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A NEW DAWN IN TIBETAN DIPLOMACY

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NORTH KOREA TEST-LAUNCHES TWO BALLISTIC MISSILES

MONEY 10

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OPPOSITION FINDS VOICE IN PARLIAMENT

Rahul debuts as LoP Government returns fire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties, led by Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha and Mallikarjun Kharge in the Rajya Sabha, fired a salvo at the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is in his third tenure, by "provoking" and then "prompting" the top Cabinet Ministers from the BJP, including Modi, Amit Shah, and Rajnath Singh, to respond and retort to the statements made by Congress leaders in Parliament.

Amid several rounds of interruptions, references to the Rule Books, Parliamentary conventions etc, a brief 'clash' between Speaker Om Birla and Rahul and a few Opposition leaders was also observed apparently catapulting a tough Opposition to resonate in Parliament after a hiatus of one decade.

In his maiden speech as LoP in Lok Sabha, Rahul triggered a row when he said those who call themselves Hindus are engaged in "violence and hate" round the clock.

Rahul said leaders of the ruling party are not Hindus as they engage in "violence and hate" round the clock, drawing massive protests from the Treasury Benches. He, however, hit back at



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha during ongoing Parliament Session, in New Delhi, on Monday PTI

saying he was speaking about the BJP and neither the ruling party nor the RSS nor Modi represents the entire Hindu society. "It is not just one religion that talks about courage. In fact, all our religions talk about courage," Rahul said in his debut speech as the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha that was watched by his mother Sonia Gandhi and sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from the visitors' gallery. Holding up pictures of Lord Shiva, Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ, he referred to Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism and

Jainism to underline the importance of fearlessness. As Rahul held up a picture of Lord Shiva, Speaker Om Birla reminded him that rules do not allow displaying placards in the House. "Shivji says daro mat, daro mat, shows the abhaya mudra (the right hand held upright with the palm facing outwards), talks about ahimsa, but those who call themselves Hindus indulge in hatred, violence and untruths round the clock," Rahul said, pointing towards the BJP MPs. In his one hour 40 minutes

speech Rahul accused the BJP of launching "systematic attacks" on the Constitution and the fundamental idea of India, noting that millions of people have resisted the ideas proposed by the ruling party. Rahul also claimed that the Armed forces know that Agniveer was Modi's brainchild, prompting Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to accuse the Leader of Opposition of misleading the House. He also hit out at the Centre over the situation in Manipur, alleging that it has pushed the northeastern State into a civil war.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed "serious" the remarks made by Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, by calling the entire Hindu society violent and he, along with Home Minister Amit Shah and other Ministers, demanded an apology from the Congress leader. Intervening during Rahul's speech, Modi said, "This issue is very serious. Calling the entire Hindu community violent is a serious issue." Besides Modi, who intervened twice, at least five Cabinet Ministers also interjected during Rahul's speech with Shah demanding his apology for painting the Hindu community as violent. The second intervention by Modi came when Rahul alleged that Ministers do not greet him due to the fear of Modi, the Prime Minister said democracy and the Constitution have taught him to take the Leader of Opposition seriously. Shah said the ruckus created by the Opposition cannot drown the fact that the words — "those who call themselves Hindus indulge in violence" — were used in the House. Shah spoke of the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks in the Lok Sabha during ongoing Parliament Session, in New Delhi, on Monday PTI

Emergency and 1984 anti-Sikhs riots to hit back at Rahul, saying he has no right to talk about non-violence when the Congress had spread "ideological terror" in the country. Shah said Rahul insulted "crores of Hindus" by saying that Hindus commit violence, lie and spread hatred. "He should apologise for this," the Home Minister demanded. Union Ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw and Kiren Rijiju accused Rahul of denigrating the responsible position of the Leader of Opposition with his "extremely

irresponsible" speech in the Lok Sabha. They also accused the Congress leader of inflicting "grave insult" on the Hindus by allegedly linking them with violence and spreading untruth. Rijiju said the ruling BJP has challenged many of the claims made by Rahul in his speech in the Lok Sabha and has sought action from the Speaker. He will have to substantiate or tender an apology, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister said slamming his allegations on Agnipath scheme and compensation

for the residents of Ayodhya during development projects there. BJP Rajya Sabha member Sudhanshu Trivedi said the Congress has a history of insulting Hindus, as he cited former home ministers P Chidambaram and Sushil Kumar Shinde's alleged terrorism barbs for the religion. Union Health Minister and BJP president JP Nadra also lambasted Rahul, accusing him of combining lies and hatred in his speech. "It was a worst show by Rahul on his first day. Third time fail LoP has a knack for agitated, flawed logic. His speech today has shown that neither has he understood the mandate of 2024 (his third successive loss) nor does he have any humility," Nadra said. Slamming Rahul for his remarks, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy said democracy will remain intact and there will also be peace "so long as Hindus are in majority" in the country. Union Minister Krishan Pal Gurjar flayed Rahul for his remarks and said the Leader of Opposition only made "baseless remarks" in his speech and did not give any "positive suggestion" in the House.



World Cup team stranded in Barbados

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Indian cricket fans might have to wait a little longer to see their T20 World Cup-winning heroes back in the country as the Rohit Sharma-led side's travel plans have been impacted by a hurricane here.

Reports said that hurricane Beryl, originating in the Atlantic, had intensified with maximum sustained winds of 210 kmph. The Category 4 hurricane was about 570km east-southeast of Barbados and there are reports that the airport in Bridgetown will shut in the evening. The Indian team was supposed to take an Emirates flight from New York via Dubai. A source told PTI that the plan now is to fly the team back to India on a charter flight. "The team was supposed to leave from here (Bridgetown) to New York and then reach India via Dubai. But now the plan is to get a charter flight straight from here to Delhi.

A meeting with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also being considered," a source said. The Indian contingent, including support staff, families, and officials, consists of about 70 members.

India had ended their 11-year wait for an ICC trophy on Saturday, overcoming South Africa by seven runs in a thrilling contest to win the T20 World Cup for the second time.

Home Minister Amit Shah allays fears

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As the new criminal laws came into force on Monday amid apprehensions, Home Minister Amit Shah allayed fears regarding them asserting that the new laws have ended the era of British laws in India, converting the criminal justice system into 'completely Swadeshi'.

The new law prioritises the provisions of justice in contrast to the colonial-era law that focused primarily on penal action, the Home Minister claimed. "Instead of 'dand', it is now 'nyay'; instead of delay, there will be speedy trial and speedy justice. Earlier, only the rights of the police were protected but now, rights of victims and complainants will be protected too," Shah said. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) came into effect on Monday. The new laws have replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

Addressing a Press conference in the Parliament premises, Shah said, "First of all, I would like to congratulate the people of the country that about 77 years after Independence, our criminal justice system is becoming completely 'Swadeshi'.

"This will function on Indian

ethos. After 75 years, these laws were contemplated upon and as these laws have gone into effect from today, colonial laws stand scrapped, and laws made in the Indian Parliament are being brought into practice," he said. The Home Minister said justice would be delivered up to the level of the Supreme Court in all cases within three years of the registration of an FIR under the new criminal laws. "The new laws brought in a modern justice system, incorporating provisions such as Zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, summons served through electronic modes such as SMS and mandatory videography of crime scenes for all heinous crimes," he said. He said the new statutes were made more sensitive by adding a chapter on crimes against children and women and the inquiry report in such cases were to be filed within seven days. Shah said, according to the new laws, judgment in criminal cases had to be delivered within 45 days of completion of trial and charges must be framed within 60 days of first hearing. The Home Minister said the laws would be applicable to cases occurring on or after July 1, 2024. Shah said the first case under the new laws was about a motorcycle theft registered in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior at 10



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks in the Lok Sabha during ongoing Parliament session, in New Delhi, on Monday PTI

minutes past midnight. He also said the police dismissed the case filed against a street vendor for selling water and tobacco products from a cart that allegedly obstructed a public way in central Delhi's Kamala Market after an investigation. Setting aside apprehensions regarding the new criminal laws, Shah said that new laws do not give more powers to police and remand period will remain only 15 days.

"In the first-60 day period, police can take custody for 15 days any time," he said, adding that in the next 3/4 years, the entire system would get an uplift. Shah also said the issue of bringing sexual crimes against men will be discussed since a Supreme Court verdict has mentioned this. On terrorism, Shah said it has been defined separately in the BNS "as we have a zero-terror policy".

"There are some instances," he recalled, "where conspiracies are hatched outside the country as was a bomb blast which occurred when he was Gujarat Home Minister. "All conspirators walked free as terror was not defined." Shah also rejected amid protests Opposition's criticism that the new criminal laws were a "cut, copy, paste" job and were rushed through without adequate discussion or debate. He said misinformation was being spread in this regard. "We have been consulting on the new laws for four years. I have attended 118 consultative meetings. And in Parliament, there was a 9.29-hour debate in the Lok Sabha, 6.7-hour in Rajya Sabha on the new laws...34 members in Lok Sabha and 26 in Rajya Sabha participated [in the debate]," Shah said. The Home Minister said organised crime, acts of terrorism and mob lynching had been defined, sedition was replaced with treason and video recording of all search and seizures made mandatory. "A new provision has been added for the cases where physical relations have been established after giving false promise of marriage and statement of rape victims will be recorded by a woman police officer in presence of her guardian," he said.

NEET toppers tally down

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency announced the revised rank list for the medical entrance exam NEET-UG on Monday.

The revised list was announced after a retest was conducted for candidates who were earlier awarded grace marks to compensate for loss of time as the exam on May 5 started late at six centres.

For the retest conducted at seven centres on June 23 following a Supreme Court order, 48 per cent of the 1,563 candidates did not appear. NTA officials reported that 813 of the 1,563 candidates appeared for the retest while the others opted for the marks without the grace.

Centre-wise, Chandigarh — which had just two candidates — registered zero attendance. The under-scanner Jhajjar centre registered 58 per cent attendance, with 287 of the 494 candidates taking the retest.

Allegations arose that the grace marks inflated scores, leading to six candidates from a single Haryana centre achieving a perfect 720, along with 61 others. Consequently, the top court ordered the cancellation of the grace marks and provided an option for a retest.

"At least 52 per cent — 813 out of 1,563 candidates — appeared for the retest. No candidates appeared in Chandigarh while the numbers were 291 from Chhattisgarh, one from Gujarat, 287 from Haryana, and 234 from Meghalaya," a senior NTA official earlier said.

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) was held on May 5 across 4,750 centres, with approximately 24 lakh candidates appearing for it. Initially expected on June 14, the results were announced on June 4 due to early completion of answer sheet evaluations.

Delhi IGI canopy fall impacts 22,000 fliers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the canopy collapse at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), the Ministry of Civil Aviation shared data saying the incident impacted more than 22,000 passengers of IndiGo and SpiceJet.

Around 21,690 passengers of IndiGo and around 925 passengers of SpiceJet were affected.

The Ministry said IndiGo airline provided alternate flights to 12,194 passengers while refunded airfare to 9,431 passengers. SpiceJet

provided alternate arrangements to 250 passengers. Terminal 1 was used for domestic flight operations by IndiGo and SpiceJet.

Sources said 72 flights of IndiGo have been shifted from T1 to T2 and T3, and 17 flights to T3, adding that all the flights are operational. The expanded T1, which had its capacity increased to handle 40 million passengers from the earlier 17 million, is yet to become fully operational.

According to the sources, it might be a few months before operations resume at T1. Union Minister of Civil

Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu on Monday visited the Airport Operations Control Centre (AOCC) at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) and held a meeting with senior officials from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, DGCA, BCAS, DIAL, and airline operators where he took stock of the operations. The meeting focused on reviewing current operations and passenger handling following the transition of flights from Terminal 1 to Terminals 2 and 3. According to the Ministry, a comprehensive assessment was conducted, involving



Restoration and relief work underway at the Terminal-1 of the IGI Airport where a canopy collapsed amid heavy rain in New Delhi PTI

detailed discussions on ensuring smooth functioning and deploying additional manpower to manage increased passenger flow. Minister Naidu advised all stakeholders to maintain rigorous standards to ensure

seamless operations and prioritise passenger safety. All flights from T1 have been shifted to Terminal 2 (T2) and Terminal 3 (T3), and all of them were being operated. As per an update provided by the ministry on Monday, the war rooms to help passengers have been activated and close coordination between DIAL and airlines is being facilitated. "All SpiceJet flights to/from Delhi from 1st July till 7th July, 24 will operate from Terminal 3, Delhi Airport. Necessary information has been communicated to all the passengers on their registered contact details (SMS/Email),"

the airline said in a post on X on Sunday. According to officials, structural engineers from IIT Delhi, engaged by the Civil Aviation Ministry, are expected to complete an independent assessment of the roof collapse at Delhi airport's T1 in a month's time. After a thorough assessment of the findings and taking into consideration other aspects, decision will be taken on restarting operations at the terminal. On June 28, a canopy at the old departure forecourt of T1 partially collapsed amid heavy rains resulting in the death of

a person and injuries to at least six people. Following the incident, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said structural engineers from IIT Delhi have been asked to immediately assess the partial collapse of the canopy. The official said the ministry was engaging structural engineers from IIT Delhi to do an independent assessment of roof collapse incident at T1 and they were expected to complete the assessment in one month. After the findings come in, a decision will be taken about recommencing operations at T1, the official added.

