



Modi launched the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign on June 5 to mark World Environment Day. Under the drive, approximately 140 crore trees will be planted across the country, including 5.5 crore in Madhya Pradesh, which Shah has described as the "lungs of Bharat". Indore, which has been recognised as the country's cleanest city for several years as per the Swachh Survekshan, will see 51 lakh saplings planted during this campaign, as per officials. The plantation drive was carried out at the BSF Academy's Revati Range,

which was divided into nine zones and 100 sub-zones. Besides 2,000 BSF jawans, more than 100 NRIs, NCC cadets from 50 schools, a large number of citizens, and members of various social organisations participated in the plantation drive, officials earlier said. According to the Guinness World Record website, the previous record for the most saplings planted in 24 hours was 9,21,730. It was achieved by the Assam (India) government's Forest Department at Udalguri on September 13 and 14, 2023.

Kerala man stuck inside hospital lift for 2 days rescued, 3 staffers suspended

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A 59-year-old man was stuck in a lift at the Government Medical College Hospital in the Kerala capital for two days, but the officials responsible for its operation were unaware of the situation until Monday morning, prompting the authorities to initiate disciplinary action against them for their alleged lapses. Ulloor resident Ravindran Nair, a patient who came for a medical check up, had been stuck inside the lift of the OP Block of the government medical college here since Saturday and was rescued by an operator who had arrived for routine work, police said. He has been admitted to the hospital for a detailed medical examination. "He (Nair) got into the lift to go to the first floor but claims that the lift came down and did not open. He says he shouted for help, but no one came. His phone was also switched off," police said. State Health Minister Veena George has ordered a probe into the incident and sought



a report in this regard. The health department has also suspended three staff members — two lift operators and a duty sergeant — in connection with the incident. The officials said that the incident came to light on Monday morning, when the lift operator came for routine work. The man's family had on Sunday night filed a missing case with the medical college

police. Speaking to the media in the hospital, Nair said the lift got stuck, and he kept pressing the alarm, but no one came to the rescue. "I tried calling all the emergency numbers listed inside the lift, but no one answered. The alarm was also sounded, but no one came. After some time, I understood that it was the second Saturday and a

Sunday the next day, and then I waited for help. "Later, after some time, I lost track of time inside the lift. This morning, an operator came, and I pressed the alarm. We both forcefully opened the door from both sides, and I jumped out of it," Nair said. The man said he was sure that someone would come and operate the lift on Monday. Nair's son, Hari Shankar, said his father was pretty shaken up as he had been inside the lift for almost two days. "My father says he kept on ringing the alarm inside the lift, but no one came to the rescue," he said. Thirumala native Nair had gone to the medical college hospital to seek treatment and got stuck in the lift on Saturday around 12 noon. As his phone was not reachable, family members approached the medical college police station on Sunday evening and lodged a complaint. However, the medical college officials maintained that the lift was not a regularly used one.

Heavy rain: Trees uprooted, houses damaged in Kerala

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Incessant downpour accompanied by gusty winds continued to batter several parts of Kerala, prompting authorities to declare a holiday for educational institutions in seven districts on Monday. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted extremely heavy rainfall in northern Malappuram, Kannur and Kasaragod districts and placed these northern districts under red alert. According to its latest update, the weatherman issued an orange alert in Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Idukki, Kozhikode and Wayanad districts. In Kottayam district, fallen trees damaged houses and vehicles following heavy rains and gusty winds since early morning. Several houses suffered partial damage in the rural areas of northern Kozhikode including Onchiyam, Kottur, Payyoli and so on.

300 villagers whose houses set on fire yet to return home

TRIPURA VIOLENCE

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Around 300 villagers whose houses were set on fire three days ago following the death of a 19-year-old man in a clash between two groups in Tripura's Dhalai district are yet to return to their homes, officials said on Monday. They have been staying at a shelter after the July 12 arson in Gandatwisa village, around 110 km from the state capital Agartala. A team led by Dhalai District Magistrate Saju Vaheed held a meeting with the affected families on Sunday and assured them of the necessary steps for providing security and compensation, the officials said. "At least 40 houses were severely damaged and around 30 shops were looted by the attackers. The affected family members are now staying at the Gandatwisa Higher



Secondary School. Four motorcycles were also burnt on July 12 night. The situation has improved in Gandatwisa with the deployment of additional security personnel in the vulnerable pockets," Gandatwisa Sub Divisional Magistrate Chandrajoy Reang told PTI over the telephone. The administration has taken all possible steps to provide compensation to around 80 families affected by the arson, he said. The team led by the district magistrate also held a

meeting with the members of a local committee to open the market, another official said. According to the officials, the attack on villagers stemmed from the clash between the two groups in the local market on July 7. Parameshwar Reang, a college student, was critically injured in the clash and later succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at GBP Hospital in Agartala on July 12. Four people were arrested in connection with the death of the youth, police said.



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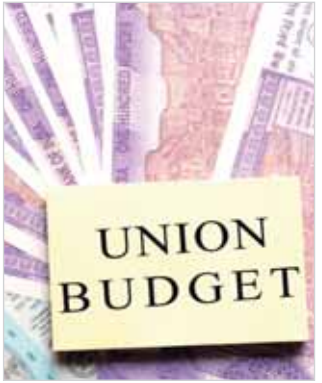
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Expectations from the budget

The Union Budget must address infrastructure growth, job creation and clean energy initiatives

The 2024 Union Budget will be presented in the Lok Sabha on July 23rd. This will be the first budget by NDA-3, likely to continue its earlier policies. However, setbacks in the recent elections might lead to course corrections, and some populist measures may be included in the budget by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. As the Union Budget 2024-25 approaches, the Indian economy stands at a pivotal juncture, characterized by robust growth prospects and lingering challenges. The GDP growth forecast remains optimistic, buoyed by a strong recovery in various sectors, particularly manufacturing, services, and technology. However, inflationary pressures, high fiscal deficits, and global economic uncertainties pose significant challenges. The government has made concerted efforts in the past to enhance infrastructure, digitalisation, and clean energy initiatives, reflecting its commitment to sustainable development. Despite these strides, issues like unemployment, income inequality, and rural distress persist, necessitating targeted fiscal measures. The forthcoming budget is expected to address these concerns, aiming to foster economic resilience, stimulate investment, and ensure inclusive growth for the nation. It is an opportunity to streamline the economy and heal ailing sectors. People's prime concerns remain inflation, which can be dexterously handled with tight fiscal planning. The Union Budget under NDA 3.0 must prioritise infrastructure growth and job creation, aiming to boost manufacturing through public-private partnerships. Changes in personal taxation and pension schemes are also expected, focusing on long-term fiscal sustainability and middle-class relief.



There is significant industry expectation for reforms and incentives to bring them back on track. The real estate sector, a major catalyst for economic growth and a vital provider of employment, urgently needs industry status to access lower-cost financing and tax benefits. High taxes on essential materials like cement and steel, particularly the 28% GST on cement must be addressed to sustain growth. India's electric vehicle (EV) sector stands at a crucial juncture, with high expectations for the upcoming budget. The government should prioritise incentivising firms to use EVs for last-mile delivery operations. Reducing GST rates for renewable energy components from the current 18% to 5% could lower the cost structure for green energy projects, promoting faster adoption across the country. The upcoming budget is expected to focus on employee welfare, formal job creation, reducing compliance complexity, and addressing the skill gap. Job creation and equipping people with desired skills, especially in technology, must be focal points. The budget should allocate more funds to tech infrastructure and resources, preparing students for a tech-driven job market and supporting entrepreneurial growth. Overall, the Budget must provide a definitive direction for India's economic agenda, with a strong emphasis on infrastructure, job creation, clean energy, and comprehensive sectoral reforms.

PICTALK



Devotees carry idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra on the occasion of Ulta Rath Yatra in Nadia

High seas treaty: A crucial step for marine biodiversity protection

This treaty represents a significant international effort to protect our oceans, promoting equity and cooperation among nations

The world's oceans, vast and mysterious, are crucial to the health of our planet. They regulate the climate, produce half of the oxygen we breathe, and support a rich tapestry of life that is vital to global biodiversity. Marine ecosystems are incredibly diverse, hosting countless species, many of which remain undiscovered. Protecting this biodiversity is not just an ethical obligation but a practical necessity. Healthy marine ecosystems provide essential services, such as carbon sequestration, which helps mitigate climate change. They also support fisheries that millions of people rely on for food and livelihoods. Yet, the high seas—the areas of the ocean that lie beyond national jurisdictions—remain largely unprotected and poorly managed. The significance of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement comes into the picture here. BBNJ is an international treaty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, also



known as the High Seas Treaty, is a significant international treaty aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Areas beyond national jurisdiction cover approximately two-thirds of the ocean's surface and 95% of its volume. These regions offer invaluable benefits to humanity, including ecological, economic, social, cultural, scientific, and food security advantages. However, they are vulnerable to significant threats such as pollution, overexploitation, and the escalating impacts of climate change. The anticipated rise in human demand for marine resources in the coming decades—for food, minerals, and biotechnology—poses a risk of worsening these issues. These areas cover nearly half of the Earth's sur-

face, yet they lack comprehensive legal frameworks to regulate human activities, leaving them vulnerable to overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. The BBNJ Agreement aims to ensure marine biological diversity conservation and sustainable use in areas beyond national jurisdiction. One of the most commendable aspects of the BBNJ Agreement is its emphasis on equity. The agreement recognises the differing capacities of developed and developing nations in managing marine resources. It includes provisions for capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, helping to level the playing field and enable all nations to participate effectively in ocean governance. This is vital for ensuring that the benefits of marine resources are shared fairly. The BBNJ Agreement represents a vision of global stewardship where nations come together to protect the shared heritage of our oceans. It establishes mechanisms for creating marine protected areas (MPAs), conducting environmental impact assess-

ments (EIAs), and sharing marine genetic resources (MGRs) and associated benefits equitably. This holistic approach ensures that conservation efforts are globally coordinated, scientifically informed, and inclusive of all stakeholders. It is a testament to the power of multilateralism in addressing global challenges. While the BBNJ Agreement is a significant step forward, it faces considerable challenges. Ensuring compliance and enforcement in the vast and remote high seas areas will be complex. Effective implementation will require robust monitoring systems, international collaboration, and sufficient funding. Moreover, the agreement must harmonise with existing regional and sectoral bodies to avoid conflicts and duplication of efforts. An international agreement like the BBNJ Agreement, where countries work together for a common goal, is a beacon of hope for resurrecting our planet from the hardships caused by human activities. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARAMAPALAN

New army chief follows Zorawar's footsteps



BHOPINDER SINGH

The ancient Duggar region has produced many of India's bravest warriors and earned the highest number of gallantry awards in the annals of the Indian Armed Forces

Ancient Duggar region (land of warrior-Dogras spanning J&K, Himachal Pradesh, and parts of Punjab) has given maximum sacrifice and earned the highest number of gallantry awards in the annals of the Indian Armed Forces. Geographically, they have been the first line of defence against all invading forces. The noble land birthed the likes of King Porus, and the warrior sans pareil, General Zorawar Singh. Unbeknownst to many, the legendary Zorawar's audacious conquests included regions that are now in Pakistan and China like Gilgit-Baltistan, Skardu, Hunza, to even large swathes of Tibet. With such martial traditions, it is the only region in the country that populates not one but four fiery regiments of the Indian Army i.e., Jammu & Kashmir Rifles, Dogra Regiment, Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry and Punjab Regiment, besides other arms, and services. But the Jammu & Kashmir Rifles or Jak Rif, has a hallowed place in history and imagination as a proud and direct legatee of those Zorawar's daredevilry traditions. The only 'State Force' of the Princely Dogra Kingdom to be fully amalgamated in the Indian Army, they remain the quintessential 'Gentlemen Soldiers' owing to pedigree, immense dignity, and professional restraint in personal conduct, but unmatched ferocity in battle. In 1947 the 'Saviour of Kashmir', Brigadier Rajendra Singh Jamwal, MVC, and his band of 300 indefatigable warriors held off Pakistani tribals for crucial three days to allow the con-fabulations and the landing of Indian troops in Srinagar. The Maharaja and Commander of J&K State forces had ordered, "Brigadier Rajender Singh is commanded to hold the enemy at Uri at all costs and to the last man" - he did so by paying the "ultimate sacrifice" himself. In another theatre, Brig Sher Jung Thapa, MVC, of the J&K State Forces earned the title of "Hero of Skardu". Even the first Param Vir Chakra of India, Maj Somnath Sharma, was from the Duggar region. Decades later, when the enemy attempted to



cross over yet again, it was the unparalleled heroics of the 13th Jak Rifbattalion, atop the unforgiving heights of the Kargil War that galvanised the nation. Two combatants from the traditional Duggar catchment areas of Palampur and Bilaspur were to send shivers down the spine of the enemy with their regimental war cries of "Durga Mata ki Jai" as they retook Point 5140. Captain Vikram Batra was to immortalise the moment with his "Yeh dil mange more" spirit and Rifleman (later Subedar Major) Sanjay Kumar would fight to defend their land just as their forefathers did, for aeons. Both won Param Vir Chakra. Even the peace-time equivalent of gallantry, Ashok Chakra, was bestowed on 2/Lt (later Maj Gen) Cyrus Pithwalla of 17th Jak Rif, to be the only 'General' officer with the highest gallantry award. It is from this deep fount of distinguished soldiering, that the 30th Chief of Indian Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi, takes over the reigns. Commissioned in the 18th Rif battalion, he is the first Army Chief from the decorated Regiment. Understandably, people in the Duggar land (especially those from the Jak Rif fraternity) are justifiably proud. As 97 years

GENERAL DWIVEDI ASSUMES THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT HIS REGIMENTAL FOREFATHERS HELD WITH MUCH APLOMB, ELAN AND PROFESSIONAL ACUMEN THAT BEFITS THEIR MOTTO, PRASHATA RANVIRTA OR VALOUR IN BATTLE IS PRAISEWORTHY!