CM promises alternative irrigation amid drought like situation



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Amid growing concerns over the drought situation in Kolhan, Chief Minister Soren has promised residents that alternative irrigation arrangements will be swiftly implemented in Rajnagar block, Seraikela Kharsawan and surrounding areas. Addressing the media during his two-day visit to his home district, Soren emphasized the urgency of expediting the plan to deliver water directly from the river to the fields through an underground pipeline sys-

tem. Chief Minister Soren arrived in Jilingoda, Seraikela, for a two-day visit. While attending a private event on Monday, he took the opportunity to discuss the drought crisis with the media. Soren revealed that a comprehensive plan is in the works to tackle the drought in Jharkhand. This plan includes identifying several villages in Seraikela district and implementing an underground pipeline scheme to ensure timely water delivery to the fields without acquiring villagers' land. "The pipeline scheme will be executed efficiently and effectively, ensuring that the agricultural needs of the region are met," Soren stated. "Our aim is to complete this project without causing any disruption to the local communities."

Chief Minister Soren also addressed the implementation of a new law across the country starting July 1. He expressed confidence that the new legislation would significantly enhance law and order, making it stronger and more effective nationwide. "The implementation of this new law will bring about a more

robust and orderly system, benefitting the entire nation," Soren remarked. Following his engagements in Seraikela, Soren departed for Jamshedpur and subsequently flew to Ranchi by helicopter. The drought in Seraikela district has posed significant challenges to the local farmers, who rely heavily on consistent water supply for their crops. The alternative irrigation plan, which involves transporting water from the river to the fields through pipelines, is seen as a critical measure to mitigate the effects of the drought and support agricul-

tural productivity. The Chief Minister's visit and the proposed irrigation scheme have brought a glimmer of hope to the residents of Rajnagar block and surrounding areas. Farmers and local authorities are optimistic that these efforts will provide much-needed relief and ensure the sustainability of their agricultural practices during these trying times. As the drought situation persists, the implementation of innovative irrigation solutions and supportive policies will be crucial in addressing the water scarcity issues in

Seraikela and other affected regions. The Chief Minister's proactive approach and commitment to resolving these challenges highlight the government's dedication to improving the livelihoods of its citizens and ensuring food security. With the new law coming into effect from July 1, and the promise of enhanced irrigation systems, the people of Jharkhand can look forward to a future with better infrastructure and stronger governance, paving the way for sustained development and prosperity in the region.

BJP leader visits Asia's largest Amrita Hospital

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Social worker and BJP leader Amarpreet Singh Kale recently paid a visit to Asia's largest private hospital, Amrita Hospital in Faridabad. This visit left a lasting impression on Kale, who praised the institution for its unwavering dedication to serving the needy and providing world-class healthcare services. After meeting with Shri Nizamritananda Puri Ji Maharaj, the Administrative Director of Amrita Hospital, Kale discussed the potential of extending the hospital's services to patients from Jharkhand, opening new doors of possibilities for the region's underprivileged population.



hospital, they are greeted with a sense of tranquility and warmth. Security personnel and hospital staff welcome everyone with the phrase "Namah Shivay," reflecting the institution's ethos of compassion and service. The main building, with its gleaming floors and well-organized layout, does not resemble a typical hospital. Unlike other private hospitals in India, Amrita Hospital maintains a calm and orderly environment despite its large capacity, thanks to its thoughtful design and efficient management. Despite Jharkhand's 24-year history as an independent state, it still lacks world-class healthcare facilities. Residents often have to travel to other states for better medical treatment. Recognizing this gap, Amarpreet Singh Kale discussed the potential for establishing an Amrita Hospital in Jharkhand, aiming to provide accessible and comfortable treatment for the state's population at the Faridabad facility.

Located adjacent to Delhi, the newly built Amrita Hospital in Faridabad stands as a symbol of the health revolution in India. Spanning an impressive 135 acres, the hospital boasts a serene environment with lush greenery, clean gardens, and meticulously organized services. Signboards offering assis-

stance and directions are strategically placed, ensuring a seamless experience for visitors. This vast campus houses a 2,600-bed facility, including over 500 ICU-CCU beds, and provides world-class treatment for various ailments, including cancer. Additionally, the hospital offers training programs to enhance skills and supports thousands of self-help groups, contributing to the overall development of the community. From the moment visitors enter the

SAIL Chairman's Unique Initiative: 'Who Moved My Cheese' Distributed to Inspire Officers

R SHARMA : BOKARO

The unwavering enthusiasm and dedication of SAIL officers have played a pivotal role in the company's outstanding performance in recent years. Under the leadership of SAIL Chairman Amarendu Prakash, various initiatives have been launched to maintain and enhance this dedication. One such unique initiative is the distribution of the book "Who Moved My Cheese?" among SAIL officers. The objective of this initiative is to foster knowledge growth and sustain the officers' enthusiasm, promoting better teamwork and a positive outlook. SAIL management has distributed this book to all 10,200 officers in the organization. "Who Moved My Cheese? An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life," published on September 8, 1998, is a bestselling motivational business fable by Spencer Johnson. The book explores how individuals react to major changes in their work and personal lives, illustrating four typical reactions through the story of two mice and two "littlenpeople" in their quest for "cheese."

M.K. Dhan, COC BSL, praised the book highly after reading it, expressing confidence that it will illuminate the path for all officers, providing valuable insights and inspiration for dealing with change.



Doctors Day Celebrated at WellMark Hospital, Bokaro

PNS : BOKARO

WellMark Hospital recently celebrated Doctors Day, honoring the dedication and contributions of its medical professionals. The event was graced by the presence of several esteemed doctors and dignitaries, including Chairman Dr. Satish Kumar, Dr. R.N. Pradhan, Dr. Mukteshwar Rajjak, Dr. A.K. Agarwal, Dr. B.N. Karmakar, and Rajeev Singh from Mission Hospital, Durgapur. The celebration commenced with a warm welcome address by Chairman Dr. Satish Kumar, who emphasized the vital role that doctors play in society. He praised the unwavering commitment and relentless efforts of the medical staff, especially during challenging times such as the recent pandemic. Dr. R.N. Pradhan and Dr. Mukteshwar Rajjak shared their experiences and insights, highlighting the



importance of continuous learning and adaptation in the medical field. They also acknowledged the support of their colleagues and the hospital administration in achieving successful patient outcomes. Rajeev Singh from Mission Hospital, Durgapur, commended WellMark Hospital's commitment to excellence and shared best practices from his institution. His presence underscored the importance of inter-hospital cooperation and knowledge exchange in enhancing healthcare services.

The event concluded with a round of applause and heartfelt thanks to all the doctors for their relentless dedication to patient care. A special award ceremony was held to recognize outstanding contributions by individual doctors, followed by a luncheon where attendees had the opportunity to network and discuss future collaborations. Overall, the Doctors Day celebration at WellMark Hospital was a resounding success, reinforcing the spirit of unity and commitment among the medical community in Bokaro.

New DDC Bokaro assumes Office

PNS : BOKARO

Girija Shankar Prasad assumed his role as the 27th Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC) of the district on Monday. The outgoing DDC, Sandeep Kumar, handed over the charge to him at the Collectorate office. Prior to this, Girija Shankar Prasad served as the Joint Secretary in the Excise and Prohibition Department, Jharkhand, Ranchi. Recently, the Department of Personnel, Administrative Reforms, and Official Language issued a notification transferring the outgoing DDC, Sandeep Kumar, to the position of Director of Sports,

Tourism, Art, Culture, and Youth Affairs Department, Jharkhand, Ranchi. The ceremony was attended by several notable officials including DPLR Menka, Additional Collector Md. Mumtaz Ansari, In-charge Officer of the Legal Branch Prabhas Dutta, District Sports Officer Hemlata, District Supply Officer Shalini Khalkho, District Engineer Hari Das, District Disaster Management Officer Shakti Kumar, Assistant Public Relations Officer Avinash Kumar Singh, DRDA's Pankaj Dubey, Manikchandra Prajapati, and other DRDA staff members.



Rotary Bokaro hosts vocational and club awards ceremony

PNS : BOKARO

On Saturday night, Rotary Club of Bokaro held its final event of the Rotary year 2023-24, the 'Vocational and Club Awards' ceremony, at the Paul Harris Auditorium. The event recognized outstanding contributions to the community. Doctors and paramedical staff from Muskaan Hospital, Chas, were honored for their exemplary service during the club-organized free medical camp. A total of 10 doctors and 29 paramedical staff were awarded mementos and certificates, and were declared 'Friends of Rotary'. In addition, the club honored three other individuals for their outstanding service to society. Mohan Azad, who conducts drawing and painting classes in the adopted village of Ulgora, was recognized. Three homeopathic doctors, Dr. Paresh Chaudhary Mahto, who provides services at the club's free homeopathy clinic every



Sunday, and Dr. Nikhil Pathak and Dr. Poonam, who contribute to the free homeopathic clinic at the Gurdwara in Chas, were also honored. The club recognized 14 members for their dedicated service in 2023-24. Eleven members were named 'Exemplary Rotarians', including Rtn. (Dr.) Professor Anil Trehan, Rtn. Anil Tripathi, Rtn. Ashok Jain, Rtn. Hardeep Singh, Rtn. Dr. John Liu, Rtn. PDG Mahesh Kejrwal, Rtn. Dr. Rajdeep, Rtn. Rani Agarwal, Rtn. Dr. R.N. Pradhan, Rtn. Sandhya Raj, and Rtn. Dr. S.C. Munshi. Additionally, Rtn. Ashok

Taneja, Rtn. Chandrima Ray, and Rtn. Pradeep Narayan received the most coveted 'Rotarian of the Year' award amidst resounding applause. Outgoing President Rtn. Ghanshyam Das expressed heartfelt thanks to all members for their support and cooperation throughout the year. The awards ceremony was successfully conducted by Rtn. Pradeep Narayan, whose unique style was highly appreciated. The event concluded with a musical Antakshari led by Rtn. Chandrima Ray, with participation from Rotary Bokaro Midtown couples and Rotary Chas members. The enthusiastic applause from the audience boosted the morale of the participants. With this event, the Rotary year 2023-24 came to an end worldwide. From July 1, Rtn. Mahesh Gupta, a prominent businessman, will take over as the President of Rotary Bokaro for the year 2024-25.

Doctors Day celebration at Bokaro General Hospital

PNS : BOKARO

At Bokaro General Hospital, a celebration for Doctors Day was organized, honoring the invaluable contributions of medical professionals to society. The event was graced by several esteemed doctors, including Dr. Anil Agrawal, Dr. Santosh Choubey, Dr. Rahul Kumar, Dr. Sunil Kumar, Dr. Priyanka, Dr. Amit Anand, Dr. Jayshree Reddy, Dr. Saheli, Dr. Tanoy, Dr. Subhasis, Dr. Gaurav, Dr. Avinash, Dr. Alok, Dr. Soumya, Dr. Kapil, Dr. Naveen, and Rajeev Singh from Mission Hospital, Durgapur. The celebration featured discussions highlighting the critical role doctors play in healthcare. Their dedication, especially during challenging times, was commended, and the event served as a platform to express gratitude for their tireless efforts in ensuring the well-being of patients.



Giridih cops lodge 3 FIRs on first day of enactment of new criminal laws

PRAVIN K MISHRA : GIRIDIH

Giridih district's first FIR under the new criminal laws was lodged against an unknown truck driver on Monday. The Nimiyaghat police have lodged an FIR (bearing no. 56 / 2024, dated 01-07-2024) under section 106 and 281 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023. The district police have lodged, altogether, three FIRs on the very first day of enactment of the new criminal laws - the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam. The first FIR was lodged today wee-hours in Nimiyaghat police station, others were lodged in Bagodar and Bengabad. According to the FIR, "The accused truck driver had hit a motorcycle near Khakikala village under Nimiyaghat police station of the district. The incident took place at around 6 pm, when one, Kishori Mahto, along with his 20-year-old son, Prakash Kumar Mahto, was on his way towards Bermo. Meanwhile, a speedy truck coming from the opposite direction lost his control and struck the bike, though the rider, Kishori Mahto received minor injuries, his son died on the spot. Giridih Superintendent of Police, Deepak Kumar Sharma, said that the new laws would bring transparency in all respects. "Besides, making the system easier for the people, especially the victims or the informants, the new laws would help the police authorities, Investing Officer or the agencies in reaching out to the suspects and in many other ways". "As per the new laws, the police authority will provide required information to all the concerned, particularly the informant, regarding his/her cases. Even they would get instant information through text messages", Sharma told the Pioneer. The IPC 1860 has been replaced with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, the CrPC1973 has been replaced with Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and the Indian Evidence Act has been replaced with the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023.

ECONOMICS OF FREEBIES AND POLITICS OF GENEROSITY



PROF. ANANT KUMAR

It is assumed that the State should be generous and benevolent. In recent years, the state and political leaders have become overly generous to retain their vote banks and popularity. The Central and State governments keep announcing various welfare programmes and freebies. However, they fail to understand the need and consequences of such freebies.