'young', Major General Goverdhan Singh Jamwal (the only General who was commissioned by Commander-in-Chief of J&K State Forces, Maharaja Hari Singh) extended congratulations and recalled the countless regimental sacrifices that, "made the State as crown of newly independent India". Today, General Dwivedi assumes the responsibility that his regimental forefathers held with much aplomb, elan and professional acumen that befits their motto, Prashata Ranvirta or Valour in battle is Praise-worthy! The General assumes the mantle in most challenging times, but as the Military truism goes, "The harder the conflict, the greater the triumph". With the Indian Army, he takes over the most disciplined, combat-hardened, and restrained institution of the nation - much like his own regimental ethos. Regrettably, such a selfless attitude in a selfish world can often lead to being 'taken for granted' or lead to institutional diminishment. Transmitting that 'voice' for redressal to the powers-that-be will be his foremost challenge. To his singular credit, he has tenanted the most sensitive posts e.g., Army Commander of the Northern Command that dealt with dual nemesis

i.e., China and Pakistan simultaneously, amongst other operational and staff posts. This makes him a worthy leader. In a movingly reassuring optic that is so typical of the Indian Army and its inimitable ways, the good General took blessings of his family elders, laid a wreath for those who went down fighting at the National War Memorial and then exchanged greetings with religious leaders of all faiths and denominations. Much like the multi-religious and multi-castiest denomination of the Duggar land and the combatants-in-arms from his beloved Jak Rif who could be a Sikh like Honorary Captain Sundar Singh (Ashok Chakra), Parsi like Maj Gen Pithwalla (Ashok Chakra) or even the martyr from his battalion i.e. 18th Jak Rif, Rifleman Arif Khan Pathan, who laid down his life on Indo-Pak Line-of-Control (LoC). Jak Rif's pride is the nation's pride. As regimental patriarch, Maj Gen Goverdhan Singh Jamwal dotingly noted, "General Upendra Dwivedi is the product of this great Regiment of General Zorawar Singh. You can expect results". (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ROT IN THE SYSTEM

Madam — It is ridiculous that the central institutions are being pulled in for series of alleged discrepancies in the entrance exams one after another. After NEET exam paper leaks, now its time for UPSC exam. Probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar's issue in Pune, is now on the limelight to raise many doubts regarding the UPSC and its selection process which is lenient towards IAS officers daughters and sons. It seems that the rules were bent in favor of her due to the political influence of her father and the impact of nepotism while clearing her medical examination certificate under OBC, PwBD quota, which was accepted despite it was done by the private hospital with an excuse of COVID-19 and posting. It is highly doubtful that she passed the exam under OBC category by misusing the law and fooled the interview board regarding her credentials which is not supposed to fall under OBC, PwBD quota as her asset worth is 22 crore. Her attitude, lavish life and pomposity on her probation period was unethical and disrespect to such highest post in the government. Perhaps, its just because of such candidates the honest and deserving get deprived of a chance to serve the society and nation building. It raises a red flag whether rules were misused in the past as well under the guise of obtaining OBC certificate by showing disability by the candidates who have had political affiliation and support. One hopes for fair and proper investigation of this matter to wipe out the rot in the system. **Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri**

Trump dodges the bullet



In the shooting incident in Pennsylvania at a Trump rally, the Ex president fortunately had a narrow escape. History is replete with attempts at assassination of US presidents. In

fact world over national leaders elsewhere too have been targeted for differing reasons. In the Trump incident, political observers have highlighted increasing and consistent effort at polarisation in the US, fed by hateful political rhetoric in the past few years. Trump as the serving President would refuse to concede defeat in his bid for re-election in 2020, even after losing it by as many as seven million votes. He not only stuck to a theory of conspiracy to deny him a win but created a partisan following that would recklessly storm into the parliament. The Pennsylvania incident must carry a larger and universal lesson. As a leader grows tall his onus to public propriety and temperance in speech, becomes exponential. Else it stands to rapidly fray the socio-politic fabric of a nation. **R N Narayanan | Mumbai**

Court held Indira Gandhi guilty for her electoral malpractices. The Allahabad High Court delivered its judgment on June 12, 1975. The adverse judgment against Indira Gandhi threatened her position as Prime Minister. Top national leaders Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, Vajpayee, and many others were arrested when Indira Gandhi had the premonition that her power and position would be in peril. The justification given for imposition of emergency was 'the internal disturbance'. Vajpayee did not indulge in electoral malpractices for facing a situation of the kind Indira Gandhi faced. He never hankered after power. Power came in search of him. The thought of Raut that Vajpayee would have imposed emergency if he had faced similar situation makes a laughing stock. What is wrong if Modi calls the day of emergency as the day of murder of the Constitution? **K V Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru**

removal of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Doomsday, Assam. The abrupt decision to dismantle this statue, which stood as a symbol of peace and unity at Gandhi Chowk, has understandably sparked widespread outrage among the community, particularly student leaders and local civil society. The statue's removal not only disrespects the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi but also undermines the values of non-violence and harmony that he tirelessly promoted. Such actions can have far-reaching negative impacts on our society, eroding the respect for historical figures who played pivotal roles in shaping our nation. I urge the authorities to reconsider their decision and engage in a dialogue with the community to address their concerns. Restoring the statue or finding a more inclusive solution will help in maintaining social harmony and respecting the sentiments of the people. **Masood Ahmad | Barabanki**

RESPECT GANDHI'S LEGACY

Madam — I want to express my deep concern and disappointment over the recent

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

MANY REASONS FOR THANKING GOD

God helps us in many ways, and the least we can do is thank Him for His generosity



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Anyone, who has even tried to link with God either by praying or by chanting or by any other spiritual practice, would have benefited in some way. Because God can never be a debtor; He doesn't have to be. After all, He is the controller. I do many spiritual activities, and I am rewarded much beyond my expectations. How do I respond? I thank God profusely. This entitles me to more favours from God because thanking God is a high-class spiritual act. Over a long period of being in the shelter of God, many changes have occurred in my life. I am more peaceful; feel more secure; am 'sukhi' (happy); bad times don't last long; help comes, as required; guidance is generally available; etc. There are multiple reasons to thank God. I will detail a few. The first one has to be God's role in keeping the Creation going for our benefit. There have been many wars. But the world remains intact. Because God is the only entity, who could have prevented an all-out war like a nuclear war, which could have destroyed the world. God keeps the Creation going for His parts (The Bhagavad-Geeta 15.7). A businessman tries to keep his business going for his children, grandchildren, etc, but doesn't always succeed, because we all are limited; God is not.

God uses good souls, those who possess divine qualities to keep the Creation going. He rewards them in many ways including a better next birth. Shouldn't we thank God for this 'kripa' (grace)? The second reason to thank God profusely is for protecting good souls from demons. Lord Krishna has stated in verse # 16.6, "There are two types of living beings in this world: possessing divine qualities and having demonic qualities. Every person has either the predominance of divine or demonic qualities." Those with a preponderance of demonic qualities remain engaged in cruel acts. (16.4) There is a good percentage of such people. How do good people, i.e. having a preponderance of divine qualities, escape their attention?

God manages that. I cannot imagine living the way I do, i.e. with freedom and escape from being hurt by them. Believe me, I thank my Lord for this great mercy a lot, knowing how vulnerable I am. My third reason to be thankful to God is for bailing me out of all troubles, which make



their painful appearance due to my past bad/sinful acts, mostly in my past lives. I must have, otherwise I wouldn't be giving birth in this *dukhalaya*. God has promised this to all those who have God's consciousness. The fourth reason to thank God is for acting as karta (doer) in my life. There are five factors for accomplishing any task. These are: the place of action and the doer and many different kinds of instruments and many different efforts and fifth in this connection is the providence only." (18.14) Only God can control all the five. No human being has control over any other factor except being a doer. And when God is the karta, a task gets surely done. God does this kripa on us whenever He feels that it is according to dharma and we deserve it.

The fifth reason to thank God, especially by me is for God using me as His nimitta (instrument). I am one of many whom God has chosen. I suspect that all good people get this privilege, as Arjuna was. (11.33) The sixth reason to thank God one and all human beings is His mercy in allowing very simple spiritual practices like praying, naman (obseance), chanting and, yes, thanking.

Once we begin doing them, God is in the picture. He doesn't wait for us to become His devotees; God begins to help us to become one. Because all these acts signal to God our intention to take His shelter. In my case, God has been micromanaging my life for a long time encouraging me to go on with my spiritual activities like writing spiritual texts such as articles and books. All the religions promote this act of thanking God. If we don't thank when we should we are becoming a debtor. I look for opportunities to thank others, and to God of course. He gives me plenty of reasons to be thankful.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Prioritising growth and regional development



A S MITTAL

The first budget by NDA-3 is anticipated to address the demands of stakeholders and States seeking assistance to bridge regional disparities



The NDA-3 government is gearing up to present its first budget on July 23. This budget carries high expectations as it is anticipated to outline a 5-year economic agenda and is expected to deliver substantially to meet the demands of stakeholders and states seeking assistance. Discussions are underway regarding the reinstatement of special status for states like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, with demands from Janata Dal (United) and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in exchange for their support for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government. Andhra Pradesh's CM, N. Chandrababu Naidu, has demanded Rs one trillion to support the state's industrial and infrastructure development. The demand for special category status for Bihar and Andhra Pradesh poses the crucial question of why a similar approach should not be adopted to accelerate and expand the industrial growth of Punjab, a landlocked border state. This expectation arises at a critical time when the state is experiencing a significant divergence in its industrial activities due to stagnant growth and reduced exports. These circumstances demand new measures to catapult the state to greater heights. In the mid-nineties, neighbouring hill states like Himachal Pradesh reaped the benefits of a central special industrial package, while Punjab faced significant setbacks as many major players expanded and shifted their operations to the hilly states. The geographical disadvantage of being distant from seaports has led to certain investment disadvantages and stagnant growth in the industrial sector. Today, Punjab demands a level playing field to compete on an equal footing, as its key manufacturing industries have the potential to become an 'Engine of Growth.' Punjab inherited a fragile industrial base at the time of India's partition in 1947, which was further eroded with the creation of Haryana in 1966. The 1980s and 1990s were tumultuous due to terrorism and social unrest, impacting industrial growth in the region. Currently, Punjab only accounts for 5% of industrial units in the country, with a 3.6% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in the industrial sector over the last five fiscal years. In contrast,



THE DEMAND FOR SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS FOR BIHAR AND ANDHRA PRADESH POSES THE CRUCIAL QUESTION OF WHY A SIMILAR APPROACH SHOULD NOT BE ADOPTED TO ACCELERATE AND EXPAND THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF PUNJAB, A LANDLOCKED BORDER STATE

neighbouring states like Haryana have demonstrated higher growth rates at 5.9%. Punjab is positioned 10th with a score of 58.95 in the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) ranking 2023, whereas Haryana holds the 5th position with a score of 63.65. It raises concern that Gujarat has the highest number of 8 districts among the top 25 districts in terms of export share, followed by Maharashtra with 5 districts, Haryana with one, and Punjab with none.