It is a good step and nothing wrong with being eleemosynary for those in need. However, being generous to those who are well-off and able to earn must be reviewed, as it places an unintended burden on the state exchequer. The states should follow the principle of equity in showering state expenditure. In recent years, distributing revids (freebies) in the names of schemes and programmes to gather votes has become a culture

among political parties. The political parties and their leader do not understand the consequences on the country's economy and society. They do not understand this culture of freebies is detrimental to the country's development and progress. At times, the lust for power among politicians overrides policymakers' and bureaucrats' suggestions against such freebies. It is not new for political parties, politicians, and governments to promise voters free electricity, housing, health services, and other amenities. Nowadays, rations are free for BPL families, but over ninety percent of the village population avails of these benefits, regardless of need. Irrespective of those who need it and those who do not. Health services are free along with Ayushman Bharat coverage. Parents do not need to spend on children's education due to free books, uniforms, scholarships, mid-day meals, cycles, and more. Additionally, people receive toilets under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, housing from schemes like PMAY, two hundred units of free or subsidized electricity, cooking gas, and many other subsidized or free services and amenities. Different types of pensions are available for the young, the elderly, and widows. Recently, the Jharkhand government announced

pensions for tribal people over age fifty and INR 1000 per month for all women aged twenty-five and above. Farmers are getting INR 6000 per annum in their accounts. Interestingly, many of these benefits are availed by those who do not need them. Getting a BPL card or other documents to avail of such schemes is not difficult due to institutionalized corruption and nexus between the parties involved. Such schemes and freebies are making a substantial portion of the population non-productive, unemployed, and dependent on the state. It is becoming difficult to find labour for agriculture and other activities because people are receiving more than enough from the state freebies. People, especially the youth, need to be wary of this culture of freebies. It has become a menace, and no political party or leader dares to stop it. Political leaders and policymakers fail to understand that nothing is free. Someone pays for their promises and those who are paying should have their voice. Paying taxes is not a charity, and political leaders should spend taxpayers' money judiciously in favour of the state and citizens, rather than for political mileage and retaining power. Undoubtedly, such overgenerosity has helped political leaders in retaining power and position. This has become a

tool to win elections over time. Policymakers should understand that this has far-reaching negative consequences for the state and its citizens. This showering of wealth and injudicious distribution has led to the unavailability of labour in rural areas. When people's aspirations are low and most of their needs are met by the state, they are less likely to work. There are examples of economies failure in the long run due to such practices. It is time to revisit these freebie policies and ensure that benefits reach only those who need them. Government freebies result in high taxes and low productivity, causing citizen dependency and financial disruption. Continuing the freebie culture will disempower the people and impoverish the state, leading to debt spirals and economic damage. The state should invest in development projects like infrastructure and employment generation, which will provide long-term economic benefits to the state and its citizens, rather than luring people with freebies. THE AUTHOR IS A PROFESSOR AT XAVIER INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SERVICE, RANCHI; THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE PERSONAL. EMAIL: PANDEYANANT@HOTMAIL.COM. VIEWS ARE PERSONAL.

BJP, INDIA Bloc spar over new laws

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As the new criminal laws came into force from Monday, the BJP said they are a symbol of India's progress and resilience. The Congress, however, accused the government of getting them "forcibly" passed in Parliament after suspending 146 MPs and asserted that going forward, the INDIA bloc will not allow such "bulldozer justice" to prevail in the country's parliamentary system.

Defending the new laws, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said here they are a symbol of India's progress and resilience, positioning the country for a more just and secure future.

Responding to a question in a press conference, he said the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Indian Evidence Act, originating from 1860 and 1872, respectively, were outdated and ill-equipped to address contemporary issues.

"Today is a historic day in the annals of our free country, India. An evolving society needs laws that cater to its needs and demands, protecting its rights," he said.

Highlighting the comprehensive nature of the new legislation, he underscored several key changes. "In the earlier laws, terrorism had no definition, making it difficult for the prosecution and the police to file charges or prove a case. The new laws have defined terrorism," Bhatia said. This clarity, he said will strengthen India's resolve to eradicate terrorism.



Bhatia also emphasised the inclusion of mob lynching as a specific offence with the potential for death penalty. He also pointed out the special focus on the rights of women and children.

"There is a separate chapter for crimes against women and children, ensuring specificity and deterring criminals from committing these crimes," the BJP spokesperson said.

The new laws also aim to expedite the delivery of justice, he added. "A judgment, if reserved in criminal cases, has to be delivered within 45 days," Bhatia said. He pointed out that this provision addresses delays caused by judicial retirements and reconstitution of benches, ensuring timely justice for all. Addressing broader societal implications, Bhatia said the

new laws are symbolic of the fact that a new, resilient India is ready to embrace laws duly enacted by our legislators. He positioned this legal transformation as part of a larger narrative of national progress and modernisation. Hitting out at the opposition, Bhatia said, "I am sure they have not even read the three laws, just like they hold the Constitution in their hand but don't care to read it." He asserted that the entire nation has come forward to embrace and welcome the new criminal laws.

Criticising the laws, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said in a social media post "After the political and moral shock in the elections, Modi ji and the BJP are pretending to respect the Constitution, but

the truth is that the three laws of the criminal justice system which are being implemented from today, were passed forcibly after suspension of 146 MPs."

"INDIA will no longer allow this 'bulldozer justice' to prevail in the parliamentary system," he asserted. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also took a swipe at the government after the first FIR was lodged under the new laws. "The first FIR has already been filed under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita 2023. It is by Delhi Police against a street vendor for obstruction, after he was earning his daily livelihood under a foot-over bridge of New Delhi Railway Station," Ramesh said. Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram also slammed

the government as the new criminal laws came into effect and said it was another case of "bulldozing" existing laws and replacing them with three new bills without adequate discussion and debate.

In a social media post, Chidambaram said, "90-99 per cent of the so-called new laws are a cut, copy and paste job. A task that could have been completed with a few amendments to the existing three laws has been turned into a wasteful exercise."

"Yes, there are a few improvements in the new laws and we have welcomed them. They could have been introduced as amendments. On the other hand, there are several retrograde provisions. Some changes are prima facie unconstitutional," he said.

MPs, who were members of the standing committee, pored over the provisions and wrote detailed dissent notes to the three bills, the senior leader said.

Chidambaram added the government did not rebut or answer any of the criticisms in the dissent notes and there was no worthwhile debate in Parliament. "Law scholars, bar associations, judges and lawyers have in numerous articles and seminars pointed out the grave deficiencies in the three new laws. No one in government has cared to answer the questions," he said.

"It is another case of bulldozing three existing laws and replace them with three new Bills without adequate discussion and debate," Chidambaram said.

The initial impact will be to throw the administration of criminal justice into disarray, he said. "In the medium term, numerous challenges to the laws will be instituted in various courts. In the long term, further changes must be made to the three laws to bring them in conformity with the Constitution and the modern principles of criminal jurisprudence," Chidambaram said. Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said the Congress' concern was that the bills were passed without discussion.

"Something as important and as far reaching as this. Many of us had called for an overhaul of the IPC but we wanted a discussion and the discussion never took place and that is something very regrettable in a democracy like ours," he told reporters outside Parliament.

Congress MP Manish Tewari hit out at the government over the issue, saying these three new criminal laws are pernicious in nature and draconian in their implementation. "They will throw a spanner in the works of the Indian criminal justice system. From today, two parallel systems will be in play. All those cases registered before June 30, 2024, midnight will be prosecuted under the old system and those cases registered after June 30, 2024, midnight will be prosecuted under the new system," he said.

"There are 3.4 crore pending cases and a bulk of them are criminal cases. So, there is going to be utter confusion," he said.

Opp MPs protest in Lok Sabha, allege misuse of agencies by Centre



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Several INDIA Bloc MPs staged a protest in Parliament premises on Monday against the alleged misuse of probe agencies by the government to "target" Opposition leaders. Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and several leaders of the INDIA Bloc, including those from the TMC and AAP, participated in the protest on the steps leading to the Makar Dwar in Parliament.

The Opposition leaders carried placards which read "stop misusing agencies to silence Opposition" and "BJP mein jao bhrashtachar ka licence pao (Join the BJP and get a licence for corruption)". AAP MP Raghav Chadha held a poster that showed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal standing behind bars. Opposition MPs raised slogans demanding release of three arrested ministers in West Bengal, and stopping

"misuse" of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejaswini Yadav, and against former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren.

"The whole INDIA bloc is united against the misuse of central agencies against opposition leaders," Congress leader Rajeev Shukla said.

The Opposition protest comes days after a court here sent Kejriwal to judicial custody till July 12 in a corruption case related to the alleged excise scam.

He was formally arrested by the CBI last week. Previously, he was arrested by the ED in a money-laundering case linked to the policy. He was recently granted bail by a trial court that was stayed by Delhi High Court. Hemant Soren was released on Friday after the state High Court granted him bail in a money laundering case, observing that he was not guilty, and there was no likelihood of the petitioner committing an offence on bail.

Modi praises healthcare heroes on Doctor's Day



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of Doctor's Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said his government is fully committed to improving the health infrastructure in India and ensuring doctors get the widespread respect they deserve.

July 1 is observed as the National Doctor's Day to commemorate Bidhan Chandra Roy, a renowned doctor who served as West Bengal Chief Minister too, and whose birth and death anniversary falls on this day.

In a social media post, Modi said, "Greetings on #DoctorsDay. This is a day to honour the incredible dedication and compassion of our healthcare heroes.

They can navigate the most challenging complexities with remarkable skill."

"Our Government is fully committed to improving the health infrastructure in India and ensuring doctors get the widespread respect they deserve," he said.

In social media post, the prime minister hailed chartered accountants for their "vital role" in shaping the country's economic landscape.

"Happy Chartered Accountants Day! CAs play a vital role in shaping our economic landscape. Their expertise and strategic insights are beneficial for businesses and individuals alike," Modi said.

"They also contribute significantly to economic growth and stability. They are equally integral to our financial well-being," he said.

Kharge seeks scrapping of Agniveer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Constitution and people of India are supreme and the Modi government has failed to implement various policies on ground and instead indulge in speeches, Leader of Opposition and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said on Monday. He also demanded scrapping of Agniveer scheme. In its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections 2024, the Congress has promised to scrap this new recruitment scheme and return to the older one where soldiers were recruited for 16 years of service.

Kharge also said the recent Lok Sabha elections was the first one to make the Constitution an issue. "Elections can only be conducted when there's a Constitution. Some people object to anyone even talking about the Constitution, but are okay with making it a poll issue," he said.

"And today, when we talk about democracy, there are provisions in the constitution like Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chairman, Deputy Chairman, but leaving that post vacant for five years, is this a democratic way?" Kharge asked in the Rajya Sabha.

"The Opposition was sidelined, while the post of the deputy speaker has been lying vacant (for the past five years)."



in the Upper House on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, he also said the third term of the NDA has seen examination paper leaks, terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, train accident, airport canopy collapse, bridge cave-ins and toll tax hike.

Taking potshots at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that last 10 years of his rule was just a trailer and 'picture abhi baaki hai', (last ten years was just a trailer, the real picture is yet to come) and said "How the PM's picture would be, we have been able to imagine in the last one month," Kharge quipped.

Listing out many recent incidents, Kharge pointed out that there have been examination paper leaks, cancellation of many examinations, train accident, three terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, leakages

Lt Gen Raja Subramani takes over as Vice Army Chief

Lt Gen Raja Subramani on Monday here assumed the appointment of the Vice Chief of Army Staff. The General Officer was tentatively appointing the appointment of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Central Command based at Lucknow. He was commissioned into the Garhwal Rifles in December 1985. He has graduated from the prestigious National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Military Academy (IMA). He is an alumnus of Joint Services Command Staff College, Bracknell (UK), and National Defence College (NDC), New Delhi.



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

He holds a Master of Arts Degree from King's College London and an M Phil in Defence Studies from Madras University. He has in his illustrious career spanning over 37 years served across a wide spectrum of conflict and terrain profiles and has tenanted a host of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments. The General Officer has insightful knowledge and a deep understanding of operational dynamics on both the Western and Northern Borders. Lt Gen Subramani has the distinction of commanding a battalion during 'Operation Rhino' in Assam, an infantry brigade along the international boundary with Pakistan and a 'Black Cat' division in North East India. He also commanded Uttar Bharat Area in 2020 and the premier Kharga Corps at Ambala. Lt Gen Subramani also held a number of key positions including that of a brigade major of a mountain brigade, assistant military secretary in the Military Secretary Branch, Colonel General Staff at headquarters Eastern Command, deputy director general of Military Intelligence in the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence and Brigadier General Staff in Eastern Command.

MEA: 2,639 Indian fishermen repatriated from Pakistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Pakistan on Monday exchanged the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said and added that 2,639 Indian fishermen and 71 civilian prisoners have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014 as a result of New Delhi's sustained efforts.

Under the provisions of the bilateral Agreement on Consular Access 2008, such lists are exchanged every year on January 1 and July 1, the MEA said in a statement. "India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody," it said.

India has shared the names of 366 civilian prisoners and 86 fishermen in its custody who are Pakistani or are believed-to-be-Pakistani. Similarly,



Pakistan has shared the names of 43 civilian prisoners and 211 fishermen in its custody who are Indian or are believed-to-be-Indian, the MEA added. The government of India has called for "early release and repatriation" of civilian prisoners and fishermen along with their boats and missing Indian defence personnel from Pakistan's custody, the ministry said.

triation of 185 Indian fishermen and civilian prisoners, who have completed their sentence.

In addition, Pakistan has been asked to provide immediate consular access to the 47 civilian prisoners and fishermen in Pakistan's custody, who are believed-to-be-Indian and have not been provided consular access so far," the statement said. Pakistan has been requested to ensure the safety, security and

welfare of all Indian and believed-to-be-Indian civilian prisoners and fishermen, pending their release and repatriation to India, it said. The MEA said India remains committed to addressing on priority all humanitarian matters, including those pertaining to prisoners and fishermen in each other's country.

"In this context, India has urged Pakistan to expedite the nationality verification process of 75 believed-to-be-Pakistani civilian prisoners and fishermen in India's custody, whose repatriation is pending for want of nationality confirmation from Pakistan," the statement said.

"As a result of sustained efforts by the government, 2,639 Indian fishermen and 71 Indian civilian prisoners have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014. This includes 478 Indian fishermen and 13 Indian civilian prisoners who have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2023 till date," it added.

Doctors turn junkyard into fun spot for kids with chronic diseases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an initiative that goes beyond medical treatment, a team of doctors has turned a once desolate junkyard in their hospital into a vibrant space filled with fun and frolics for young patients battling paediatric cancer and chronic illness like neurological, lung, liver and heart diseases.

Located within Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here, this transformation is more than just a physical renovation. Led by the visionary minds of Senior Paediatrician Dr Anil Sachdeva and Chairman Board of Management of the Hospital, Dr Ajay Swaroop, the Pediatrics department developed the corner where swings and slides offer more than mere recreation to the little patients.

Here, amidst the laughter and play, children find temporary respite from their medical challenges, fostering a conducive environment for faster recovery. Brainchild of the initiative, Dr Sachdeva and Dr



Swaroop talked about the need for such spaces which "are in supporting the emotional resilience of young patients." Beyond swings and slides, the park offers a therapeutic space designed to promote physical activity and nurture mental well-being. Here, amidst laughter and play, children find respite from medical challenges, fostering a path to faster recovery, they said.

"This endeavour not only provides a playground for physical activity but also fosters a healing environment that supports the mental well-being of these courageous children", elaborated Chairman Board

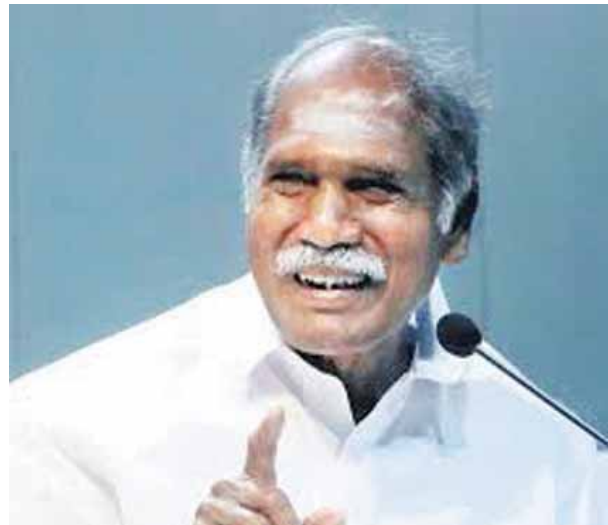
of Management Dr Swaroop. Children are able to relax and forget their medical issues leading to faster healing and recuperation, added Dr Sachdeva. The idea was to provide corners where such children on the healing path can momentarily escape their medical concerns, thus aiding in their recuperation and ensuring their overall well-being.

The park also provides a space for families to connect, feel a sense of community, and derive strength from their common experiences while navigating the emotional roller coaster that is caring for a sick child.

New criminal laws well designed to render justice: Pandy CM

PTI ■ PUDUCHERRY
Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy said that the three new criminal laws which came into force across the country on Monday are well-designed to curb crimes, particularly heinous crimes. The three new criminal laws are Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023. Addressing a special meeting of the Departments of Law and Police at the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College and Hospital here marking the launch of the three new criminal laws, Rangasamy said, "The territorial government is keen that there should be no room for crimes and more

particularly heinous crimes". Thanking the Central government for implementation of the new laws, the chief minister said that they are aimed at imposing deterrent and stringent punishment on the culprits and also ensuring justice to the victims of crimes. "People should feel safe and secure so that a peaceful society can be ensured," he said. Stating that Puducherry was becoming a tourist destination, the chief minister said that there was every need to protect law and order. The government was going ahead with ensuring a peaceful environment. He also said that seven fast track courts would come up soon in Puducherry. "Judicial officers and also



subordinate staff would be posted to man these courts," he said. The chief minister also released a handbook on the new laws and wanted its Tamil translation for the benefit of all. Home Minister A Namassivayam said that the

new laws were absolutely necessary and they were made by Indians for Indians, unlike the previous laws which were designed by the British during colonial rule. Law Minister K Lakshminarayanan said that the government was mulling appointment of a Director of Prosecution. Chief Secretary to the government Sharat Chauhan and senior police officials participated. An official source said that training has already been given to police personnel and others concerned on the three new laws in the union territory. The three new laws have replaced the old Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act.

3 killed, 1 injured as speeding SUV rams into car in Ahmedabad

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD
Three persons were killed and one was critically injured when a speeding Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) rams into another car in Gujarat's Ahmedabad city on Monday morning, police said. The accident took place at a 'T' junction on the Sardar Patel Ring Road at around 5 am, they said. Visuals showed beer cans in the SUV and some lying scattered near the car wreckage. The number plate of the SUV belonged to another car, sources said. The State Monitoring Cell (SMC), which keeps a watch on illegal liquor sale in Gujarat, denied reports that its team



was chasing the SUV. Deputy Commissioner of Police, Traffic (West), Neeta Desai said the SUV driver was in their "custody" and a probe was ordered to find out if he was speeding because of their involvement in any illegal activity. She said the SUV coming from the Vaishnodevi Circle hit the other car when the latter was taking a turn towards Rajpath Club Road.

The deceased have been identified as SUV occupant Om Prakash (37), the other car's driver Ajit Kathi (32) and its occupant Manish Bhatt (52), both residents of Viramgam town in Ahmedabad, she said. Om Prakash and the SUV's driver Rajendra Sahu, who was seriously injured, were residents of Rajasthan, she said. "The SUV going towards Bopal rams into another car, which was coming from Bopal side and taking a right turn towards the Rajpath Club Road. Two occupants of the car and one person in the SUV died on the spot. The SUV's driver was undergoing treatment at a hospital," said Desai.

Manipur CM denies report on resignation, asks media not to spread rumours

PTI ■ IMPHAL
Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Monday described a report on his resignation as unfounded and asked the media not to spread rumours. Singh also claimed that it is an attempt by political rivals who want to take advantage of the prevailing situation in the state which has been in the grip of violence since May last year. His statement came three days after a media outlet reported that Singh is likely to resign soon. "Manipur is passing through a troubled time. In such a crucial time, the leaders of Manipur can't afford to be weak. We are fully confident of our abilities," the chief minister said. Addressing the Manipur issue is more important, Singh told reporters after attending a programme in Imphal on the implementation of three new criminal laws across the country. "The rumours (on resignation) are possibly spread by those who want to be CM and ministers, as well as the opposition," he said. The chief minister said that his government communicates regularly with the PMO and



the Union Home Ministry on the Manipur situation. "If we leave, who will lead the people? More chaos will be created. We have to guide the people," said Singh who heads a BJP government in the northeastern state. Singh also called on media outlets not to publish unfounded reports. "Panic situation might be created if speculative reports are published without verification. Publications of such unfounded reports may give pleasure to some people. However, chances are 90 per cent of the people in the state would start panicking," he said. He asked media outlets to come to Manipur and take stock of the actual situation to help bring peace to the state. Ethnic conflict between Imphal valley-based Meiteis and hill-based Kukis has led to

the deaths of over 200 people since May 3, 2023, and rendered thousands of people homeless. Earlier, addressing a gathering, Singh said, "The new laws allow registration of zero FIRs anywhere and also gives scope for registration in local language or dialect." "Law against mob justice commences today with punishments of life imprisonment and even death... I want to appeal to the people of Manipur to give up mob justice" Singh said. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) came into effect on Monday. The new laws replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

Leadership change: Will abide by Congress high command's decision, says Siddaramaiah

PTI ■ BENGALURU
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said he would abide by the decision of the Congress high command on the issue of leadership change, amid a political tussle within the ruling Congress. A Vokkaliga seer last week publicly requested Siddaramaiah to step down and to make way for his deputy D K Shivakumar. "It is not a matter to be discussed in public. Whatever decision the High Command takes, we will go by it," Siddaramaiah told



reporters when asked about the Vishwa Vokkaligara Mahasamsthana Mutt seer Chandrashekhara Swami's appeal. "I don't want to comment on what Swamiji says. Ours is a

national party. There is a high command," the Chief Minister added. Meanwhile, Shivakumar warned leaders not to issue public statements on the matter of leadership change and creation of multiple posts of Deputy Chief Minister. "If anyone crosses the limit, the party will take a decision," Shivakumar said. There have also been demands by some Ministers perceived to be close to Siddaramaiah to create more posts of Deputy Chief Minister and given to leaders from Lingayat, SC, ST, and

minority communities. The move is seen in some quarters as an attempt to clip the political wings of Shivakumar, who is also the State party chief. Shivakumar, a member of the Vokkaliga community, is currently the only Deputy Chief Minister in the Siddaramaiah government. There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for the Chief Minister's post after the declaration of Assembly election results in May last year, and the Congress had managed to convince the latter and made him

the Deputy Chief Minister. There were some reports at the time that a compromise had been reached based on a "rotational chief minister formula," according to which Shivakumar will become CM after two-and-a-half years but they have not been officially confirmed by the party. Shivakumar has made no secret of his ambition to become chief minister, while Siddaramaiah had sought public support during the Lok Sabha polls so that the Congress wins maximum number of seats in the state, which would strengthen his position.

MP Cabinet nod for bills on seizing vehicles used in cow transportation

PTI ■ BHOPAL
The Madhya Pradesh cabinet on Monday approved a bill providing for seizing vehicles involved in transportation of cows for slaughter, and also gave its nod to another proposed legislation under which state ministers will henceforth have to pay their own income tax. The cabinet approved another bill that seeks to impose penalty on owners for not filling or plugging open borewells, a move that comes in the backdrop of several incidents of children falling in open borewells and dying in the state. A cabinet meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, was held in the assembly campus in Bhopal where several important decisions were taken. It approved a bill for amending the Madhya Pradesh Cow Slaughter Prohibition Act, 2004, and giving right to district collectors to confiscate vehicles involved in transporting cows for slaughter, an official said. Under the Act, illegal transportation of beef and cows is banned in Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Yadav, in a statement, said on several occasions vehicles caught while illegally transporting cows get released on court orders. "We have decided that vehicles involved in cow slaughter will be confiscated and will not get released," the CM said. According to the official, the cabinet also a nod to a bill to prevent incidents of children falling in open borewells.

Assam flood: Over 43 per cent of forest camps in Kaziranga submerged

PTI ■ GOLAGHAT/JORHAT (ASSAM)
With worsening flood condition in Assam, rising water levels have impacted more than 43 per cent of the 233 forest camps at Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, an official report said on Monday. As a significant portion of wildlife habitat is now submerged, scores of animals have started crossing the National Highway 715 in search of higher ground towards the southern direction in East Karbi Anglong district. However, no death of animals has been reported as of now due to floods or accidents while crossing the highway. Floodwaters have submerged a total of 101 forest camps, of which six have been vacated,

across Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, according to a flood report. It said 35 camps in Agorotoli range, 21 in Kaziranga, 10 in Bagori, five in Burhapahar range and nine in Bokakhat are submerged. Besides, 21 forest camps in Biswanath Wildlife Division of the national park have been inundated, the report added. "Kaziranga National Park is well-prepared for the upcoming flood season with comprehensive measures in place to ensure the safety of wildlife, staff and visitors. Continuous monitoring and timely interventions will be prioritised to mitigate the impact of flooding," the report said. It said that herds of elephants have begun moving towards East Karbi Anglong through Hati Dandi corridor and animal sensors are in place to detect the



movement. "Joint patrolling by commando action groups and forest teams is being conducted regularly. Additional staff from neighbouring divisions have been deployed to intensify patrolling. Joint patrolling in the fringe

areas of the park is being carried out by Forest and Police Departments," the report said. The Kaziranga National Park (KNP) authority has set up a dedicated floodwater gauge station with support from the Central Water Commission,

while rescue teams and veterinary care units are on standby for immediate deployment. "Boats, boatlines, barricades, raincoats, rescue materials and medicines have been procured and are already deployed. Country boats, speedboats and

mechanized boats have been strategically deployed in key areas for swift response," the bulletin said. Meanwhile, the Golaghat district administration on Sunday evening issued prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC to safeguard the animals crossing the NH-715, which passes through KNP. Stating that the highway attracts huge traffic, Golaghat District Magistrate Vivek Shyam Pangyok said, "Plying of vehicles during active flood attracts unwarranted risk and a cause for imminent threat to wild animals." He said the animals use the corridors to temporarily migrate to the natural highland (hillocks) for shelter falling under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council. Accordingly, a set of orders have been issued for traffic management along NH-715

passing through the KNP with effect from Monday. It said no commercial vehicle shall be allowed to move through Kaziranga National Park and only private ones will move at the regulated speed during the daytime. "Only local private vehicles will be allowed to cross KNP during night hours," it added. The order further mentioned various traffic diversion points for both commercial and private vehicles. The flood situation across the state continued to deteriorate with incessant rains inundating many districts, affecting lakhs of people. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday enquired about the prevailing flood situation in Assam and assured of all support to handle the crisis, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

New policy for hoardings in Mumbai metropolitan region soon

PTI ■ MUMBAI
The Maharashtra government will soon unveil a policy regarding hoardings in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), state Minister Uday Samant told the legislative assembly on Monday. Samant made the statement during a discussion about hoardings erected in the city by violating rules and the hoarding collapse incident in which 17 people lost their lives last month. "A policy will be unveiled once the code of conduct for the legislative council polls ends after the results are declared for the graduates and teachers constituencies," the minister said. He said the committee headed by former Allahabad

High Court chief justice Dilip Bhosle is probing the May 13 hoarding collapse in Mumbai's Ghatkopar area. BJP legislator Ram Kadam alleged that Bhavesh Bhide, whose firm erected the hoarding that collapsed, was photographed with Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, and his role should also be probed. Samant further said that permissions are not taken from the civic authorities to erect hoardings on railway land. Of the 1,025 hoardings in Mumbai, 306 are on railway land, he said. BJP leader Ashish Shelar demanded an inquiry into hoardings erected since the COVID-19 pandemic. He alleged that hoarding owners received subsidies and a 50 per cent discount on

licences. "The then Uddhav Thackeray-led government held secret meetings with hoarding owners for liaisoning. They received a 50



per cent waiver on their license. This conspiracy must be investigated. According to a report by the IIT, drivers face inconvenience due to the intense light of LED hoardings. Will this be taken into serious consideration? Permissions were granted to install LED on hoardings during the pandemic," Shelar said. The BJP leader also pointed out that of the 1,025 big hoardings in Mumbai, 179 are in the railway limits and do not have permission from the BMC. Samant assured that the decision taken by the previous government regarding hoardings during the pandemic will be investigated by the committee probing the Ghatkopar hoarding collapse.