Moreover, in terms of foreign direct investments (FDI), Punjab ranks 12th, having attracted only 0.49% of FDI. This is in stark contrast to neighbouring Haryana, which ranks sixth with FDI equity inflows accounting for 4.17% of the total inflows. The erosion of industry is a pressing crisis in Punjab. Despite efforts by successive governments to attract investments, significant hurdles such as location disadvantage, law and order and frequent protests persist. One major issue is the location disadvantage, as Punjab's distance from seaports makes its industrial operations non-competitive in the global market.

Two years ago, CM Bhagwant Maan announced in the Vision Punjab conclave of ASSOCHAM that Punjab aims to become the first state in the country to own wagons (Punjab on wheels), offering a potential solution to dilute the freight burden. However, the success of this endeavour depends on the support from both the central and state governments. Punjab is an exceptional hub for textile yarn, bicycles, hosiery, tractors, automobile components, sports goods, engineering goods, and leather.

These industrial clusters possess immense potential and can be further strengthened. Ludhiana proudly leads as the top producer of blended yarn and hosiery, as well

as the second-largest producer of polyester silk, fibre, and cotton yarn. It dominates woollen knitwear (95%) and hosiery (65%) exports, showcasing its strength in the global market. While China holds a dominant position with a 37% share, India is positioned with a 5% share in the global export market, and there is huge potential for expansion in export markets such as the USA, UAE, UK, Germany, France, and Australia.

Ludhiana also commands a remarkable 92% of India's total bicycle parts production and 75% of bicycle production, securing its position as the leading exporter of bicycles from India with an 80% share. While India lags behind China in bicycle exports, there is clear potential to aggressively expand global exports with untapped opportunities in the US, European countries, and Africa as burgeoning bicycle markets. Jalandhar holds a solid 45% share of the total production, with 75% of the country's sports goods being exported from the city.

Despite China's dominant position as the largest exporter of sports goods with a share of 42.2%, India's current 0.56% share of global exports signifies the untapped potential for Punjab's growth, with lucrative prospects in the USA, UK, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Colombia, and Argentina. Punjab plays a pivotal role, hosting one-third of total OEMs in the farm equipment segment and serving as the leading tractor manufacturer, contributing one-third to India's production. With a commanding share in exports, Punjab stands tall as the largest exporter.

Despite India's current 2.2% share, the potential for over 2 lakh tractors to be exported in the next 3 years to burgeoning markets such as Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, SAARC, and African nations is undeniable. Wish List: Priority Focus on PLI:

The Production Linked Incentives (PLI) scheme should be thoroughly re-evaluated to ensure it delivers the intended impact on competitiveness and scale. Monitoring its progress closely is critical.

The slow progress of the PLI scheme, especially in labour-intensive sectors like textiles, automobiles, and components, must be addressed urgently. To achieve broader goals such as enhancing exports, attracting significant investments, and generating employment, expanding PLI to new sectors like bicycles and sports goods is imperative to encompass the maximum number of MSMEs. Assertive GST Rationalization: There is an urgent need to rationalize the current GST structure to eliminate the complex hurdles created by multiple tax slabs. Transitioning from the existing structure to a simplified two or three-slab framework and providing exemptions for previously exempted items such as farm implements is crucial to streamline the system.

Critical Focus on Logistics Cost: Competitive and efficient logistics are the foundation for industrial growth. Policy-backed support for state-owned wagons in landlocked border states like Punjab is essential to address the over-freight burden and provide a level playing field to manufacturing hubs. Incentivizing labour-intensive and export-oriented industries in the upcoming budget is vital to driving the country's economic growth and employment generation.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika ITL Group, Vice-Chairman (Cabinet minister rank) of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council and President of Tractor and Mechanization Association. Views expressed are personal)

Cinema: A potent tool in global politics and cultural diplomacy

In our multipolar world, cinema has become a critical component of soft power, shaping global perceptions through its captivating narratives

Movies have evolved far beyond mere entertainment; they now play a significant role in global politics and cultural relations. Through creative expressions, films harness the ecosystem comprising key stakeholders to nurture and develop soft power dynamics and geopolitical equations. In the realm of geopolitics, movies are more than art; they are potent tools used by countries to showcase their soft power and expand their influence worldwide.

Through their film industries, nations share stories that resonate globally, reflecting their identities and serving as diplomatic instruments. Films offer profound insights into the societal dynamics of different countries, profound



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

enhancing communication and ushering in a new era where technology plays a pivotal role in shaping these interactions. The emergence of the new players can be attributed to the concept of Soft Power dynamics. This idea, coined by Joseph S. Nye, describes the ability to attract and persuade through culture, political ideals, and policies. In this context, cinema has become an essential component of Soft Power. Cinema, as a medium and platform, acts as a catalyst to position soft power dynamics, decoding perceptions, perspectives and geopolitical stances globally. The portrayal on the big screen infuses fresh thinking into the policy debate dynamics, global issues and management of ideas in a

global framework, bound by multipolarity and instant communication. Many films in the past have mirrored multidimensional dynamics and impact on different ecosystems, nations and individuals. Cinema and foreign policy interface reinforces the global appeal of a concept, or idea leading to a dynamic framework for cultural diplomacy. Cinema as a medium has added a new tool to the dynamics of bilateralism, the use of creative tools in the portrayal of a new point of view, ideology and intervention along with better cultural understanding.

Cinema has emerged as a vehicle of Collaboration, Cooperation, Cohesion, Coordination, and Convergence — the 5Cs of cinema. On the global front, cinema breaks barriers, overcomes obstacles, and thrives on the creativity of both old and new players. It no longer caters solely to Western or Eurocentric narratives but embraces a diverse global perspective, which plays a crucial role in shaping cinema perceptions and adding a soft touch to global power dynamics. The importance of cinema in geopolitics has

grown significantly over recent years, with governments increasingly funding film projects that reflect their national interests and cultural heritage. Many countries use their film industries as a powerful tool for soft power to shape their global impression. The impact of movies is greatly amplified by their global presence, thanks to the rise of streaming services that have revolutionised film distribution, making it easier for films from smaller markets to reach a worldwide audience. Platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu have democratised access to movies from various countries, allowing filmmakers worldwide to showcase their cultural stories without relying on traditional distribution.



Cinema transcends power structures by influencing public opinion and shaping international policies through its captivating narratives. Movies serve as platforms for discussions and political analysis, sparking conversations that can drive societal transformation. Filmmakers and actors act as ambassadors with significant sway, using their works to facilitate cultural exchange and international conversations. Cinema has become a platform for new ideas and concepts, driving integration through International Film Festivals. The role of cinema in today's world is incredibly significant. It serves as a diplomatic tool and a compelling medium to communicate ideas through storytelling, influencing inter-

national relationships. Beyond its audience, cinema has a far-reaching impact on global leaders, policymakers, and communities worldwide. It acts as an envoy, spreading messages of peace, empathy, and solidarity through engaging stories that mirror the complexities of human life. There is no doubt that cinema now transcends entertainment in contemporary society. Nations are recognising the power of cinema as a tool to promote their agendas and perspectives on the world stage, underscoring its importance in diplomacy.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; Inputs by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan. Views are personal)

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'I'm supposed to be dead'

TRUMP REFLECTS ON ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

PTI ■ MILWAUKEE

Donald Trump has said he is "supposed to be dead" after the assassination attempt on him at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, calling the incident a "surreal experience".

to Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention starting on Monday which will nominate him as the party's candidate for the November 5 presidential election.

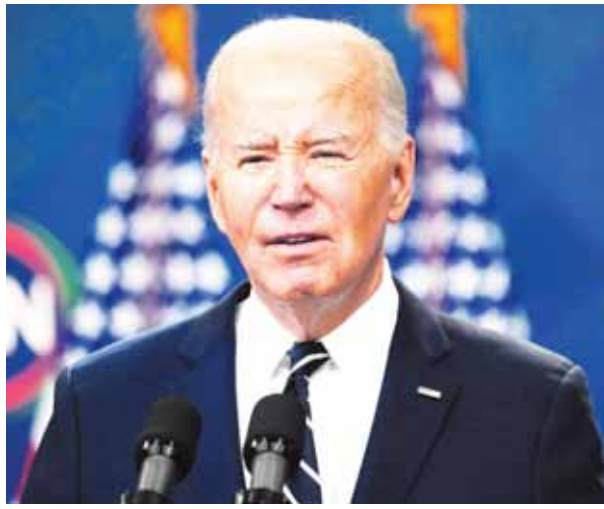
year-old gunman, who also died, has been named as Thomas Matthew Crooks. Trump wore a white bandage that covered his right ear but his aides did not allow any photographs to be taken, said the Post.

right and I didn't die. Usually, you have to die to have an iconic picture." Trump told the paper he wanted to keep speaking following the shooting but the Secret Service insisted he go to the hospital.

Biden calls for national unity, says time to 'cool down'

PTI ■ MILWAUKEE

US President Joe Biden on Sunday urged citizens to unite in the hour of crisis when a failed assassination bid was made on his predecessor Donald Trump and said it was time to "cool down" political rhetoric in the country.



Anger and anxiety loom over the Republican convention

AP ■ MILWAUKEE

Donald Trump's campaign chiefs designed the convention opening this week to feature a softer and more optimistic message, focusing on themes that would help a divisive leader expand his appeal among moderate voters and people of colour.



more somber tone during a Sunday appearance on NBC. "We've got to turn the temperature down in this country," Johnson said.

Trump's plans to lift everyday working Americans. "We have to be able to lay out a vision for where we want to take this country," he said.

Beyond voting to formally give Trump the nomination, elected delegates from across the nation will update the GOP's policy platform for the first time since 2016.

Many anti-abortion advocates strongly opposed the Trump campaign's rewriting of the platform. But after the shooting, at least one major religious conservative said he wouldn't press to reverse the committee's decision.

'Gunman acted alone; being probed as act of domestic terror'

PTI ■ MILWAUKEE

The gunman who shot at former president Donald Trump during an election rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday appears to have acted alone, according to the FBI, which is investigating it as a potential "domestic terrorism" act.

against incumbent Joe Biden. "The shooter may be deceased, but the investigation is very much ongoing. And, because of that, we are limited in what we say at this point," FBI Director Christopher Wray said.

Rescuers in Nepal recover 11 bodies

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Rescuers in Nepal have recovered a total of 11 bodies from the river that two buses full of people were swept into by a landslide, officials said Monday.

Days after NATO allies called Beijing a Ukraine war enabler, China, Russia start joint naval drills

AP ■ BEIJING

China and Russia's naval forces on Sunday kicked off a joint exercise at a military port in southern China on Sunday, official news agency Xinhua reported, days after NATO allies called Beijing a "decisive enabler" of the war in Ukraine.

Guangdong province on Sunday and is expected to last until mid-July, aimed to demonstrate the capabilities of the navies in addressing security threats and preserving peace and stability globally and regionally, state broadcaster CCTV reported Saturday, adding it would include anti-missile exercises, sea strikes and air defense.

with NATO allies last week. The sternly worded final communiqué, approved by the 32 NATO members at their summit in Washington, made clear that China is becoming a focus of the military alliance, calling Beijing a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine.

ministry maintained that China has a fair and objective stance on the war in Ukraine. Last week, a US Coast Guard cutter on routine patrol in the Bering Sea also came across several Chinese military ships in international waters but within the US exclusive economic zone, American officials said.

China's Communist Party begins key meet to stem economic slowdown

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's GDP dipped to 4.7 per cent in the second quarter, the government said on Monday, as the ruling Communist Party began a key meeting to set a defining moment for President Xi Jinping's leadership to revive the world's second-largest economy.

COVID lockdown blues, the economy posted a five per cent growth in the first half, within the range of the official growth target fixed for the year. "The current external environment is complicated, while domestic demand remains insufficient. We still need to consolidate the foundation for economic recovery," the NBS said on Monday.

presided over a host of meetings to set the tone for the key plenum and chart the direction for the nation's future reform highlighting that "the furthering of reform must focus on refining and developing the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and advance modernisation of the country's governance system and governance capacity".

reforming the country, a political researcher from Tsinghua University, who requested anonymity, told the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post. He said the watershed third plenum would be used by the party elite to review achievements under Xi's leadership and lay down plans to hit goals set for 2035, "which will lay the groundwork for the President's grand legacy of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by 2049".

attract investments. Neil Thomas, a fellow for Chinese politics at the Asia Society Policy Institute's Centre for China Analysis, said Xi would use the plenum to advance his existing agenda focused on party control, technological self-reliance, financial de-risking, social welfare, and supply-side industrial policy. But the political challenges of economic pessimism could lead to some very modest 'positive surprises,' he told the Post.