Haryana CM Saini approves initiative for free renal, liver transplants up to ₹3 lakh

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH
Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has approved an initiative that will provide free renal and liver transplantation services up to Rs 3 lakh for eligible beneficiaries under the Mukhya Mantri Muft Ilaj Yojana (MMMIY). The chief minister has also sanctioned the creation of a specialized fixed renal and liver transplant package of Rs 3 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana - Ayushman Bharat (PMJAY-AB) scheme, according to an official statement. Giving further details, Health Minister Kamal Gupta on Monday said the BJP government in the state is

committed to healthcare reform and patient welfare. With this new initiative, the patients will be able to receive critical renal and liver transplants at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS) in Rohtak without worrying about the prohibitive costs, Gupta said. "The decision aims to offer life-saving medical treatments to those in dire need, ensuring no one is denied essential healthcare due to financial constraints, he added. Gupta said that by alleviating the financial burden associated with complex medical procedures, the Govt is paving the way for a future where healthcare is a fundamental right accessible to all regardless of economic status.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Cosmetic makeover

The new criminal laws have retained old laws with minor changes while others could impact civil liberties harshly

India has finally shed its colonial legacy in jurisprudence, embracing a new era with indigenous criminal laws. The big question being asked is whether it has truly moved beyond nomenclature or if it's merely a name change. The archaic Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Indian Evidence Act, and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) have been replaced by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, respectively. This historic change, taking effect from July 1, 2024, has stirred considerable debate among legal experts, practitioners, and the broader public. While some provisions break from the past, others are just old wine in new bottles, adding a layer of confusion in the legal system. The IPC, established in 1860, and the Evidence Act, enacted in 1872, have long been the cornerstones of India's criminal justice system. Both were products of the British colonial administration and have been criticized for their outdated and colonial-era perspectives. The CrPC of 1973 also formed a significant part of the legal framework governing criminal procedures in India.



The new legal laws Replacing the IPC, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita aims to update and Indianise the criminal code. There are some provisions that are definitely new while others are mere replicas of the old ones. One notable change is the adoption of the definition of terrorism from the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). This new definition encompasses a broad spectrum of activities intended to threaten the unity, integrity, and security of India. However, critics argue that this broader definition could lead to misuse and the criminalisation of legitimate dissent. Another stark

departure is Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam which replaces the Indian Evidence Act and seeks to modernise the rules of evidence in line with contemporary technological advancements. A significant change is the new stance on electronic evidence. Last but not the least, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, replacing the CrPC, introduces several changes aimed at streamlining criminal procedures. The new law redefines the use of handcuffs and expands the scope of police custody beyond the initial 15 days, a change that has sparked considerable concern regarding potential misuse and the risk of increased custodial violence. So far, the legal fraternity has been rather jittery about the new laws. Prominent legal luminaries, State Bar Councils, and Bar Associations have expressed apprehensions about the potential implications of these changes. Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has commented that the new laws could create a positive impact only if there are concurrent investments in infrastructure development and capacity building for forensic experts and investigating officers. The expanded powers of the police and the handling of electronic evidence are areas of particular concern, highlighting the need for careful implementation and oversight to ensure that the new laws do not lead to increased misuse of power or injustice.

PICTALK



Pilgrims wait in a queue to get themselves registered for the annual Amarnath Yatra, in Jammu

A new dawn in Tibetan diplomacy



PRAFULL GORADIA

A seven-member American delegation led by US House Representatives met with the Dalai Lama, indicating a shift in the US stance on Tibet

A seven-member American delegation led by Michael McCaul, and Nancy Pelosi, both leading lights of the US House of Representatives, recently met the Dalai Lama at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh; this is a particularly significant event. They delivered a clear message that the USA no longer accepts Tibet as a part of China; and the US Congress will be soon passing an Act to be made into a law, called the "Resolve Tibet-China Act". The delegation told the Tibetan spiritual leader that "things have changed now". This American message has unmistakably resisted in Chinese ears. This US delegation first called on His Holiness at Dharmashala, indicating they were calling on the Tibetan government-in-exile, calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi only thereafter. The Government of India has not hesitated to welcome the delegation. Xi Jinping may have forgotten that Mao Zedong's regime had first claimed 'suzerainty' over Tibet.

Before long, it asserted that Tibet was a Chinese province, before attempting to erase Tibet's culture, heritage and language. These events have their roots in what happened towards the end of World War II. By allowing Stalin's Red Army to enter Berlin first and occupy it, the US made the Russians believe that they were the prime victors of WWII. In 1949, the Soviet Communist regime, by hook or crook, acquired the atom bomb. This made them believe even more they were now a superpower. Eco-militarily though, the Soviet Union was no 'super' but only a Eurasian power, as it had historically been. Similarly, the US overestimated the Communist Chinese as well. Compared to Chiang Kai Shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) on the mainland, the Maoists were much more committed. That, however, was no reason to dump the KMT as well as Formosa, now Taiwan from the UN as an official member. In fact, India should have been the correct replacement, but the Nehru gov-



ernment was insistent on giving the right of way to Red China, believe it or not. The USA, or at least its State Department continued to believe for years that the Soviets and the Chinese were a single communist bloc. The extent of the animosity between the two was fully realized only after the Sino-Soviet clash along the Ussuri River in 1969.

It was only thereafter that President Nixon decided to call on Chinese Premier Mao Zedong in 1972, which brought a great deal of prestige to Dr. Henry Kissinger. The ultimate beneficiary of this resumption of relations was China, when Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reforms, emphasizing manufacturing and exports. The surplus of trillions of dollars accumulated by China came largely through exports to America. The course of these events explains why the State Department of the USA until now ignored the treatment of the hapless Tibetans by successive Chinese regimes over the last seven decades, beginning in 1959. The question is: is this because of repeated provocations over Taiwan, or could there be some larger reason unknown to us? The intentions should become clearer with the unfolding of time. India's stand has also been important.



XI JINPING MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT MAO ZEDONG'S REGIME HAD FIRST CLAIMED 'SUZERAINTY' OVER TIBET. BEFORE LONG, IT ASSERTED THAT TIBET WAS A CHINESE PROVINCE, BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO ERASE TIBET'S CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANGUAGE

Unfortunately, the Leftists and communists in the country had clamoured for the (then) newly formed Red Chinese regime, which had requested its recognition within a few days of its winning the civil war. Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel, on the other hand, was of the clear view that there was no hurry to recognize the new Chinese regime. In November 1949, Patel invited the American charge d'affaires Donovan to verify if there was an urgency in the recognition of Red China.

Knowing the Sardar through his long correspondence with Jawaharlal Nehru on the subject of China, uppermost in his mind must have been the concern that the Sino-Indian border should be mutually recognized. But Jawaharlal Nehru was in a hurry and without consulting the Sardar, informed the Chinese of India's decision to recognize their regime in the December of that year itself. While expressing its delight at Nehru's message, China also laid down a few preconditions. India would pass on to the new regime all properties and assets of China. Secondly, India would not recognize any members of the KMT. Thirdly, India should support the expulsion of Nationalist China from the UNO, as well as its replacement by the

communist regime. China's perfidious intentions can be gauged from the fact that its communist regime announced the 'liberation' of Tibet as the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) task just one day before the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Tibetans had expelled the Chinese Amban, although he had been a Kuomintang government appointee.

The Chinese blamed India for it, abusing Nehru as "a lackey of British imperialism" and complicit in the British humiliation of China, which Mao sought to reverse. The People's Daily of China in an editorial denounced the concept of suzerainty as feudal and oppressive—the very thing China demanded over Tibet. It even called on the UNO to examine India's relationship with Bhutan. The reality, which the Nehru government chose to ignore despite even Ambassador K.M. Pannikar's warnings was that China was eyeing Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan too. But India's first prime minister, a votary of international peace and brotherhood was oblivious to this. The sufferers were from Tibet and India.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REFORMING JUSTICE

Madam — India is poised to undergo a transformative shift in its criminal justice system with the implementation of three groundbreaking laws starting July 1st, 2024. However, the primary concern lies in the readiness of our institutions to handle these changes, necessitating a nationwide audit. There has been no thorough assessment of the preparedness across various criminal justice institutions in different states. Additionally, the transition from old laws to new ones is likely to create significant confusion. It would be prudent to postpone the implementation of these laws until a comprehensive and independent audit of institutional readiness is conducted. Alternatively, a phased implementation to test the waters would be a more sensible approach.

Noopur Baruah | Tezpur

A DEMOCRACY IN DISARRAY

Madam — The signs were clear for all to see. We eagerly awaited the end of the elections and patiently anticipated the results. Yet, once Parliament convened, it quickly became apparent that walk-outs and paralysis were the order of the day. The drama of democracy played out in full view, with heightened agitation across the country. On the anniversary of the Emergency, Parliament was divided, and the opposition was relentless in disrupting proceedings at every turn, reflecting the turbulence within our so-called democratic framework. Opposition leaders harshly criticized President Droupadi Murmu's address, dismissing it as a government-scripted speech riddled with falsehoods. They accused the government of imposing an undeclared emergency and challenged its claims of economic growth and investment.

Leaders highlighted issues facing farmers, unemployed youth, and recent national events. The true nature of our parliamentarians has been laid bare,

India's T20 World Cup victory



India celebrated a momentous victory over South Africa in the T20 World Cup 2024 final, marking a glorious return to World Cup triumph after a 13-year hiatus since their last ICC trophy win in 2011. Under the astute leadership of Rohit Sharma, the team showcased exceptional prowess

and resilience, dominating the tournament with consecutive victories. This win was particularly poignant as it marked a grand farewell for two Indian cricket stalwarts, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, along with head coach Rahul Dravid, who had not previously won a World Cup trophy. Both Rohit and Virat announced their retirement from T20 internationals, making this victory an emotional and proud moment for all Indians. Rohit's tactical brilliance and Virat's consistent performances have been instrumental in India's cricketering success over the years. Their departure signifies the end of an era. The Indian cricket team displayed outstanding skill and determination, ensuring that they lifted the ICC trophy and gave their beloved captain and star player a memorable send-off. This victory will be cherished as one of the most emotional and proud moments in Indian cricket history. Bishal Kumar Saha, Murshidabad

Bishal Kumar Saha | Murshidabad

farewell to a coach whose wisdom has guided Team India to new heights. Dravid's tenure has been marked by unforgettable victories and moments of cricketing genius, from nurturing young talent to instilling a culture of discipline and resilience. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of cricketers, embodying the values that define our beloved sport. A World Cup win would be the perfect capstone to Rahul Dravid's remarkable journey. As we celebrate Rahul Dravid's contributions to Indian cricket, we also honor a figure whose integrity, dedication, and humility have left an indelible mark on the game. His departure marks the end of an era, but his legacy will continue to inspire and shape the future of Indian cricket for years to come. What a distinguished man and an outstanding cricketer!

Jayanthi S Maniam | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Unveiling the deception: Decoding food labels for healthier choices

It's vital to scrutinise food labels beyond their claims. Decoding the fine print ensures that what we eat aligns with our health goals

Decoding Food Labels As a dietician, I strive to provide the best possible tailored meal plans to my clients, so why would I not stop and flip food packages to scrutinize labels to ensure what goes on my plate and my family's? Albeit, every time I do that I stop to think about the actual intent of documenting the ingredients on the package and I feel deceived. The idea behind all this 'extra work' was to keep the consumer informed and help them make intelligent choices for themselves. But then

I see a granola bar labelled "whole grain" and "healthy snack," only to find sugar listed as the first ingredient! Has the food industry turned food labels into a game of hide-and-seek with our health? Food manufacturers have become masters of a deceptive language game. Over time, they've developed tactics to maximize sales and keep their customers hooked, often at the expense of health. Buzzwords like "natural" and "low-fat" create an illusion of health, while hidden sugars and cleverly disguised serving sizes make it difficult to deci-



pher the truth. These tactics paint a picture of a healthy snack, obscuring the reality which can be quite different. So, does this mean we're doomed to fall victim to marketing tactics? Absolutely not! With a little knowledge, we can become empowered to decode food labels, making informed choices about what purchases we make.

Here are a few key areas to focus on during your next grocery run and fill your shopping cart with what is right for you: As I said earlier, don't allow the food companies to trick you into buying their products just because they claim to be "natural," "low-fat" or "multi-grain." Low fat doesn't alone mean that literally. The term also implies added sugars and the use of unhealthy fillers. For the longest brown

rice has wooed Indian buyers, but this does not mean that brown rice syrup is any good and a healthy replacement for sugar! High fructose corn syrup, agave nectar, palm, etc are scattered through the list of ingredients keeping even the most discerning customer, from grasping the true sugar content. When you see "sugar-free" on the label, know that other forms like sugar alcohol or artificial sweeteners might be in play. The latest in line is, "natural sweeteners" or "fruit extract" which again is sugar; no less, no more.

The biggest gamble lurks in the Serving Sizes. As a standardized directive laid down by the FDA, it is ideally meant to help consumers compare the same products from different brands, empowering them to make the best choice for themselves. But, most manufacturers shrink the serving size per package, compared to what an average consumer would typically eat. Consider finishing a whole bag of munchies in one go while the manufacturer suggests two servings per container. All ingredients are specified per serving and

you ended up twice what you thought was good for you! Ensure you keep a tab of serving size and calculate your portion and calorie/sugar intake accordingly. "Rich in protein," "Fiber-rich" etc are another set of crowd pullers that mostly tend to divert customer's attention from other not-so-healthy ingredients. Bearing these points in mind, your next trip to the supermarket will be a game-changer for your household. Don't get carried away by big claims made on the face of the package, TURN IT AROUND & be sure to read the numbers. Whether it is calories, saturated and trans fats, sodium or added sugars, learn the limits and decide for yourself what suits you best. Employ help from label-reading apps that can demystify tricky labels and provide additional information about ingredients. See-through those marketing gimmicks and bring to the table what is healthier and more wholesome for you and your family.