Pak govt's bid to ban party act of desperation: Imran

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on Monday reacted sharply to the government's decision to ban the party, saying the move came "out of desperation" and is a "sign of panic" within the federal administration. The Pakistan government announced that it would ban the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for its alleged involvement in anti-state activities and slap cases against him and two of his senior party colleagues for treason. Khan, 71, faces over 200 cases, has been convicted in a few of them, and is currently lodged at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. The federal government has decided to ban PTI as a political party. Reasons cited by the information minister are the cipher case and the US Congressional Resolution on electoral rigging and politically motivated cases with no merit in sight. The PML-N is shooting its own foot for these reasons," the PTI said in a statement. The PML-N — Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz — is run by Khan's arch rival Nawaz Sharif and is a major coalition partner in the ruling dispensation headed by his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif. "The PML-N is shooting its own foot for these reasons because Khan has been acquitted in a cipher case and the US congressional resolution points out the ordeal a political party has to face over the period of a few months," the PTI statement added.



Senior PTI leader Senator Ali Zafar told Geo News that the federal government was attempting to ban the party "out of desperation" as the Supreme Court had ruled in its favour in the reserved seats case and said that his party would not allow the decision's implementation "even for a second" as it is against the law of the land. He was referring to the key judgment of the Supreme Court last week that declared that Khan's PTI was eligible for the seats reserved for women and minorities in the national and four provincial assemblies. If allotted thus, the PTI will become the largest party in the National Assembly with 109 seats. "The government doesn't realise, the UN resolution wasn't a bilateral agreement but an independent observation made by a

charter, Pakistan is a part of. Pakistan is a signatory of the UN and therefore any provocative comments could lead to Pakistan losing its membership," the party added. The PTI statement also pointed out that the Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, who announced the government decision at a press conference, ignored all questions regarding the US and the UN working group observations, "maybe because he's either unaware of its implications or just doesn't have a clue." "And this is a sign of panic as they have realised the courts can't be threatened and put under pressure. So they will try to move under the cabinet," it said, adding, "Since no judge is willing to give in to blackmail or pressure, I have been saying for a while now we are under a soft martial law and this move only proves our point further." The party also issued a longish statement on its X handle. Khan has already claimed the February 8 general elections to have witnessed the 'Mother of All Rigging' and called his rivals the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) as "mandate thieves." In the election, both PML-N and PPP individually won fewer seats than 92 won by independent candidates backed by Khan's PTI. The two parties entered into a post-poll alliance under which the PML-N got the prime minister's post and the chief ministership of Punjab province while the PPP got the presidential post and the chief ministership in Sindh province.

KP Sharma Oli sworn in as Nepal's PM for 4th time

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

KP Sharma Oli on Monday was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the fourth time to lead a new coalition government that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the Himalayan nation. The leader of Nepal's largest communist party was appointed as prime minister on Sunday by President Ram Chandra Paudel to lead the coalition government with the Nepali Congress (NC), the largest party in Parliament, apart from other smaller parties. Oli, 72, succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who lost the vote of confidence in the House of Representatives (HoR) on Friday, leading to the formation of the new government. Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Oli was sworn in by President Paudel at Shital Niwas, the main building of Rashtrapati Bhawan at a ceremony that was delayed by more than half an hour. According to the news portal MyRepublica, the swearing-in ceremony was delayed due to the failure of the Nepali Congress to finalise the names



Outgoing Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (left) congratulates newly-elected Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli (right) after the oath of office at the Presidential residence in Kathmandu on Monday.

of its ministers to join the government amid disputes within the party. The President also administered oaths to the two Deputy PMs — Prakash Man Singh and Bishnu Paudel — and 19 other ministers. Singh would also look after the Urban Development Ministry while Vishnu Prakash Paudel would look after the Finance Ministry. Arzoo Rana Deuba, wife of Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba is the Foreign Minister in the cabinet. There are 10 cabinet ministers from the Nepali Congress;

eight, excluding the Prime Minister, from the CPN-UML, two from the Janata Samajwadi Party and one from the Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party in the government. Outgoing Prime Minister Prachanda was also present at the ceremony, which was attended by foreign diplomats and other dignitaries. Earlier on Sunday, President Paudel had appointed Oli as the new Prime Minister under Article 76-2 of the Constitution of Nepal, according to a notice issued by the President's Office. On Friday night, Oli had staked

his claim to become the next Prime Minister with the backing of NC President Deuba and submitted the signatures of 165 House of Representatives (HoR) members — 77 from his Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) party and 88 from the Nepali Congress. Oli will now need to secure a vote of confidence from Parliament within 30 days of appointment, which he is likely to secure easily as the minimum number to form a government in the 275-strong HoR is just 138. Prachanda faced the vote of confidence as earlier last week, Oli's party withdrew its support to that coalition and inked a new seven-point deal with Deuba to form a new coalition government. According to the July 1 deal between NC and CPN-UML, the two parties will lead the government on a rotational basis until the next general elections scheduled for 2027. Oli served as Nepal's prime minister from October 11, 2015, to August 3, 2016 and then, from February 5, 2018, to July 13, 2021. He continued to serve from May 13, 2021, to July 13, 2021.

Pakistan govt files review petition against allotting reserved seats to Imran's party

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party-led government on Monday filed a review petition in the Supreme Court against its decision to allocate reserved seats to jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party. A 13-member full court in a key judgment on July 12 ruled that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was eligible for the seats reserved for women and minorities in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies. The case gave a major boost to PTI and its founder Khan while

the government criticised the apex court and decided to challenge it. Following the ruling, PTI will become the largest party in the National Assembly as its seats will likely soar from 86 to 109, after it gains 23 reserved seats, Pakistani media reports said. In the review petition, the PML-N stated the PTI had not requested for specific seats while the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), which had filed the petition, was a separate political entity. It further contended that the independent candidates have already joined the Sunni Ittehad Council and as per the July 12 decision, the members who were declared as part of

PTI have declared themselves independent in the papers. The PML-N in the review petition took the stand that the July 12 decision of the Supreme Court regarding specific seats is against the law asking independent members to join a political party within 15 days. It has been argued in the petition that the Constitution and law are clear that independent candidates can join a political party within three days. It is also mentioned in the petition that the court did not hear the arguments of the parties while giving the decision in favour of the PTI. In this review appeal, it has been requested that the

Supreme Court should review the decision of the specific seats and suspend the July 12 decision pending the decision on the review application. The latest development comes as Information Minister Atta Tarar dropped the bombshell about banning the PTI, creating political uncertainty which may further exacerbate the economic situation of the country. Tarar in the controversial move announced the government will ban jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party for its alleged involvement in anti-state activities and slap cases against him and two of his senior party colleagues for treason.

Ukrainian startups create low cost robots to fight Russia

AP ■ NORTHERN UKRAINE

Struggling with manpower shortages, overwhelming odds and uneven international assistance, Ukraine hopes to find a strategic edge against Russia in an abandoned warehouse or a factory basement. An ecosystem of laboratories in hundreds of secret workshops is leveraging innovation to create a robot army that Ukraine hopes will kill Russian troops and save its own wounded soldiers and civilians. Defense startups across Ukraine — about 250 according to industry estimates — are creating the killing machines at secret locations that typically look like rural car repair shops. Employees at a startup run by entrepreneur Andrii Denysenko can put together an unmanned ground vehicle called the Odyssey in four days at a shed used by the company. Its most important feature is the price tag: USD 35,000, or roughly 10 per cent of the cost of an imported model. Denysenko asked that The Associated Press not publish details of the location to protect the infrastructure and the people working there. The site is partitioned into small rooms for welding and body work. That includes making fiberglass cargo beds, spray-painting the vehicles gun-green and fitting basic electronics, battery-powered engines, off-the-shelf cameras and thermal sensors. The military is assessing dozens of new unmanned air, ground and marine vehicles produced by the no-frills startup sector, whose production methods are far removed from giant Western defense companies. A fourth branch of Ukraine's military — the Unmanned Systems Forces — joined the army, navy and air force in May. Engineers take inspiration from articles in defense magazines or online videos to produce cut-price platforms. Weapons or smart components can be added later. "We are fighting a huge country, and they don't have any resource

limits. We understand that we cannot spend a lot of human lives," said Denysenko, who heads the defense startup UkrPrototyp. "War is mathematics."

One of its drones, the car-sized Odyssey, spun on its axis and kicked up dust as it rumbled forward in a cornfield in the north of the country last month.

Anti-terrorism court indicts ex-Pak foreign minister Qureshi in May 9 violence case

PTI ■ LAHORE

An anti-terrorism court here on Monday charged top Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a case involving the burning down of a police station during the May 9 violence last year. Qureshi, 68, who was brought to Kot Lakhpat jail here from Adiala jail in Rawalpindi under tight security, has several cases related to May 9 violence, including arson, filed against him at the Shadman police station. Geo News reported. The court had summoned Qureshi to initiate indictment proceedings against him and ordered him to present witnesses in the next hearing scheduled for July 22. The indictment of Qureshi came hours before the Pakistan government announced its decision to ban Khan's PTI for its alleged involvement in anti-



state activities. The Lahore police had registered a case against several leaders and activists of the PTI on the charges of attacking and burning down the Shadman police station during the May 9 riots following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan by the Rangers in an alleged corruption case. Besides this case, multiple cases

related to the May 9 violence have been lodged against Qureshi in Lahore alone. Qureshi has been in prison since he and Khan, 71, were sentenced by a Pakistani court to 10 years in jail for violating the Official Secrets Act by making a diplomatic cable public when the PTI founder was in power. Though the Islamabad High

Court (IHC) on June 3 acquitted Khan and Qureshi in the Cipher case, suspending their 10-year sentence, the two remain in jail as they are named in multiple cases in connection with the May 9 violence across Pakistan. Qureshi was earlier this year indicted in eight more cases related to the May 9 violence. The May 9 riots were triggered across the country after 71-year-old Khan was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the 190-million-pound corruption case. He is currently facing over 200 cases and has been in jail since August last year. Hundreds of PTI workers and senior leaders were put behind bars for their involvement in violence and attacks on military installations, including the Jinnah House, ISI building in Faisalabad and General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, last year on May 9.

World's rarest whale may have washed up on NZ beach

AP ■ WELLINGTON

The spade-toothed whales are the world's rarest, with no live sightings ever recorded. No one knows how many there are, what they eat, or even where they live in the vast expanse of the southern Pacific Ocean. However, scientists in New Zealand may have finally caught a break. The country's conservation agency said Monday a creature that washed up on a South Island beach this month is believed to be a spade-toothed whale. The five-meter-long creature, a type of beaked whale, was identified after it washed ashore on Otago beach from its color patterns and the shape of its skull, beak and teeth. "We know very little, practically nothing" about the creature, Hannah Hendriks, Marine Technical Advisor for the Department of Conservation, told the Associated Press. "This is going to lead to some amazing science and world-first information." If the cetacean is confirmed to be the elusive spade-toothed whale, it would be the first specimen found in a state that would

permit scientists to dissect it, allowing them to study the relationship of the whale to the few others of the species found, and learn what it eats and perhaps lead to clues about where they live. Only six other spade-toothed whales have ever been pinpointed, and those found intact on New Zealand's North Island beaches had been buried before DNA testing could verify their identification, Hendriks said, thwarting any chance to study them. This time, the beached whale was quickly transported to cold storage and researchers will work with local Maori iwi (tribes) to plan how it will be examined, the conservation agency said. New Zealand's Indigenous people consider whales a taonga — a sacred treasure — of cultural significance. In April, Pacific Indigenous leaders signed a treaty recognizing whales as "legal persons," although such a declaration is not reflected in the laws of participating nations. Nothing is currently known about the whales' habitat. The creatures deep-dive for food and likely surface so rarely that it has been impossible to narrow their loca-



tion further than the southern Pacific Ocean, home to some of the world's deepest ocean trenches, Hendriks said. "It's very hard to do research on marine mammals if you don't see them at sea," she said. "It's a bit of a needle in a haystack. You don't know where to look." The conservation agency said the genetic testing to confirm the whale's identification could take months. It took "many years and a mammoth amount of effort by researchers and local people" to identify the "incredibly cryptic" mammals, Kirsten Young, a senior lec-

turer at the University of Exeter who has studied spade-toothed whales, said in emailed remarks. The fresh discovery "makes me wonder — how many are out in the deep ocean and how do they live?" Young said. The first spade-toothed whale bones were found in 1872 on New Zealand's Pitt Island. Another discovery was made at an offshore island in the 1950s, and the bones of a third were found on Chile's Robinson Crusoe Island in 1986. DNA sequencing in 2002 proved that all three specimens were of the same species — and that it was one distinct from other beaked whales. Researchers studying the mammal couldn't confirm if the species went extinct. Then in 2010, two, whole, spade-toothed whales, both dead, washed up on a New Zealand beach. Firstly mistaken for one of New Zealand's 13 other more common types of beaked whale, tissue samples — taken after they were buried — revealed them as the enigmatic species. New Zealand is a whale-stranding hotspot, with more than 5,000 episodes recorded since 1840, according to the Department of Conservation.