(The author is a dietician and Clinical Nutritionist Ambassador of FIT INDIA Movement of GOI; views are personal)



KOMAL PATEL



FIRST COLUMN

THE EVOLVING PATH TO SUCCESS WITH UPSKILLING

Success is more than just good intentions. It's a journey paved with education and skill



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

The saying "Where there's a will, there's a way" offers a reassuring belief that sheer determination can overcome any obstacle. However, navigating the complexities of real-world success involves more than just good intentions. It requires a foundation built on education, experience, and often, a blend of both. The path to achievement is multifaceted, demanding a strategic combination of willpower, continuous learning, and specialization. Enter the upskilling advocate. These individuals champion the importance of lifelong learning, asserting that the pursuit of new knowledge can unlock doors that even traditional qualifications cannot. The argument holds weight, especially in an era where technology evolves at breakneck speed. The ability to adapt to these changes is crucial. However, the journey of upskilling can sometimes feel like an endless treadmill—each completed course leads to another, creating a perpetual cycle of learning without a clear endpoint. On the other hand, we have the specialist.

Specialists possess targeted expertise, backed by rigorous education in a specific field. Their qualifications often serve as a shortcut past initial professional hurdles, providing a clear and direct path to success. Yet, this path can be fraught with its own challenges. As industries transform and new technologies emerge, specialization that once seemed advantageous may become obsolete. The clear road that once led to career success can abruptly end, leaving the specialist in need of new directions. So, who holds the advantage in this dynamic landscape? The truth, as with many aspects of life, is that the ideal path is a balanced



one. The most successful individuals often embody a blend of both approaches. They possess a solid foundation in a core discipline but are equally committed to continuous learning and adaptation. For instance, someone with a degree in marketing might pursue courses in digital analytics to stay relevant in an increasingly data-driven world. This duality—rooted in depth of knowledge but flexible in acquiring new skills—is what makes them particularly valuable. Employers who recognize the importance of this balance are making the smartest investments. They seek out candidates who not only have the expertise to excel in their current roles but also the agility to navigate the shifting landscape of the professional world.

These employers understand that a blend of foundational knowledge and a willingness to upskill can create a workforce capable of responding to change with confidence and competence. The key takeaway? While willpower is essential, it must be channeled effectively. Start by building a strong educational foundation in a chosen field, then continually seek opportunities for growth and learning. This approach fosters a mindset of perpetual improvement, positioning individuals to thrive amid the uncertainties of the modern workplace. Yet, the journey doesn't end with acquiring new skills. The future of work demands the ability to unlearn outdated practices and embrace new paradigms. The most successful professionals will be those who approach each challenge with a growth mindset, eager to expand their knowledge and reshape their skills. They understand that change is the only constant and that adaptability is the ultimate competitive advantage. Rather than seeing your career as a ladder to climb, envision it as traversing a vast, ever-shifting landscape. The willingness to learn and grow continuously is key to unlocking a fulfilling and successful career in an ever-evolving world. So, abandon the notion of being a finished product and embrace the journey of lifelong learning. It's a marathon, not a sprint. With the right mindset, you'll be well-equipped not just to survive but to thrive in the ever-changing world of work. Are you ready for the adventure?

(The writer is an author and has penned three books; views are personal)

Focus shifts to prudent public wealth management



UTTAM GUPTA

The new Govt is overhauling India's disinvestment policy. It is supporting non-profit enterprises, and maintaining a strong presence of State-run firms in strategic sectors

The new National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is reviewing the existing disinvestment policy to shift its focus from selling central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) to prudent public wealth management (PWM), supporting not-for-profit enterprises, and ensuring strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors'. A CPSU is an undertaking in which the Union government has majority share holding meaning it holds more than 50 percent of its shares. Disinvestment is fancy nomenclature for sale of these shares to private investors. When, disinvestment results in reduction of the government's shareholding in the CPSU to below 50 percent and concomitant transfer of ownership and management control to private entity, this is termed as 'strategic' disinvestment or privatization.

The extant policy on disinvestment was announced by the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech for FY 2021-22.

Under it, CPSUs were classified into two broad categories i.e. strategic and non-strategic. The strategic group covers atomic energy, space and defense; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking, insurance and financial services. The non-strategic category includes all other sectors viz. industrial and consumer goods, hotel and tourist services, trading, and marketing and so on. The government's intent was to sell all undertakings in the strategic sector with the caveat that at least one (and a maximum of four) will be retained in the public sector.

As for undertakings in non-strategic sectors, it wanted to reduce its shareholding to below 50 percent in 'all' of them. Put simply, they would all be privatized. All loss-making undertakings in this category would be closed.

Also tagged to this policy was government's intent to use the proceeds from disinvestment for meeting its fiscal deficit (excess of total revenue over total expenditure) or FD target. This part was a continuation from the past when the Modi - government started selling its shares in CPSUs in 2015-16 with particular focus on 'strategic' disinvestment. In the backdrop of devastation caused by Covid-19 pandemic and debilitating effect on its finances during 2020-21 (in that year, FD had scaled to 9.2 percent of GDP), in the budget for 2021-22, Sitharaman had put even greater reliance on proceeds of disinvestment by setting an ambitious target of Rs 175,000 crore. During that year, the government had planned big ticket disinvestments such as Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), IDBI Bank, NMDC Steel and Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) and so on.

But, the process has remained stuck in the slow lane even as the targets of proceeds from sales were missed year-after-year. Only during two years viz. 2017-18 and 2018-19, it achieved the target. That was primarily because, in those years, it had conducted two big-ticket sales of its shares from one CPSU to another.

During 2017-18, the government sold



51.11 percent of its shareholding in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) yielding Rs 37,000 crore. In the following year, it undertook the sale of its 52.63 percent stake in the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) yielding Rs 13,000 crore. But, those sales can't be termed as strategic as the purchaser being another CPSU namely ONGC/PFC, the Government continues to have effective ownership over the divested entity viz. HPCL/REC.

The results during 2021-22 and 2022-23 were particularly disconcerting. During 2021-22, against a target of Rs 175,000 crore, the actual proceeds from disinvestment were a meager Rs 15,440 crore. During 2022-23, against a target of Rs 65,000 crore, the actual was nearly half at Rs 31,059 crore. For 2023-24, the FM had lowered the target to Rs 51,000 crore which during the course of the year was further revised downwards to Rs 30,000 crore. Even against this, the actual proceeds were a meager Rs 14,564 crore.

What does the interim Budget for 2024-25 say?

In a briefing following the presentation of the Budget by Sitharaman on February 1, 2024, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan had stated that the "government no longer views disinvestment from the perspective of balancing the budget". Can it be taken to mean that it has shed its age-old stance of using proceeds from share sale for reducing FD. The answer is 'No' as it has set a target of Rs 50,000 crore for 2024-25 under the head "miscellaneous capital receipts" which

includes disinvestment proceeds besides receipts from asset monetization.

The very idea of garnering resources from the sale of government shares in CPSUs is inherently flawed. This is because unlike tax revenue, which can be projected with a degree of certainty based on the existing tax rate and a reasonable assessment of the growth in nominal GDP, the same cannot be said about proceeds from disinvestment. In this case, a lot depends on the market scenario and, in particular, the perception of investors about the company in which share-sale is contemplated.

In cases where the strategic sale is mooted, the Government faces a bigger challenge as apart from a favorable market, it needs bidders with deep pockets. The lengthy and cumbersome process of approval and bureaucratic red tape further undermines the chances of its kicking the ball rolling just around the time when the strategic investors are ready to put in their bets.

The Niti Aayog identifies companies for disinvestment which are then considered by the Core Group of Secretaries on Divestment (CGD), a long-drawn process by itself, which takes it to the Alternative Mechanism (AM) - a group of ministers, including finance, road transport & highways, administrative reforms, etc., for approval. After AM's approval, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) moves a proposal for in-principal approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

In view of above, the government shouldn't put any number to

receipts from share sale while preparing the budget as the end of the year, slippage is inevitable. Even so, the government's tax revenue is buoyant (for three years in a row since 2021-22, these have exceeded the target) and it is getting higher dividends from CPSUs as also higher dividends from the Reserve Bank of India (for its FY 2023-24, the RBI has made a huge dividend transfer of Rs 210,000 crore to the Centre for latter's use during 2024-25) and public sector banks (PSBs). These positive trends should be good enough for managing fiscal deficits; hence, no need to depend on 'miscellaneous capital receipts'.

What happens to strategic sale? From the emphasis on public wealth management (PWM), strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors, one gets sense that the government has completely abandoned the path of privatizing CPSUs in these sectors. As it is, under the 2021-22 policy, it had intended to retain at least one (and a maximum of four) undertakings in the strategic sector. Now, it seems it won't privatize even one. The government's decision to drop its plan for sale of BPCL which was on its agenda since 2019-20 is an indication of things to come.

Changing horses midstream won't be in the best interest of the country. Fundamentally, the State shouldn't be in the business of running enterprises. There always remains a risk of political interference and bureaucratic red tape which can seriously hamper the working of CPSUs. The government should continue the process of share sale and focus on de-bureaucratizing it.

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



IN CASES WHERE THE STRATEGIC SALE IS MOOTED, THE GOVT FACES A BIGGER CHALLENGE AS APART FROM A FAVOURABLE MARKET, IT NEEDS BIDDERS WITH DEEP POCKETS

Surviving the scorch: Strategies for managing heat waves in India

The summer of 2024 has seen record-breaking temperatures. It is imperative for policymakers to understand the underlying causes and implement effective measures

The country is in the midst of intense heat waves causing severe hardship in the entire North, Central and Western India for more than a month. India may have recorded the hottest-ever temperature in 2024. On 29th May 2024 Delhi recorded 52.3 Degrees Celsius temperature at a weather station in Mungeshpur a suburb of Delhi though later on it was proved that it was slightly on the higher side. Even cooler places like Dehradun have noticed the highest temperature of the last 53 years this year. More than 30 crore people in India are prone to high risk due to lack of means to escape heat waves. The people are feeling severe shortages of power and water and many grids are collapsing due to overload lead-



V K BAHUGUNA

ing to prolonged outages. Several people have died due to heat waves across the country. According to official sources, 150 people have died due to heat waves and around 30,000 people suffered heat stroke from March to mid-June 2024. The people from Delhi and other adjoining areas are rushing to hill stations of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and other hills to escape the heat torture

and in the process causing heavy traffic jams and throwing in disarray the civic amenities in several towns and cities. The River width of Ganga in Varanasi has reduced by 35 % and similar reports are forthcoming of the narrowing of other streams and rivers.

The experts have been warning the government and the society at large about the changing weather trends of the country. The policy makers, professionals and administrators is to assess the causes of such an unprecedented rise in temperature and how to mop up resources to deal with it. If the mandarins in power in the centre and state do not change the way to deal with it efficiently and effectively many disasters will be ruining the stabil-

ity and cohesiveness in the society.

One thing all must learn is the fact that high temperatures are the results of the combined effects of global warming, increasing urbanisation/concretization leading to changing weather patterns. As far as Delhi and nearby areas are concerned the dry and warm westerly winds from Rajasthan and Haryana are the causes of the heat wave. Now these winds continue during the night and do not allow the night temperature to fall and this is further accentuated when these westerly winds lead to cloud formation in the sky which prevents cooling the temperature. To find the solution our planners and civic administrators in cities must meet the challenges of the

'urban heat island effect'.

In nature trees and other vegetation in the landscape along with green roofs help in reducing the urban heat island effects by releasing moisture through transpiration, and by shading reflecting the sun radiation back into the atmosphere. Therefore, the massive dense urbanisation, buildings, roads and pavements absorb and retain the heat and hence the urban heat island effect with disastrous consequences. On the other hand, the effects of heat waves in rural areas are different; there is less or minimal heat island effect but the heat effects mostly relate to health issues like severe dehydration, heat stroke, heat exhaustion and gastro-intestinal diseases exacerbated by the long power cuts and water

shortage.

India is not the only country affected by heat waves. Europe is also suffering from heat waves since April 2024. The temperature is above 30 degrees Celsius in south Europe, particularly in Spain. This year in Europe the highest temperature was noticed in Zeneca and Bosnia at 33.3 degree Celsius on 14th April 2024. The European country's architecture is such that they cannot cope up well with continuous heat waves. The objective of this article is to stress that in India the Central and State governments should jointly devise a policy to effectively deal with summer weather.

The first thing to be done is to declare the temperature beyond a certain limit as a nat-

ural disaster/climate emergency and put in place standard operating procedures to deal with it for the different cities and rural areas. In rural areas, the government must ensure a supply of potable water and electricity as well as a mobile dispensary to provide quick health care services. In each village lakes and ponds should be created compulsorily so that people including farmers and cattle get water. It needs short-term planning risk assessment and early warning systems based on the India Meteorological Department forecast.

One of the fundamental requirements is the need to remould the district administration by creating an integrated and holistic approach so that climate-resilient develop-

ment is ensured and preparations are made in advance to deal with any emergent situation.

However, real change in the entire civic administration is essential in urban areas. The town and country planning needs complete overhauling as also revisit the power-centric civic bodies. The drainages are in shamble and must be protected so that the next emergency in rainy weather does not derail the life and property. Will the Urban Development Ministry set up a task national force to recommend action?

(The author is the former Director-General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and Chancellor of FRI University; views are personal)

Sensex, Nifty hit fresh record

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex rose by 443 points to close at a new record high while Nifty settled above the 24,100 mark on Monday on buying in banking and IT shares in line with gains in Asian and European markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex settled higher by 443.46 points or 0.56 per cent at an all-time high of 79,476.19. During the day, the barometer soared 528.27 points or 0.66 per cent to 79,561. The broader Nifty rose by 131.35 points or 0.55 per cent to close at a fresh lifetime high of 24,141.95. Intra-day, the index hit a high of 24,164, just 10 points short of its lifetime high of 24,174 hit on Friday.