// ई-निविदा आमंत्रण //

उज्जैन स्मार्ट सिटी लिमिटेड (USCL) द्वारा श्री महाकाल महालोक के बेसमेंट पार्किंग के ऊपर निर्मित दुकान/कियोस्क "प्रसादम" (Prasadam) के लिए ऑनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की गई है। जिसका विवरण निम्नानुसार है। समय सारणी :-

क्रमांक	विवरण	दिनांक एवं समय
1.	ऑनलाइन निविदा पंजीयन प्रारंभ करने का दिनांक एवं समय	15.07.2024
2.	ऑनलाइन निविदा ऑफर प्रस्तुत करने का अंतिम दिनांक एवं समय (तकनीकी और वित्तीय बोली जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि)	20.08.2024, 17:00 pm
3.	निविदा के तकनीकी प्रस्ताव खुलने की दिनांक एवं समय	22.08.2024, 11:00 am
4.	निविदा का ऑनलाइन वित्तीय प्रस्ताव निविदा प्रपत्रों का मूल्यांकन होने पश्चात ओपन किया जाएगा। जिसकी सूचना एस एम एस/ईमेल के माध्यम से दी जावेगी	सूचित किया जाएगा
5.	निविदा की वैधता अवधि	वित्तीय प्रस्ताव खुलने की तिथि से 180 दिन तक

अतः निम्नानुसार निविदा विज्ञापित की सूचना समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित कराया जाना प्रस्तावित है :-

दुकान क्रमांक	NIT क्रमांक	टेंडर आई. डी.	दुकान/कियोस्क का बिल्ड-अप एरिया	निकटतम सौ.रू. के मूल्य पर पूर्णांकित करते हुए	आरक्षण स्थिति	अमानत राशि (5 प्रतिशत)
Shop No. 5	USCL/343	2024_UAD_357079_1	13.12	23,83,100.00	अन्य पिछड़ वर्ग	1,19,155.00
Shop No. 6	USCL/344	2024_UAD_357082_1	26.12	47,93,800.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	2,39,690.00
Shop No. 7	USCL/345	2024_UAD_357087_1	14.48	26,35,200.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,31,760.00
Shop No. 9	USCL/346	2024_UAD_357092_1	15.76	28,71,700.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,43,585.00
Shop No. 10	USCL/347	2024_UAD_357095_1	15.76	28,71,700.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग की विधवा	1,43,585.00
Shop No. 13	USCL/348	2024_UAD_357098_1	12.78	23,21,200.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,16,060.00
Shop No. 14	USCL/349	2024_UAD_357089_1	24.18	44,33,700.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	2,21,685.00
Shop No. 15	USCL/350	2024_UAD_357117_1	14.61	26,68,200.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,33,410.00
Shop No. 16	USCL/351	2024_UAD_357123_1	14.53	26,62,900.00	अनारक्षित वर्ग	1,33,145.00

विशेष नोट :-
 1. ई-निविदा में भाग लेने वाले व्यक्ति/संस्था/साझेदारी फर्म/कंपनी या कंपनी द्वारा अधिकृत व्यक्ति/संस्था/फ्रेंचाइजी मध्य प्रदेश क ई-निविदा पोर्टल <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर ई-निविदा प्रस्तुत कर सकते हैं।
 2. प्रत्येक दुकान की निविदा के लिए पृथक-पृथक आवेदन प्रस्तुत किये जायेंगे।

verka
Har Din Da, Har Din Da

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66

Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop

e/sealed tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Mohali Dairy a) Hiring of Insulated & Refrigerated vehicles with different capacities for supply of Verka milk and milk products. b) Outsourcing the activities related to city supply :- • Demand, Dispatch & Milk Supply Helpers. • Security Personnels, BCC and Accounts personnels	65 No's (no. of vehicles may increased or decreased) Annual Annual
2.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy Repair of 04 TPH husk feed boiler (replacement of shell and water valve tubes) including material and supply of ID fan complete in all respects.	01 Complete job
3.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Annual Rate Contract for the supply of Nitric Acid b) Outsourcing of housekeeping activities of Old Dairy and New Dairy at Verka Jalandhar Dairy. c) Annual Labour Contract for packing of milk & milk products in different pack sizes. d) Hiring of refrigerated vehicles for supply of frozen (like ice cream, table butter, cheese etc.) and Ambient Verka products in Verka Jalandhar Dairy Milkshed area.	Annual
4.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy a) Outsourcing of Milk Booth at Park back side main shopping centre sector 32-A, Chandigarh Road, Ludhiana. b) Outsourcing of Verka Milk Bar at :- • Macchiwara • Kamalpur	Three Years
5.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy a) e-tenders for supply, installation, testing & commissioning of :- • 125 KVA DG set for Milk Chilling Centre Mehta. • 100 KVA DG set for Milk Chilling Centre Fatehgarh Churian. b) Sealed Tenders for Sale of :- • Tata 407 (Model 1994) vehicle at Verka Amritsar dairy. • Tata 709 (Model 1997) vehicle at Verka Amritsar dairy. • Ambassador Car (Model 2010) vehicle at Verka Amritsar dairy.	01 No. Complete job.
6.	For Verka Mega Dairy, Bassi Pathana Loading/ Unloading of Verka Milk & Milk Products, Corrugated Boxes, SMP bags etc.	01 09.2024 to 31.08.2025

NOTE:
 1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
 2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

NA/12/24135/2023/35653 Dated CHD :- 7/15/2024

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

WPI inflation surges to 16-month high in June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wholesale inflation in the country surged to a 16-month high of 3.36 per cent in June on account of rise in prices of food articles, especially vegetables and manufactured items. This was the fourth consecutive month when inflation witnessed an upward journey. The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation was 2.61 per cent in May. It was (-) 4.18 per cent in June 2023. Wholesale inflation had touched a high of 3.85 per cent in February 2023. "Positive rate of inflation in June, 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, manufacture of food products, crude petroleum & natural gas, mineral oils, other manufacturing etc," the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement on Monday. As per the data, inflation in food articles rose 10.87 per cent in June, as against 9.82 per cent in May. Inflation in vegetables was 38.76 per cent during June, up



from 32.42 per cent in May. Onion inflation was at 93.35 per cent, while potato was 66.37 per cent in the month under review. Pulses inflation rose 21.64 per cent in June. During the month, inflation in other food items like fruits stood at 10.14 per cent, cereals at 9.27 per cent, and milk at 3.37 per cent. The upmove in the WPI inflation in June 2024 was broad-based, driven by all the

major segments except fuel and power, ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said. Looking ahead, she said, the headline WPI inflation is expected to dip to about 2 per cent in July 2024, driven by a favourable base, as well as some cooling in global commodity prices. With regard to oil prices, she said, the average price of the Indian basket of crude oil has been quite

volatile in July 2024 so far, on the back of supply-demand mismatches, witnessing a month-on-month rise (USD 86.6/bbl up to July 11). Higher crude oil prices might exert an upward pressure to the headline WPI inflation in the ongoing month, she added. In the fuel and power basket, inflation stood at 1.03 per cent, marginally lower than 1.35 per cent in May. However, price rise in crude petroleum & Natural gas was in double digit at 12.55 per cent during the month. In manufactured products, inflation was at 1.43 per cent in June, higher than 0.78 per cent in May. The rise in June WPI was in line with the retail inflation data for the month. Retail inflation rose to a four-month high of 5.1 per cent in June, data released last week showed. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mainly takes into account retail inflation while framing the monetary policy.

India's exports rise 2.56% to USD 35.2 bn in June



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports in June increased 2.56 per cent to USD 35.2 billion from USD 34.32 billion in the year-ago month, according to government data released on Monday. Imports rose by about 5 per cent to USD 56.18 billion in June against USD 53.51 billion a year ago. The trade deficit, or the gap between imports and exports, during the month under review stood at USD 20.98 billion. Briefing media on the data, Commerce Secretary Sunil

Barthwal said going by the current trend, the country's total exports of goods and services may cross USD 800 billion this fiscal. During the first quarter of 2024-25, the exports of goods and services stood at about USD 200 billion, he added. India's merchandise exports rose by 9.1 per cent to USD 38.13 billion in May, even as the trade deficit widened to a seven-month high of USD 23.78 billion. Exports during April-June this fiscal increased 5.84 per cent to USD 109.96 billion, and imports grew 7.6 per cent to USD 172.23 billion.

Sai Life Sciences files IPO papers with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Private equity major TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO). The company's proposed IPO comprises fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 6.15 crore shares by a promoter, investor shareholders and other shareholders, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). Under the OFS, one of the promoter entities -- Sai Quest Syn Pvt Ltd -- and investor shareholders -- TPG Asia VII SF Pte Ltd, HBM Private Equity India -- will partly offload their respective stakes. At present, Sai Quest Syn holds 5.61 per cent stake in the company, TPG owns 39.69 per cent shareholding and HBM Private Equity India has 5.5 per cent stake. Of the IPO proceeds, funds to the tune of Rs 600 crore will be used for debt payment and a portion will be used for corporate general purposes, the draft papers filed on Friday showed. The Hyderabad-based Sai Life



Sciences provides end-to-end services across the drug discovery, development, and manufacturing value chain, for small molecule new chemical entities (NCE), to global pharmaceutical innovator companies and biotechnology firms. According to a F&S report, India CRDMO market (contract research, development and manufacturing organization) was amongst the fastest growing markets in APAC over 2018-2023. This growth is expected to continue, with the Indian market projected to grow by 14 per cent between 2023 and 2028 reaching an estimated value of USD 14.1 billion in 2028. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, IIFL Securities Ltd, Jefferies India Private Ltd and Morgan Stanley India Company Private Ltd have been appointed as merchant bankers to manage the company's IPO.

Hindustan Zinc contributes ₹13,195 cr to exchequer in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) on Monday said it has contributed Rs 13,195 crore to the exchequer in the last financial year, representing about 46 per cent of its total revenues. In FY 2023-24, Hindustan Zinc's total contribution to the exchequer stood at Rs 13,195 crores, the Vedanta group firm said in a regulatory filing. With this, HZL's cumulative contribution to the exchequer over the past five years stood at Rs 77,803 crore. "As our businesses grow, so will these numbers. At Hindustan Zinc, we are committed to continuing to do business with a purpose in a manner that is sustainable,



transparent and creates value for all our stakeholders," Hindustan Zinc Chairperson Priya Agarwal Hebbar said. Over the past five years, that company has consistently contributed an average of approximately Rs 3,250 crore per year to Rajasthan in the form of royalties, contributions to the District Mineral Foundation (DMF), and other levies. "This substantial contribution underlines Hindustan Zinc's commitment to the state's

economic development," the company said. Over the past five years, Hindustan Zinc has consistently contributed an average of approximately Rs 3,250 crore annually to the state of Rajasthan in the form of royalties, contributions to the District Mineral Foundation (DMF), and other levies. In the past five years, the company said it has paid Rs 16,350 crore in government royalties, Rs 10,100 crore as corporate income tax, Rs 18,008 crore as corporate dividend and Rs 26,384 crore as indirect taxes. Hindustan Zinc Limited, a Vedanta Group company, is the world's second-largest integrated zinc producer and the third-largest silver producer.

Imports from Bangladesh aggravate jute sector crisis: Stakeholders

PTI ■ KOLKATA

A body of jute suppliers have written to Union Minister Giriraj Singh, alleging that raw material imports from Bangladesh, either directly by mills or through third parties, have adversely impacted the industry and farmers. In a letter to the textile minister, the Jute Balers' Association has raised concerns over the "unregulated import of raw jute" from the neighbouring country and "low orders" for mills have led to a severe payment crisis for domestic raw jute suppliers. Indian Jute Mills Association has also raised concerns over the issue and sought intervention from the central and state governments to tide over the crisis. A meeting between the industry stakeholders and the

ministry is expected later on Monday, an official said. The balers' association, which has been serving the sector for over 115 years, outlined the critical issues threatening the industry's survival. "Despite a bumper crop year in 2023-24, where domestic supply was sufficient, mills have continued to import large quantities of raw jute from Bangladesh. In June 2024 alone, 73,000 bales, or 22 per cent of the total 3,34,000 bales, were imported," Jute Balers' Association secretary Pulak Jha said in the letter. "There is an opening stock of 3 million bales of raw jute for the jute season as of July 1, 2024, and the new crop is also around the corner. These factors caused prices to plummet below the minimum support price (MSP)," Jute Balers' Association secretary Pulak Jha said in the letter.



Prices of the golden fibre fell below Rs 5,000 per quintal, while the minimum support price (MSP) is Rs 5,335 per quintal for the 2024-25 season, he said. There has been a bar on the use of imported jute in

making bags for food grain packaging but the "influx of cheaper and low-grade jute from Bangladesh has exacerbated the crisis", an industry stakeholder said. "With mills facing liquidity issues, payments to suppliers are getting delayed, hindering their ability to purchase fresh jute from farmers. This has created a vicious cycle, where mills are obligated to buy MSP-linked jute, which reduces their market purchases, further depressing prices and pushing more farmers towards MSP dependency. "Already six mills are closed. The current dues are about Rs 1,400 crore of which Rs 400 crore is legacy dues from the mills," Soni said explaining the current situation. The association called for a rigorous crackdown on illegal jute imports and a reaffirmation of commitment to lawful practices. "The future of millions of livelihoods is at stake," the letter said, urging immediate government intervention to curb the menace of "unregulated imports" and address the issue of reduced orders.

Cardiac ward inaugurated

PNS ■ NEW RAIPUR

In a significant step to help children born with congenital heart diseases from economically weaker sections of society, REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, inaugurated the "REC Gift of Life-Cardiac Ward" at the state-of-the-art Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in New Raipur. Vivek Kumar Dewangan, Chairman and Managing Director, REC Ltd inaugurated the "REC Gift of Life-Cardiac Ward" in presence of distinguished guests, hospital management, doctors, medical staff, patients and their family members, and senior officials from REC Ltd.

Induction ceremony for 2024 freshers held

PNS ■ CHENNAI

It was a field day for first year students of Allied Health Sciences and Health Sciences Colleges when they received a warm welcome during an induction ceremony at Kattankulathur near Chennai today. N Ram, Director, The Hindu Group said learning always is a must to stay updated in one's field of study. Skills have to be constantly upgraded. He was the chief guest at the ceremony held at Dr T P Ganesan Auditorium on SRMIST premises at Kattankulathur near Chennai. They must also have good conduct and humbleness, as these are very essential while interacting with the patients, he said.



Showering praises on SRMIST, N Ram said the institution has a very robust entrance exam system designed to intake students into various courses. The entrance exam can be said to be an ideal one as it is designed taking into view all streams in school education in India. "Colleges of Allied Health Sciences and Health Sciences have over 100 courses and have an enrolment of 1500 students.

Govt aims to cover 25% of kharif paddy area with climate-resilient seeds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to combat the growing challenges posed by climate change, the government is targeting to bring 25 per cent of the total kharif paddy area under climate-resilient seeds, a senior agriculture ministry official said on Monday. The move comes as erratic rainfall patterns have become increasingly common in recent years, threatening rice production in the country. India, the world's second-largest rice producer after China, cultivates paddy on over 410 lakh hectares during the kharif season. Speaking on the sidelines of ICAR's 96th Foundation and Technology Day celebrations, ICAR Director General



Himanshu Pathak said, "While we have achieved 75 per cent coverage of climate-resilient seeds in wheat cultivation, the adoption in paddy is still limited." Pathak revealed that ICAR has developed paddy seeds resistant to drought and lodging. These seeds were sown in 16 per cent of the total paddy area during the 2023 kharif season. "For the ongoing kharif season, we aim to increase this

coverage to 25 per cent," he added. The push for climate-resilient seeds comes at a crucial time. Research studies indicate that climate change could reduce rice yields in India by 3-5 per cent under a medium emissions scenario, and up to 31.3 per cent by 2030 under high emissions. India's estimated rice production for the 2023-24 crop year (July-June) stands at 136.7 million tonne. The top rice-producing states include West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. Pathak attributed the record wheat output of 112.9 million tonne in 2023-24 to the widespread use of climate-resistant seeds, despite weather aberrations.

Automobile retail sales up 9% in April-June: FADA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Automobile retail sales increased 9 per cent year-on-year in June quarter FY25 with all segments, barring tractors, reporting growth, dealers' body FADA said on Monday. Overall retail sales rose to 61,91,225 units in the April-June period from 56,59,060 units in the same quarter of FY24. Passenger vehicle retails increased 2.53 per cent to 9,20,047 units as against 8,97,361 units a year ago. "Despite strong bookings and customer flow, high competition, excess supply and discounting presented challenges for sustained growth in the PV segment," FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said in a statement. Dealers reported significant impacts from elections, extreme heat and market liquidity issues, he noted. The extreme heat led to 18 per cent drop in showroom walk-ins in May, with inventory levels reaching an all-time high of 62-67 days by the end of June, Singhania said. "Despite improved product availability and substantial discounts aimed at stimulating demand, market sentiment remains subdued due to the extreme heat and delayed monsoons, resulting in 15 per cent fewer walk-ins," he added. Two-wheeler retails stood at 45,54,255 units in April-June, up 12.56 per cent as compared with 40,46,169 units in the year-ago period. "The recovery in the two-wheeler segment is



promising, largely due to the emerging performance in rural areas, although these are early trends," Singhania said. The segment also faced significant challenges from extreme heat and the election period, resulting in 13 per cent reduction in walk-ins in the showrooms during May and June, he stated. Three-wheeler sales rose 11.36 per cent to 2,72,691 units in the first quarter from 2,44,878 units in the same period last fiscal. Commercial vehicle retail sales witnessed marginal increase at 2,46,513 units as against 2,44,834 units earlier. "Commercial vehicle segment experienced a slowdown due to the elections and a pause in infrastructure projects. In April, elections dampened sentiment, causing delays in expansion plans. Additionally, limited financing options and regional challenges, such as water scarcity, further impacted performance," Singhania said. Tractor retail sales declined 12.44 per cent to 1,97,719 units from 2,25,818 units a year ago.

Next round of talks for proposed trade, investments agreement between India, EU likely in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) are expected to hold the next round of talks for the proposed free trade agreement, which aims at boosting commerce and investments, in September, an official said. Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce Darpan Jain said that the eighth round of talks was concluded on June 28. He said that discussions were held on all 21 chapters in the meeting and progress was made in number of areas such as government procurement, digital trade, technical barriers to trade,

goods, and market access. "We plan to hold more inter-annual meetings in July and August and we intend to have another round (of talks) in the last week of September," Jain told reporters here. On June 17, 2022, India and the EU formally resumed negotiations on the proposed agreement, after a gap of over eight years. They are negotiating Trade and Investment Agreement, and a pact on Geographical Indications (GI). India had started negotiations for a trade pact with the EU in 2007, but the talks stalled in 2013 as both sides failed to reach an agreement on key issues, including customs duties on

automobiles and spirits and the movement of professionals. The trade agreement with the EU would help India further expand and diversify its exports of goods and services, including securing the value chains. India's merchandise exports to EU member countries have increased to USD 75.92 billion in 2023-24 from USD 74.83 billion in 2022-23. Imports also rose to USD 59.38 billion in 2023-24 from USD 61 billion in 2022-23. The EU accounts for over 17 per cent of India's total exports and about 8.8 per cent of the country's total imports. Talking about the proposed

trade pact with the UK, another official said that with the new government taking charge in Britain, the two countries will take forward the negotiations. The official said the new government in the UK will look into the agreement. The India-UK talks for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) began in January 2022. The 14th round of talks stalled as the two nations stepped into their general election cycles. Britain's newly-elected Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently and said he stood ready to conclude an FTA that worked for both sides.

The two leaders agreed to work towards the early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-UK FTA. There are pending issues in both the goods and services sectors. The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its skilled professionals from sectors like IT and healthcare in the UK market, besides market access for several goods at nil customs duty. On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, electric vehicles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items. Britain is also looking for

more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services (banking and insurance). The two countries are also negotiating a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which include goods, services, investments and intellectual property rights. The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24 from USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23. The Labour Party's election manifesto for the recent polls also committed to clinching the deal.

ARGENTINA WINS RECORD 16TH COPA AMERICA TITLE, BEATS COLOMBIA 1-0 AFTER MESSI GETS HURT

AP ■ MIAMI GARDENS (USA)

Argentina won its second straight Copa America championship, overcoming Lionel Messi's second-half leg injury to beat Colombia 1-0 on Lautaro Martinez's 112th-minute goal. Messi appeared to sustain a non-contact injury while running and falling in the 64th minute and covered his face with his hands as he sat on the bench and sobbed on Sunday night. Martinez later ran to that bench to hug his captain after the goal that propelled Argentina to its record 16th Copa title. In a match that started 1 hour, 22 minutes late because of crowd trouble at Hard Rock Stadium, Argentina won its third straight major title following the 2021 Copa America and 2022 World Cup and matched Spain, which won the 2008 and 2012 European Championships around the 2010 World Cup. Argentina also stopped Colombia's 28-game unbeaten streak dating to a February 2022 loss to the Albiceleste. Martinez entered in the 97th minute and scored from Giovanni Lo Celso's perfect through pass. Just inside the penalty area, Martinez sent a right-foot shot through the upraised arms of sliding goalkeeper Camilo Vargas for his 29th international goal, his tournament-high fifth. Making his 39th and possibly last Copa America appearance at age 37, Messi had one goal in the tournament. He went down after an ankle was stepped on in the first half but remained in the game.



The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner looked to the bench as soon as he fell to the field in the second half, appearing to know his tournament was over. He took off his right boot as he walked off and slammed it in frustration, and his ankle appeared to swell. The start was delayed from 8 p.m. EDT to 9:22 p.m. Because of crowd control issues outside the stadium, including troves of fans breaching security gates at a venue to be used for

the 2026 World Cup. Days after Uruguay players were involved in a brawl with Colombia fans following their semifinal match in Charlotte, North Carolina, video showed fans climbing fences and railings to get inside the championship match, with officials unable to keep track of who had purchased tickets and who didn't. Colombia was more aggressive and forced goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez to make four saves in the first half, but Argentina began to threaten more in

the second. Nicolás Tagliafico thought he scored in the 75th minute but was ruled offside. Nicolás González, who replaced Messi. Was stopped by Vargas in the 95th minute. Numerous players lost their footing during the second half of Sunday's match. The grass was heavily watered with sprinklers following the halftime performance by Colombian pop star Shakira, which caused an extended halftime break.



Spain wins record fourth European Championship title by inflicting another painful loss on England

AP ■ BERLIN

Spain is the king of European Soccer for a record fourth time. For England, it's another agonizing near-miss in the team's decades-long tale of underachievement. Completing a tournament the team dominated from start to finish, Spain beat England 2-1 in the European Championship final on Sunday with Mikel Oyarzabal the unlikely match-winner in the 86th minute. Oyarzabal, a backup striker who came on as a substitute for captain Alvaro Morata, slid in to poke home a left-wing cross by Marc Cucurella, just when the game at Berlin's Olympiastadion seemed destined for extra time. England, the birthplace of soccer, is still without a major title in the men's game since winning the 1966 World Cup and its players watched on forlornly as Morata raised aloft the silver trophy to backdrop of confetti and fireworks inside the stadium built for the 1936 Olympics. Add 2024 to the titles won by Spain in 1964, 2008 and 2012. "Here we are, champions of Europe," said Nico Williams, whose opening goal for Spain in the 47th minute was canceled out by England substitute Cole Palmer in the 73rd. "We are thrilled and hope this can keep going and we can go for the (2026) World Cup." Lamine Yamal, the prodigy who turned 17 on Saturday and is the youngest player to have appeared at a European Championship, set up Williams' goal with an inside run before passing across the face of the area. The two wingers have become the poster boys of an exciting, multicultural team that reflects Spain's changing demographics. Yamal's mother is from Equatorial Guinea and his father is from Morocco, while the 22-year-old Williams has Ghanaian parents who made the long journey to Europe looking for a better life. To make it to Spain, they had to ride on the back of a crowded truck and walk barefoot