Among Sensex shares, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Consultancy Services, JSW Steel, Infosys, HDFC Bank,



Tata Motors and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, NTPC, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank and Axis Bank were among the

laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled higher. European markets were trading with gains. US markets ended lower on

Friday. "The domestic market sustained its upward momentum, with a reduction in US PCE inflation raising hopes for a rate cut by the US Fed in September. This optimism contributed to the strong performance of IT stocks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.51 per cent to USD 85.43 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 23.09 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark declined 210.45 points or 0.27 per cent to settle at 79,032.73 on Friday. During the day, it jumped 428.4 points or 0.54 per cent to hit a fresh record trading peak of 79,671.58. The Nifty went lower by 33.90 points or 0.14 per cent to 24,010.60. During the day, it climbed 129.5 points or 0.53 per cent to hit a new lifetime high of 24,174.

GST reduced tax rates on household goods, brought happiness, relief to every home: FinMin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Goods and Services Tax (GST), which completed 7 years of implementation on Monday, has brought happiness and relief to every home through reduced taxes on household appliances and mobile phones, the finance ministry said on Monday. GST, which subsumed about 17 local tax and cesses, was rolled out on July 1, 2017. The theme of the 7th GST Day is Sashakt Vyapar Samagra Vikas (empowered trade overall growth). "With reduced tax rates on household goods after GST implementation, 7 years of GST has brought happiness and relief to every home through lower GST on household appliances and mobile phones," the ministry said in a post on X. The GST taxpayer base has increased to 1.46 crore in April 2024 from 1.05 crore as



consumption after GST implementation. The rate of food items like unpacked wheat, rice, curd, and lassi, which were taxed at 2.5-4 per cent before GST implementation, is at nil after the GST rollout. Household goods like cosmetics, wrist watches, sanitary plastic ware, doors and windows, furniture and mattresses are taxed at a lower rate of 18 per cent in the GST regime, lower than 28 per cent in the erstwhile excise and

VAT regime. The ministry said mobile phones, TVs up to 32 inches, refrigerators, washing machines electrical appliances (other than air conditioners), geysers and fans which attracted 31.3 per cent taxes in the pre-GST era, are now in the 18 per cent tax slab in GST regime. It further said the compliance burden was reduced for small taxpayers, and the GST Council has recommended to waive off annual return filing requirement for taxpayers with aggregate annual turnover of up to Rs 2 crore in fiscal 2023-24. The quarterly return filing (QRMP) scheme has reduced the number of returns filed in a year from 24 to 8, for more than 44 lakh small taxpayers. IFF (Invoice furnishing Facility) ensured seamless passage of ITC (Input Tax Credit), the ministry added.

TVS Mobility arm acquires Italy-based automotive components supplier



PTI ■ MUMBAI

TVS Mobility group on Monday said its subsidiary SI Air Springs has acquired Italy-based automotive components supplier Roberto Nuti Group, which will help it broaden the product range and strengthen its position in the global market. The pact between the two partners includes the 100 per cent purchase of Roberto Nuti Group by TVS Mobility indirectly, through its wholly-owned Indian subsidiary, SI Air Springs Private Limited and investments appropriate to the full re-launch of the company, TVS Mobility group said in a statement. It also said that both companies will continue to operate normally during the integration period. TVS Mobility has a well-established presence in Europe with some of the other businesses that are part of the group such as TVS Supply Chain Solutions and TVS Srichakra Ltd. Following this collaboration, the Bologna (Italy)-based group will now operate on a more international scale, benefiting from the market and product leadership of TVS Mobility, it said. "This acquisition marks a

significant step in our global expansion strategy, allowing us to combine our distinctive skills in air spring business with the Nuti Group's suspension systems expertise," said P. Srinivasavaradhan, Director of SI Air Springs. SI Air Springs, which operates from Madurai in Tamil Nadu provides air spring solutions to major commercial vehicles, Bus OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers), trailer manufacturers Tier 1 suspension System suppliers and Indian Railways. On the other hand, Roberto Nuti Group produces and distributes shock absorbers and air springs for the aftermarket mainly for industrial and commercial vehicles. "We are excited about the international growth potential this agreement brings us and we are confident that partnering with SI Air Springs will allow us to take advantage of their capabilities. Both companies will continue to operate normally during the integration period, and we are committed to ensuring a smooth transition for all our stakeholders," said Luca Randighieri, General Manager at the Nuti Group.

FirstCry's parent firm Brainbees Solutions gets Sebi's go ahead to float IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Brainbees Solutions Ltd, the parent firm of online e-commerce platform FirstCry, has received Sebi's approval to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO), an update with the markets regulator showed on Monday. According to the fresh draft red herring prospectus (DRHP), Pune-based Brainbees Solutions' proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares, aggregating up to Rs 1,816 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 5.44 crore equity shares by existing shareholders. Under the OFS, SVF Frog, a Cayman Islands-registered entity of Softbank, will sell 2.03 crore equity shares of

January and May 2024 -- obtained the regulator's observations during June 25-28, according to the update. In Sebi's parlance, obtaining its observations means its approval to float the public issue. According to the fresh draft red herring prospectus (DRHP), Pune-based Brainbees Solutions' proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares, aggregating up to Rs 1,816 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 5.44 crore equity shares by existing shareholders. Under the OFS, SVF Frog, a Cayman Islands-registered entity of Softbank, will sell 2.03 crore equity shares of



Brainbees Solutions Ltd, and automaker Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) will offload 28.06 lakh shares of the company. Currently, Softbank holds a

25.55 per cent stake in Brainbees Solutions, and M&M owns a 10.98 per cent stake in the multi-brand retailing platform. Apart from Softbank and

M&M, other entities selling shares in the OFS are PI Opportunities Fund, TPG, NewQuest Asia Investments, Apricot Investments, Valiant Mauritius, TIMF Holdings, Think India Opportunities Fund and Schroders Capital. Brainbees Solutions re-filed preliminary papers with Sebi in May after the company was directed by the regulator to re-file the draft papers, citing insufficient disclosure of key performance indicators (KPIs), market sources had said. The company's key performance indicators include its number of orders, average order value and annual transacting customers.

Unicommerce's issue is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) aggregating up to 2.98 crore equity shares by the selling shareholders. Under the OFS, SB Investment Holdings (UK) Ltd, an affiliate of Japan's SoftBank, will offload 1.61 crore shares, promoter AceVector Limited (formerly known as Snapdeal Limited) will sell up to 1.14 crore shares, and B2 Capital Partners will be selling up to 22 lakh shares. Since the IPO is completely an OFS, the entire proceeds will go to the selling shareholders. Shares of these four companies will be listed on the BSE and NSE.

Rupee falls 11 paise to 83.45 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 11 paise to settle at 83.45 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, tracking rising crude oil prices in international markets. However, a firm trend in domestic equity markets, positive manufacturing PMI data and a weak US dollar against major currencies overseas capped the sharp fall, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.39 and moved between the high of 83.38 and the low of 83.47 against the greenback during the session. The unit finally settled at 83.45 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a loss of 11 paise from its previous closing level. On Friday, the rupee settled 11 paise higher at 83.34 against the US dollar. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the rupee depreciated on a surge in US treasury yields and rising crude oil prices. Oil prices were hovering at nearly two-month high levels while the US bond yields above 4 per cent pressurised Asian



currencies. However, positive domestic markets and a rise in manufacturing PMI supported the rupee. Choudhary further said the rupee is likely to trade with a slight positive bias on gains in domestic markets and expectations of fresh foreign inflows. "Traders may take cues from ISM manufacturing PMI and construction spending data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.10 to Rs 83.70," he added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 105.24, lower by 0.28 per cent. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.41 per cent to USD 85.35 per

barrel. In the domestic equity market, The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 443.46 points, or 0.56 per cent, to close at 79,476.19 points. The broader NSE Nifty settled 131.35 points, or 0.55 per cent, higher at 24,141.95 points. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) increased from 57.5 in May to 58.3 in June, indicating a sharper improvement in business conditions. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Friday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 23.09 crore, according to exchange data. India's forex reserves jumped by USD 816 million to USD 653.711 billion in the week ended June 21, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous week, the overall reserves had dropped by USD 2.922 billion to USD 652.895 billion. The central government's fiscal deficit was 3 per cent of the annual estimates at May-end 2024-25, the first two months of the financial year during which model code of conduct was in place due to Lok Sabha elections.

ATF price hiked 1.2%, commercial LPG cut by ₹30

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jet fuel or ATF price on Monday was hiked by 1.2 per cent while that of commercial LPG used by hotels and restaurants cut by Rs 30 per 19-kg cylinder in line with international oil price trends. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was hiked by Rs 1,179.37 per kilolitre, or 1.2 per cent, to Rs 96,148.38 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. The increase followed a steep 6.5 per cent (Rs 6,673.87 per kl) reduction effected on June 1. The ATF rate in Mumbai was increased to Rs 89,908.30 per kl from Rs 88,834.27. Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes. Alongside, oil firms cut the price of commercial LPG by Rs 30 to Rs 1,646 per 19-kg cylinder. This is the fourth straight monthly reduction in rates. The price was last cut by Rs 69 per cylinder on June 1. Prior to that, rates were on



May 1 reduced by Rs 19 per cylinder, and by Rs 30.5 on April 1. Rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on 1st of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate. Prices of petrol and diesel continue to remain frozen. Rates had been cut by Rs 2 per litre in mid-March. Petrol costs Rs 94.72 a litre in Delhi while diesel is priced at Rs 87.62.

Gold flat at ₹72,350 per 10g, silver rises by ₹200

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices traded flat at Rs 72,350 per 10 grams while silver gained Rs 200 per kg in the local market on Monday, according to HDFC Securities. Silver prices rose by Rs 200 to Rs 90,300 per kg from the previous close of Rs 90,100 per kg. "In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading flat at Rs 72,350 per 10 grams, unchanged from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,327 per ounce, slightly up USD 1 from the previous close. Gold struggled to find direction on Monday and moved in a narrow range above the USD 2,320 level during the European trading session, Gandhi said. "...Traders appear cautious about making aggressive directional bets given uncertainties about the US Federal Reserve's interest rate-cutting plan, resulting in sluggish range-bound price activity," he added.

Digi Yatra policy should spell out all rules on passenger info deletion, suggests study

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The policy for Digi Yatra — a digital platform to verify air travellers using biometric data — needs to spell out all the rules related to deletion of passenger information from the database once the travel is complete, according to a study instituted by NITI Aayog. There have been privacy concerns in various quarters about Digi Yatra user data. Based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), Digi Yatra provides for contactless and seamless movement of passengers at various checkpoints at airports. As per the policy for Digi Yatra, facial biometrics are deleted from the local airport's database 24 hours after the departure of the

passenger's flight. "However, the rules related to deletion of other information collected from the passengers, as well as any facial biometrics that are stored in other registries, must be clearly set out in the policy," the study said. Digi Yatra envisages an identity management ecosystem for Indian airports, which can enhance the capabilities of Indian civil aviation infrastructure, digitise manual processes at airports, improve security standards and lower the cost of operations of airports. "While the Digi Yatra Policy states that it is completely voluntary in nature, if the use of Digi Yatra is made mandatory in any way then the same must comply with the principles laid down in



K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (case) relating to the constitutionality of the policy," the study said.

The verdict pertains to the constitutional right to privacy. The study recommended that there must be frequent

cybersecurity audits and vulnerability testing of the Digi Yatra platform to ensure that reliability, usability, information security in the

ecosystem is a subject of continuous engagement and is adaptive to the rapidly evolving threats that exist in this sphere. In addition to cybersecurity audits, it is imperative to establish a mechanism for performing algorithmic audits by independent and accredited auditors, prior to system deployment at periodic intervals, it added. According to the study, the Digi Yatra SOP must specify timelines and purposes for retention of different types of data within the Digi Yatra Central Ecosystem, beyond which personal data is deleted. "Internal SOPs for handling personal and sensitive personal data must be identified," it said. The study also noted that there must be a provision for

the ongoing monitoring of the performance of the entire system. It also suggested that the use of facial recognition data and other relevant subject data for providing value-added services should only be activated through an opt-in rather than an opt-out method of consent with an ability to revoke consent at any time. Digi Yatra proposes use of FRT to authenticate a passenger's travel credentials, which allows other checkpoints at an airport to be operated in an automated form with minimal human involvement. The use of FRT prima facie has the potential to streamline operations at airports and provide tangible benefits to the civil aviation ecosystem.

Amid persisting concerns over user data privacy, the Digi Yatra Foundation, in April, said the Digi Yatra Central Ecosystem (DYCE) never stores any of the ID credentials data, which has Personally Identifiable Information (PII) anywhere in any central repository. The foundation is the nodal agency for the app. In India, as part of its efforts to improve travel experience, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has initiated the Digi Yatra programme using the FRT, and facial verification technology (FVT) to be used at different process points. FRT refers to an AI system that allows identification or verification of a person based on certain images or video data interfacing with the underlying algorithm.



NEERAJ CHOPRA OPTS OUT OF PARIS DIAMOND LEAGUE: REPORT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has opted out of this Sunday's Paris Diamond League, citing the adductor niggle that has been troubling him for the past couple of months, according to a report. Speaking to 'ESPN', Chopra said he is focussing on training and strengthening his blocking leg. "I need to strengthen my blocking leg when I throw because that's when my groin gets pulled. We're working on that to see how we can reduce the impact on the groin and control the pressure on it," he said, explaining the issue for which he will consult "different doctors" after the Paris Games. "I could have competed in more events for sure and that was the plan. But I have realised that my health is paramount, that comes first. Even if I feel the slightest discomfort or like I am pushing myself too much in training, I've learnt to pause for a bit," he added.