through the Sahara desert. "I believe there is a historical change, we are really grateful," said Williams, the player of the match with his darting runs and his second goal of Euro 2024. "My parents have suffered a lot to get here. They are the ones who have suffered the most and they have instilled this sort of respect and loyalty in me," he said. "I'm really happy because we are making history. Unlike his brother Inaki, who is a Ghana international, Nico chose to play for Spain and will now be regarded as a national hero there. Spain is back as a major player in senior soccer after winning both the Women's World Cup - also against England - and the men's UEFA Nations League in 2023. Since 2001, Spanish men's teams have won 23 consecutive major finals in club and international soccer. "I said before the tournament, nobody can hang with us," Williams said. Spain won all seven games at this European Championship - an unprecedented feat - and broke the record for goals scored in a single tournament, with 15. There were joyous scenes after the final whistle, with defender Dani Carvajal piled on by jubilant teammates after slumping to the ground. Spain coach Luis de la Fuente was thrown into the air by his players. Both Cucurella and Yamal led Spain's players in jumping over the advertising boards to reach the red-and-yellow-clad Spanish fans in the stadium's east end. "This is the best (birthday) gift I could have asked for," Yamal said. "It is a dream come true." After getting his medal, the teenager turned and shook his fist in celebration, stuck his tongue out and showed off a beaming grin. By then, Yamal and his team mates were wearing Spain jerseys with "Kings of Europe" and the number "4" on the back. Meanwhile, fans who had watched the game on a big screen in Madrid celebrated wildly, chanting "champions, champions" in Spanish. It was

a great sporting day for the nation, with Carlos Alcaraz winning the Wimbledon men's singles title for a second straight year hours before the Euro 2024 final. As for England, the men's team has now lost back-to-back Euro finals - it was defeated in a penalty shootout by Italy on home soil in the final in 2021 - and this was another painful loss for a team that will have gone six decades without a major title by the next World Cup. England's women have been more successful, though, winning the European Championship in 2021 and reaching the World Cup final two years later. "This time it just wasn't meant to be," Prince William, who attended the final alongside other dignitaries including Spain's King Felipe, wrote on social media. "We're all still so proud of you." It was the fourth straight game that the English came from behind since the group stage, but their resilience wasn't rewarded this time. A team that has produced big moments when it really mattered at Euro 2024 - including Jude Bellingham's 95th-minute overhead kick against Slovakia in the round of 16 - couldn't deliver another one, with Spain midfielder Dani Olmo clearing the ball off the line at a corner in the 89th minute. "It has been a difficult ride, we have done extremely well to get here, but ultimately we are going to be judged on this game," England captain Harry Kane said. "It's extremely painful," he added. "It's going to hurt for a long, long time." England coach Gareth Southgate, who has been in charge for eight years and also led the team to the World Cup semifinals in 2018, said it wasn't the time to make a decision on his future. His contract expires in December. "Most of this squad are going to be around not just for the World Cup but the next Euros as well," Southgate said. "There's a lot to look forward to but at this moment that's not any consolation.

England's Harry Kane and Spain's Dani Olmo end Euro 2024 in 6-way tie for Golden Boot top scorer

AP ■ BERLIN

England striker Harry Kane finished Euro 2024 in a six-way tie for the Golden Boot top scorer as his team lost the final 2-1 to Spain. It was another individual accolade for a player yet to win a major trophy for club or country. Kane ended the tournament tied on three goals with Spain midfielder Dani Olmo, Germany midfielder Jamal Musiala, Netherlands forward Cody Gakpo, Slovakia winger Ivan Schranz and Georgia striker Georges Mikautadze. Kane has now been a runner-up in back-to-back European Championship finals after England's loss to Italy three years ago, and a runner-up in one Champions League final and two English League Cups. He's won a string of individual awards, including Bundesliga top scorer last season at Bayern Munich, but the German club had its first season without a trophy since 2012. "It's an opportunity missed. It's not easy to get to these finals," Kane told British broadcaster ITV of England's loss to Spain. "It takes unbelievable resilience and character to get to where we are but ultimately you take the opportunity when it comes and we haven't done it again. It's extremely painful, it's going to hurt for a long, long time." Kane is one of four men's players to have been top scorer at both a European Championship and a World Cup, something he achieved in 2018. Olmo's main contribution to Spain's win in the final was defensive, as he cleared Marc



Guéhi's header off the line to keep his team in the lead late on. "I told him that he is my top scorer because his save counts as a goal for me," goalkeeper Unai Simón said. "It was our planned defense for him to protect that post, but he remembered to do just that and cleared it off the line. It was incredible." For Olmo, being joint top scorer at Euro 2024 is a moment in the spotlight for a player who has faced repeated injury setbacks. He took an unorthodox path to the top of European soccer, leaving Barcelona's renowned youth academy at the age of 16 in 2014 and making his pro debut with Croatian club Dinamo Zagreb. He's played in Germany with Leipzig since 2019. UEFA allowed multiple players to share the Euro 2024 top scorer award if they scored the same number of goals, in a

change from recent tournaments. At the last men's European Championship, Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo and Czech striker Patrik Schick both had five goals but Ronaldo was named the winner because he had an assist and Schick had none. Under the old system, Olmo would have won the tiebreaker with two assists, the most among the players tied on three goals. The last time that three goals proved enough to win the Golden Boot was at Euro 2012, when Spain's Fernando Torres took the prize. At the time, the tiebreaker was which player had played the fewest minutes. If that had applied at Euro 2024, the award would have gone to Slovakia's Schranz. UEFA named Spain midfielder Rodri its player of the tournament and Spain forward Lamine Yamal, who turned 17 on Saturday, was the young player of the tournament.

Kate, the Princess of Wales, hands Carlos Alcaraz his Wimbledon trophy in rare appearance for her

AP ■ LONDON

Kate, the Princess of Wales, handed Carlos Alcaraz the champion's trophy after the Wimbledon men's final at the All England Club in only her second public appearance since announcing she was diagnosed with cancer. Kate, wife of heir to the throne Prince William, was greeted by a standing ovation when she arrived in the Royal Box at Centre Court on Sunday to watch Alcaraz's victory over Novak Djokovic. After leaving the court following the trophy ceremony, the princess and Alcaraz had a conversation in a room inside the tournament's main stadium. "You played so well," Kate told him. "Enjoy the win." Earlier, Kate - wearing a purple dress, one of Wimbledon's official colors - went from the stands down to the playing surface to present the trophies, part of her duties as patron of the All England Club, which hosts the annual tournament. She shook hands with some of the ball kids who worked at the tournament, then exchanged words with both players and applauded for Alcaraz after giving him the winner's trophy for the second year in a row. "It was, of course, a privilege to be in her presence again. I've said to her that it is very nice to see her in good health; she seems to be in good health," Djokovic said at his postmatch news conference. "That's obviously very positive news for everyone in this coun-



try, but also for Wimbledon." Kate and her 9-year-old daughter, Princess Charlotte, got to the site of the grass-court Grand Slam tournament in southwest London in a motorcade about a half-hour before the final was scheduled to begin. They went to a terrace at the club that is connected to the main stadium by a pedestrian walkway and greeted several people, including 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu and other young British tennis players. Also in the Royal Box for the final were Kate's sister, Pippa Matthews, actors Tom Cruise and Benedict Cumberbatch and several past Wimbledon champions, including Rod Laver, Andre Agassi and Stefan Edberg. Since 2016, Kate has been the patron of the All England Club. She did not attend Saturday when Barbora Krejčíková defeated Jasmine Paolini for the women's title. Kate revealed in March that she has an unspecified form of cancer and was undergoing chemotherapy. Her lone public appearance since then had been attending last month's birthday parade for King Charles III. Before that event, she released a statement saying she was "making good progress" but still had "good days and bad days."

Athletics biggest gainer in Govt funding for Paris Olympics preparations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

One Olympic medal is all it takes to raise the profile of a sport and if the colour happens to be gold, it is just icing on the cake. Ask the practitioners of track-and-field disciplines in India, who were the biggest beneficiaries of government funding in this Olympic cycle after javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's top finish in the Tokyo edition three years ago. According to official data from the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), which is available with PTI, the government has spent a whopping Rs 96.08 crore for athletics. It's the biggest chunk in the close to Rs 470 crore which has been spent on India's preparation for the Games this time across 16 disciplines. In the previous Olympic cycle, athletics received Rs 5.38 crore from TOPS funds. A strong 28-member contingent, led by Chopra, will represent Indian athletics at the Paris Games starting July 26 where the country's overall representation will stand at 118. The full details of the funding for Tokyo preparations are sketchy but sources say the expenditure this

time is substantially higher keeping in mind higher expectations after the seven medals achieved last time. The country's shuttlers were the second biggest gainers, receiving Rs 72.02 crore followed by boxing (Rs 60.93 crore) and shooting (Rs 60.42 crore). India secured a total of five badminton quotas for Paris, which includes two-time medallist PV Sindhu (women's singles), HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen (men's singles), Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty (men's doubles) and Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto (women's doubles). Hockey, in which the bronze-medallist Indian men's team will compete to match or better the Tokyo performance, received funding of Rs 41.29 crore in the last three years, while archery got Rs 39.18 crore from the government. The wrestlers received Rs 37.80 crore funding, while weightlifting got Rs 26.98 crore. Equestrian received the least financial support -- little more than Rs 95 lakh, while tennis got Rs 1.67 crore, followed by golf (Rs 1.74 crore), rowing (Rs 3.89 crore), swimming (Rs 3.9 crore), sailing (Rs 3.78 crore) and judo (Rs 6.3 crore)



The Indian table tennis team, which will be spearheaded by star paddler Achanta Sharath Kamal, who will be India's joint flag-bearer along with Sindhu during the opening ceremony, got a funding of Rs 12.92 crore from the government. According to the official data, in terms of foreign exposure trips, the country's shuttlers received the maximum support, 81 trips to be

precise. The shooters got 45 foreign exposure trips, followed by tennis (40), athletics (31), table tennis (28), wrestling (27), archery (24), boxing (23), sailing (22), hockey (18), judo (15), golf (12) and swimming (11). The funding by the government has been done in three categories -- Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC) Senior Paris

Cycle, Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Elaborating on the process, a SAI source told PTI that it kicks in after proposals are received from the athletes and respective national federations. Besides, an athlete or a sport's performance is also monitored and analysed over a period of time.

The athletes who are interested in government support for their preparations for major events send their proposals to SAI, which puts those proposals in front of Mission Olympic Cell and after serious deliberations and debate, they are approved," the source told PTI. "It's not just that, SAI also keeps track of athletes' performances and the approvals are passed after analysing all these factors." During the last three years, 41 national camps were conducted in shooting, which is the highest among all 16 disciplines. Archery comes a close second with 41 camps, followed by athletics (36), hockey (33), boxing (17), rowing (16), wrestling (15) and badminton (13). There were no national camps for equestrian as most of the riders train abroad, while only one camp was organised for golf. "We have been getting the best of facilities provided to us at SAI, Bengaluru, from food to accommodation to gym and other training facilities. We have been based here for a long time. We are also getting plenty of foreign exposure trips," a Paris-bound hockey player said. In terms of individual or sport-

specific expenditure, the Indian men's hockey team got the highest of Rs 41.81 crore, which includes 76 national camps and 19 foreign exposure trips. Chopra is second on the list with Rs 5.72 crore, spent towards assistance for hiring current foreign coach Dr Klaus Bartomeiz, assistance towards pre-Olympic camp in Europe, and competition in Europe, USA and South Africa. Men's doubles badminton pair of Satwik and Chirag received Rs 5.62 crore for assistance towards appointment and extension of tenure of their coach Mathias Boe, hiring of video analyst and assistance for sparring partners. Sindhu got Rs 3.13 crore, mainly towards hiring of current foreign coach Agus Dwi Santoso, and training at Hermann-Neuberger Sportschule (LSVS) in Saarbrücken, Germany for 36 days. Besides she also got assistance towards 17 foreign exposure trips through TOPS for her personal support staff, appointment of former foreign coaches Mohd Hafiz and Park Tae Sang. Tokyo silver-medallist weightlifter Mirabai Chanu received Rs 2.74 crore.

REMEMBER THEIR FACES: KOHLI SAYS GOOD LUCK TO INDIA'S OLYMPIC-BOUND ATHLETES

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian cricket's reigning superstar Virat Kohli has urged the nation to get behind its Olympic-bound contingent, asking the fans to join him in supporting the athletes as "they inch closer to the podium with dogged determination" in the quadrennial showpiece starting July 26 in Paris.

In a little over a minute long video post on social media, featuring some Paris-bound athletes like javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and boxing hope Nishant Dev, Kohli said it is time for India to be recognised as a global sporting powerhouse.

"There was a time when the world could only think of India as a land of snake charmers and elephants. Over time, that has changed. Today we are known to the world as the largest democracy, a global tech hub," he said.

"We are known for cricket and Bollywood, for start-up unicorns and as the fastest growing economy in the world. So, what is the next big thing



for this great nation? Well, that will be more gold, more silver and more bronze," he added.

He then went on to address Indian sports fans, asking them to support the 118-strong group of athletes, who

would be aiming to better the country's best ever performance of seven medals achieved in the previous

Games in Tokyo.

"Our brothers and sisters are headed to Paris, hungry for medals. A billion of us will be watching them nervous and excited as our athletes set foot in the tracks and fields and courts and rings.

"Every neighbourhood, every corner of India will hear a chorus of voices chanting 'India, India, India'. Join me in remembering their faces as they inch closer to the podium with the dogged determination of waving the Tiranga with pride. Jai Hind and good luck India," Kohli, who is currently in London on a break after India's T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies last month, said in his monologue.

Most of the Indian competitors are currently training abroad and will head to the French capital from their respective bases. India's medal hopes will rest on shooting, badminton, wrestling, and boxing aside from the expectations of a second successive podium finish from Chopra, who scripted history with his javelin throw gold in Tokyo.



It is good thing that everyone performing: Gill on competition for openers' slots

PTI ■ HARARE

The competition for the openers' slots has intensified following India's T20I series win in Zimbabwe and for contender Shubman Gill, that can only be a 'good thing'.

Gill, who is expected to open alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal in the three T20Is in Sri Lanka later this month, was the leading run getter in the five-match series in Harare. He was not part of the T20 World Cup squad in the USA and the Caribbean.

For the major part of the series, India played as many as four openers in the playing eleven and all of them did well including Gill, Jaiswal, Abhishek Sharma and Rituraj Gaikwad.

Gill captained India's second string team and played as an opener in all the five matches with Jaiswal joining him at the top from the third game onwards.

For the first two games, he opened with Punjab teammate Abhishek Sharma who scored a hundred and a fifty in his debut series. Among the four openers, Gill had the lowest strike rate, 125.92, compared to Jaiswal's 165.88, Gaikwad's 158.33 and Abhishek's 174.64.

"It's a good thing that everyone's performing. It shows that everyone is hungry and nobody is ready to take it easy. For any country or board, that's always a good thing," said Gill on Sunday referring to the openers.

Following the retirement of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli from T20Is, the selectors will have a problem of plenty when it comes to picking the openers for the Sri Lanka series.

"Anyone who got the

opportunity grabbed it with both hands. The openers to spinners, everyone made a mark and I think the selectors have now seen everything and it's up to them to name the squad for the next series," he said after India's 4-1 series win over Zimbabwe.

On captaining the team through the series, Gill said he enjoyed every bit of the challenge.

"One thing about captaincy I feel is how much confidence you can show in your players. I try to do that and make them believe that if you try and execute the plans, the results will always follow," Gill said.

"After losing the first match, we were under a bit of pressure. It's not easy to play back to back games and the series was planned in a way that there were two back-to-back games, a couple of days rest and then again back-to-back games.

"It's never easy playing a series like that but I think the way we came back after losing the first T20I was really remarkable." India bounced back to win the series 4-1 after losing the opener.

"Seeing everyone hungry and so quickly adapting to the situation and assessing the conditions was truly spectacular to watch," said Gill. With the ball moving around in the powerplay, the opener thought it was important to be a little cautious early in the innings.

"I think, as per the conditions of the wicket, there were some challenging conditions, especially in the powerplay, the ball was always doing something or the other. As an opening batter, my focus was to see out 4-5 overs and not concede any wicket," he added.

Our planning is that he will not be there in Pakistan: Bailey on Warner in Champions Trophy

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian national selector George Bailey has said that the national team plans to move on from the recently-retired David Warner despite the southpaw's desire to be considered for the Champions Trophy in Pakistan next year.

The 37-year-old Warner retired from international cricket following the T20 World Cup in the Americas last month, where the Aussies failed to progress beyond the Super 8 stage. However, he had insisted that he will keep the door open for a return for the Champions Trophy, a One-Day International format ICC event.

"Our understanding is that David is retired, and [he] should be commended on what has been an incredible career across all three formats. Certainly, our planning is that he won't be there in Pakistan," Bailey was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Warner had a decent run during the T20 World Cup, finishing as the side's second-highest run-scorer, after Travis Head.

On his remarks on making a comeback during the Champions Trophy, Bailey said that Warner might be "stirring the pot",



with the team planning "to transition to some different players".

"You never know when Bull's joking...think he's just stirring the pot a bit. He's had a wonderful career, can't celebrate it enough, and think as time goes

by, his legacy of what he has done for Australia and we reflect back on that, the legend of a player is only going to continue to grow," added Bailey.

"But, as far as this team goes and the journey to transition to some different players, in his case across all three formats, it's going to be exciting."

The Australians will have a young squad during their upcoming tour of the United Kingdom, which includes limited-overs meetings against Scotland and England.

With the likes of Matthew Wade, Mitchell Starc and Glenn Maxwell missing out, Bailey said the Kangaroos might see a more youthful squad going forward, with an eye on the next T20 World Cup in 2026.

"I don't think there's anyone who's not there that we've put a line through permanently besides David (Warner). This is the way we are going with this squad," he continued.

The next T20 World Cup is 2026, so I imagine there may be some more changes than what we are seeing in this squad. But specifically, to those guys (Starc and Maxwell), no we haven't had any conversations about where they think their T20 journey may finish.

Rohit says he will continue to play Tests and ODIs at least for a while



PTI ■ DALLAS (USA)

India captain Rohit Sharma says he will continue to play Test and ODI cricket "at least for a while" after ending his T20 international career with a World Cup win last month. Rohit has been on a break since the title win in the West Indies and is set to miss the limited-overs tour of Sri Lanka later this month, which includes three ODIs.

"I just said it. I don't look that far ahead. So clearly, you will be seeing me play at least for a while," the 37-year-old said at an event here on Sunday night.

His statement was reiteration of a position he made clear after announcing his T20 retirement after the final in the West Indies in which India defeated South Africa by seven runs.

Earlier this month, BCCI secretary Jay Shah had confirmed that Rohit will captain India in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle and the Champions Trophy next year in February-March.

Rohit had led India in the 2022 T20 World Cup where the team was ousted in the semifinals by eventual champions England.

A year later, India reached the final of the 50-over World Cup at home under his leadership, but succumbed to Australia in the summit clash at Ahmedabad.

Rohit left T20Is with 4231 runs from 159 matches, having made five hundreds and 32 fifties.



Cummins to miss Australia's limited-overs cricket tour to England and Scotland

AP ■ MELBOURNE

World Cup-winning skipper Pat Cummins will be rested for Australia's upcoming limited-overs tour to Britain and Mitchell Starc will miss the Twenty20 portion of the trip as part of a workload management program.

Australia is scheduled to play three T20s against Scotland and five one-day internationals against England in September. Cricket Australia said Cummins' absence was part of a "pre-planned, long-term load management strategy" as part of preparations for the Champions Trophy next year.

Mitchell Marsh, who led Australia at the recent T20 World Cup in the United States and Caribbean, will be captain for the tour. Veteran opener David Warner has retired and wicketkeeper Matthew Wade wasn't selected, with selectors looking at the future.

Young batter Jake Fraser-McGurk was included in both the ODI and T20 squads after being a designated traveling reserve for the T20 World Cup. "This tour gives us a great opportunity to bring in some new players in the absence of David Warner and Matthew Wade, as well as giving some senior players time to prepare for the home summer and a busy first half of next year," George

Bailey, Australia's selection chairman, said.

The likes of Fraser-McGurk, Spencer Johnson, Xavier Bartlett and Aaron Hardie "are exciting prospects to join the likes of Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis and Josh Inglis in the white ball setup," Bailey said. "With the Champions Trophy next year... There has been a lot of planning invested into these next six months."

"That has included gradual integration of new players into our white ball squads who have earned international opportunities via excellent form."

Australia is the World Cup champion in the 50-over format and holder of the World Test Championship title, but didn't reach the semifinals of the T20 World Cup. **T20 squad:** Mitch Marsh (captain), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Cameron Green, Aaron Hardie, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa. **ODI squad:** Mitch Marsh (captain), Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Adam Zampa.

Mental conditioning camp ahead of Paris Olympics will help India handle pressure better: Abhishek

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian men's hockey team forward Abhishek feels the mental conditioning camp the players underwent at renowned adventurer Mike Horn's base in Switzerland ahead of the Paris Olympics has helped them prepare for high-pressure situations.

The Indian team has completed a three-day mental conditioning camp at Horn's base and are slated to play a

few practice matches in the Netherlands before making their way to Paris Games. The expectations from the team will be high after India's bronze medal win at Tokyo Olympics. India will start their Paris Olympics campaign against New Zealand in their first Pool B match.

"After months of focusing on the physical aspect of the game, this camp is exactly what we needed," Abhishek said in a Hockey India release.

"The team has been spending time



connecting on and off the field, improving our bond and learning to handle high-pressure situations better," he said.

Abhishek, who has played 74 matches for India since his international debut in 2022, is set for his maiden appearance at the Olympics. "Ever since I was 14, it has been my dream to play for India in the Olympics." Abhishek asserted that he is someone who doesn't buckle under pressure. "The pressure in big tournaments

doesn't deter me or change my approach. I just try to execute on the pitch," he said.

For Abhishek, playing for India in the Olympics will be an achievement which is far beyond what his family had thought.

"When I started doing well in hockey, the most we expected was a government job. Seeing me reach this level is thrilling for them. My brother, especially, has always been my biggest supporter," he said.

Indian cricket has lot of depth but transition should be gradual: Vikram Rathour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Outgoing batting coach Vikram Rathour knows that a tough transition period awaits India in the near future but having worked with the available talent pool, he feels the side is well-equipped to handle the phase provided it unfolds in a "controlled and gradual manner".

While Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will still play ODIs and Tests for now, India will have to grapple with the transition phase in another couple of years when they move towards the last phase of their respective careers.

"It is never going to be easy to replace people of Rohit and Virat's calibre," Rathour, also a former selector, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"The recently-concluded series against Zimbabwe (on Sunday) gave us some glimpse into how the T20 team will look like in future. But we still have a few years in Test and ODI cricket to get to that point," said one of the key members of Rahul Dravid's coaching team. Having served as both national

selector and one of the coaches of the senior team, Rathour has an inside view of Indian cricket's talent pool and he finds it reassuring.

"I won't be too concerned about it. We have a lot of depth in Indian cricket. There are lots of very talented and skilful players who are coming through the system. The only thing we need to make sure is the transition is done in a controlled manner. It needs to be gradual.

He feels that by the time, Rohit and Kohli bid adieu to all formats, the younger stars would be well-settled, forming the nucleus for the next 10 years.

"I am hoping that by then, players like Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel to name a few, would establish themselves and will make the transition smooth. "In ODIs also, we have experienced players like Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya to take over," Rathour said in a confident analysis. Just as Kohli and Rohit carried



India's batting on their shoulders for more than a decade, the next decade could well belong to Gill and Jaiswal. "There are many exciting players coming through but these two are equipped to play all three formats for a long time. They are going to be the

backbone of Indian batting in years to come," the former Punjab skipper said.

Rathour was a good sounding board for Dravid in the last three years and when he says that Rinku Singh would make a good Test batter, the statement does carry weight.

"When I see him (Rinku) bat in nets, I can't find any technical reasons why Rinku cannot be a successful Test batter. I understand he has made his name as a terrific finisher in T20 cricket but if you look at his first-class record, he is averaging in high 50s.

"He (Rinku) is also blessed with a very calm temperament. So all these factors indicate that if given an opportunity, he can develop into a Test cricketer," Rathour said.

"ALWAYS TOLD VIRAT TO BELIEVE IN HIS METHODS": One question that Rathour would face at every second press conference during his tenure was Kohli's extended lean patch after the 2019 World Cup and he maintained it was a "phase that everyone has to go through."

"There were no technical issues that we worked on specifically during this phase. The constant messaging to him was to keep working hard and believe in his methods. Eventually he came back stronger and an even better player," he said. **RAHUL GAVE US SPACE**

AND HONEST FEEDBACK" Rathour and Dravid made their Test debuts in the same series against England in 1996 and have played against each other in domestic cricket even before that.

A three-decade relationship helped when they came together as back-room staff.

"Rahul is the best coach that I have worked with, who gives you lots of space to work, is open to suggestions and will provide you an honest feedback. "One of the first discussions we had was about changing the batting template in T20 cricket. We agreed that we needed to bring in more intent and aggression in our batting approach," he revealed. Rathour said a case in point was Axar Patel, who fixed their problem of a decent batting option at number eight. "That made a massive difference and gave the batters in top order lot more freedom to bat."

Axar was always a good batter and all he needed was opportunity to express himself fearlessly with an "uncomplicated technique".