Mbappé says he feels like he is in a virtual reality game wearing his mask at Euro 2024



AP ■ DUESSELDORF (GERMANY)
Kylian Mbappé felt like he was in a virtual reality game when playing in a mask to protect his broken nose at the European Championship. The France star was smiling while telling the story Sunday on the eve of facing Belgium in the round of 16. But clearly he does not enjoy playing his role as the masked man of Euro 2024 - "an absolute horror," he said. "I had the impression in the first game that I was playing in 3D," Mbappé told reporters,

scoring with a penalty in a second straight draw. "It's really difficult. It limits the vision, the sweat stays blocked so you have to keep lifting it to flow out," Mbappé said. "As soon as I can take it off, I will. It's annoying, it's annoying, it's annoying." "Now, I don't have a choice, I can't play without. So I have to stay thank you to the mask," he said. Those two draws dropped France to second place in Group D - won by Austria - and sent Les Bleus into the top half of the draw that few expected. Belgium also unexpectedly landed in the top half, by finishing runner-up in a group to Romania after a 0-0 draw with Ukraine as boos rained down from its fans. It set up a rematch of a semifinal at the 2018 World Cup that France won 1-0 six years ago en route to Mbappé's star role in the final. The winner on Monday in Duesseldorf will find a difficult path to the final. Portugal, which plays Slovenia on Monday, is potentially waiting in the quarterfinals, then Germany and Spain are possible semifinal opponents. "The teams that are considered to be the big nations on paper, we're doing everything we can to stay in it," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "But actually it's something that's quite intense, highly, highly intense." Deschamps acknowledged his team has not been scoring, but he at least has his biggest threat back.

Praggnanandhaa misses against Wesley So on another day of draws



PTI ■ BUCHAREST (ROMANIA)
Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa yet again squandered promising position to settle for a draw against American Wesley So in the fifth round of Superbet Classic tournament as none of the five boards produced any decisive result, here. The lead positions remained unchanged with Fabiano Caruana of United States still ahead on 3.5 points, enjoying a half point lead over world championship challenger D Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa. French duo of Alireza Firouzja and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia and Wesley share the third spot on 2.5 points each, a half point ahead of Anish Giri of Holland and Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan. Local hopeful Deac Bogdan-Daniel is still at the bottom with 1.5 points. Gukesh also enjoyed some advantage that slipped away against Abdusattorov while Vachier-Lagrave played solidly to hold Caruana. Bogdan-Daniel drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi in the 10-player double round-robin event, offering USD 350000 as prize money. Praggnanandhaa is usually spot-on when it comes to accurate calculation or tactics but somehow here he has been missing on advantageous positions and also some winning moves. Having missed out on a technically winning endgame against Gukesh, Wesley So found himself lucky as the Indian missed a not-so-difficult manoeuvre that he would find in seconds on another day. Inspired by the presence of Garry Kasparov in the playing hall, Praggnanandhaa chose the King's Indian defense as black, faced the Fianchetto variation and did not have many troubles in maintaining the balance. Wesley became a little ambitious towards the final stages of the middle game and this is where Praggnanandhaa could have penetrated his king side decisively. Wesley survived with the skin of his teeth. Gukesh also had a chance against Nodirbek through a tactical stroke that would have ensured consistent pressure and a long-term advantage. The game was drawn without much ado once Gukesh missed out on the opportunity. Caruana showed his opening expertise to hold Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in a Ruy Lopez open. The American went for a little known variation as black and it was clear that his home-work ran deep. Vachier-Lagrave decided not to take his chances for too long and drew wide repetition in just 28 moves. Monday is the only rest day in the tournament and the sixth round will be played on Tuesday. Results round 3: D Gukesh (Ind, 3) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 2.5); Wesley So (Usa, 2.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 2.5) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 3.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 2) drew with Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 2.5); Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou, 1.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (FID, 2.5).



Canada Open: Fourth seed Lakshya Sen hopes to regain form as defending champion

PTI ■ CALGARY (CANADA)
With fond memories of his past, defending champion Lakshya Sen will look to end his title drought when he begins his campaign at the Canada Open badminton tournament here on Tuesday. The world No 14 Sen is the only Indian competing in the BWF World Tour Super 500 meet who will compete in the Paris Olympics. The reigning Commonwealth Games gold medallist's form has slipped since his Canada Open triumph around this time last year as he is yet to win a title since then. Sen will look to find his rhythm back as he gears up for the Paris Olympics, which begins in less than a month's time. With a No 4 seeding, Sen finds himself in the bottom half of the draw which also features the Japanese duo of Kodai Naraoka (WR 6) and Koki Watanabe (WR 20). The former world championship bronze medallist Sen will start off against a qualifier and may head into a potential quarterfinal clash with Hong Kong's WR 23 NG Ka Long Angus. There are three other Indians in the men's singles main draw. Priyanshu Rajawat will face eighth seed Rasmus Gemke of Denmark. Rajawat recently had a notable last-eight finish in the US Open Super 300 event, wherein he lost to Lei Lax Xi. Kiran George will take on Yushi Tanaka of Japan, while Ayush Shetty is the fourth Indian in the draw, starting his campaign against the sixth seed Watanabe (6). On a high after her semifinal finish in the US Open last week, Malvika Bansod will face Julie Dawall Jakobsen of Denmark in her opening women's singles fixture. Malvika is also in the bottom half of the draw which has WR 14 Nozomi Okuhara as the second seed. But her immediate next challenge may be against WR 21 Line Højmark Kjærskeld of Denmark. The Danish player has got a fourth seed and could be Malvika's last 16 challenger. If she is able to overcome the pre-quarters hurdle, Malvika may face fifth seed Sung Shuo Yun, who is WR 24.

Portugal sure to respect Slovenia in Euro 2024 round of 16 with fresh memory of upset losses

AP ■ FRANKFURT
Portugal coach Roberto Martinez knows to respect the underdog, having already seen his team lose to Slovenia when the round of 16 opponents at the European Championship met in a friendly in March. Portugal lost by the same 2-0 score to Georgia in a Euro 2024 group game, and Martinez was asked Sunday about the underdog trend at the same time that Slovakia was frustrating England with a lead that lasted until the last seconds. "All the teams here have a lot of personality. They believe that they can win," Martinez said ahead of Portugal facing Slovenia again on Monday. "The same applies to Slovenia. They are very well organized,



competitive, and believe in what they're doing," he said in translated comments. Portugal, the European champion in 2016 and still with the veteran presence of Cristiano Ronaldo and Pepe, is a big favourite. Slovenia is playing its first elimination game in the knockout rounds at a major tournament, its fourth in 32

years as an independent soccer nation. "It's a historical moment for Slovenian football," Martinez said, praising his counterpart Matjaž Kek. "We admire what their coach is doing because their national team plays like a club." "They attack very quickly. (Andrej) Sporar and (Benjamin) Šeško have a very strong bond, and they kept a clean sheet against England." That 0-0 against England was a third straight draw for Slovenia, one of six teams still unbeaten at Euro 2024. Kek joined in the mutual respect, calling Martinez "a gentleman, he always behaves like that." The game is likely to follow a pattern. Portugal leads the tournament in most time possessing the ball and Slovenia has the least, with UEFA assessing their scores as 64.3 per cent and 36.7 per cent. "They don't need a lot of possession to be dangerous," Martinez said. Portugal midfielder Bruno Fernandes expects patience to be key to beating goalkeeper Jan Oblak, who he described as one of the world's best.

Spain beat Georgia 4-1 to reach Euro 2024 quarterfinals, next plays host Germany

AP ■ COLOGNE (GERMANY)
Spain recovered from conceding an early own-goal to beat Georgia 4-1 for a spot in the Euro 2024 quarterfinals, ending one of the tournament's most compelling underdog stories. Goals from midfielders Rodri and Fabián Ruiz brought Spain back into the game after Robin Le Normand's own-goal in the 18th minute had given Georgia a shock lead. Nico Williams and Dani Olmo took the game out of Georgia's reach with two more goals late in the game as heavy rain fell.

Spain will play host nation Germany in the quarterfinals on Friday in Stuttgart. The loss ends Georgia's first ever major tournament campaign, which included a 2-0 upset win over Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal. Despite the lopsided score, Georgia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili had another standout game with nine saves to prevent a rout. Spain had beaten Georgia 7-1 in qualifying last year, but this game was a close contest until the last 20 minutes and testament to Georgia's rapid improvement under coach Willy Sagnol.



Playing its fourth game of Euro 2024, Spain had yet to concede a goal all tournament. That soon changed when Otar Kakabadze surged down the right flank for Georgia and crossed low. Le Normand chested the ball past his own goalkeeper, with the defender apparently distracted by Khvicha Kvaratskhelia arriving behind him to meet the cross. Spain took its time to get back into the game, but Rodri -- back from a one-game suspension -- leveled the score in the 39th with a low shot from just outside the box.

Bellingham's stunning goal rescues England in 2-1 win over Slovakia, advance to Euro 2024 quarters

AP ■ GELSENKIRCHEN (GERMANY)
Jude Bellingham needed to produce something special to keep England at Euro 2024. And he did. England was seconds away from slumping to one of the biggest upsets in the history of the European Championship when trailing 1-0 to Slovakia deep into stoppage time in the round of 16 on Sunday. But Bellingham's spectacular overhead kick in the fifth of six added minutes at Veltins Arena sent the game into extra time, and Harry Kane sealed a 2-1 win that keeps alive England's hopes of a first major trophy since 1966.

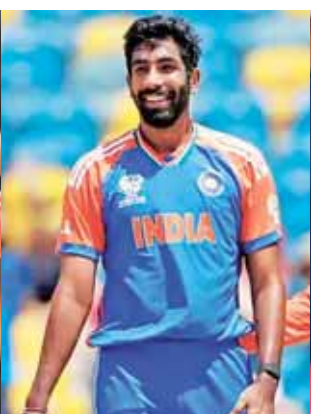
"I think it was 30 or 20 seconds until we were out of the European Championship," Bellingham said. "It's hard to deny that it was one of the most important moments of my career so far." He's had a few. The midfielder, who turned 21 on Saturday, has just completed a stunning debut season at Real Madrid, winning the Champions League and the Spanish title. At such a young age, he is one of England's most important players at Euro 2024 and delivered a moment of magic when all hope seemed lost. "His world is different to pretty much every other 21-year-old in the world... What he can provide are these moments where he grabs things by the scruff of the neck and his character and his personality creates moments that can change in a big game," England manager Gareth Southgate said. England - one of the pre-tournament favorites and runner-up at the last Euros - trailed 1-0 to 45th-ranked Slovakia after Ivan Schranz's 25th-minute goal. With the clock running down, Bellingham's time came. Kyle Walker launched a long throw from the right. Marc Guehi leapt to flick the ball on. Bellingham was in the box and had to readjust his body



to execute a perfect overhead kick, sending the ball into the bottom corner to leave Slovakia goalkeeper Martin Dubravka stuck on his line as he watched it nestle into the back of the net. Some England fans had already left the stadium. Those inside erupted. "I had a funny feeling the game wasn't dead and I know that sounds ridiculous. We were pushing and probing," Southgate said. Bellingham's goal was England's first shot on target in the match. It didn't have to wait long for its second as Kane headed home to score his seventh goal in his last seven knockout

games at major tournaments. It was also a record-extending 65th for his country. England will play Switzerland in the quarterfinals in Duesseldorf on Saturday. But for so long it looked like being a humbling exit for Southgate's team - bringing back memories of its elimination at the hands of Iceland at Euro 2016. "It's knockout football and anything is possible," Southgate said. England had faced fierce criticism for its performances in the group stage and boos rang around the stadium in the first half as frustration grew among its fans following Schranz's strike. It needed to improve in the second half. Phil Foden had a goal ruled out by VAR, Kane headed wide from close range and Declan Rice hit the post in the 81st. Slovakia had already produced a shock by beating No.3-ranked Belgium in the group stage and it looked like doing it again against the No. 5-ranked team in the world. That was until Bellingham struck. "They scored a goal from a player who is valued at 100 million euros. This was a team worth 1.5 billion (euros). You concede just half a meter and you will get punished," Slovakia coach Francesco Calzona said.

SIX INDIANS IN ICC TEAM OF TOURNAMENT



Seniors will be there in CT and WTC; next T20 captain to be decided by selectors: Shah

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN

Monday asserted that "seniors will be there" in next year's Champions Trophy and the World Test Championship...

Talking to select media here, Shah lauded the contribution of senior players in the side's T20 World Cup triumph...

match for his 59-ball 76. India pipped South Africa by seven runs in a sensational comeback...

run-getter after Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz. The Player of the Tournament and India's trump card in their title win...

Following their historic semifinal finish, Afghanistan found three players in the ICC team, including left-arm quick Fazalhaq Farooqi...

brilliantly led Afghanistan in their historic run and returned with 14 wickets with a tidy economy of 6.17.

In the final, he was the pick of South Africa's bowlers with figures of 2/26 from his four overs.

nine ODI matches that India will play before the Champions Trophy scheduled in February-March in Pakistan.



All three white ticked off; one red to go, tick it: Dravid to Kohli

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN

Staying true to his no-nonsense taskmaster image, outgoing India head coach Rahul Dravid had an assignment for star batter Virat Kohli...

title in its inaugural edition in South Africa back in 2007 under Mahendra Singh Dhoni. In the ODI format, India won the 1983 and 2011 World Cups...

India to tour Australia for multi-format Women A series in August

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India and Australia will lock horns in a multi-format women's A series in Queensland next month, in what is seen as a preparation for the upcoming T20 World Cup...

Charli Knott will be in charge of the four-day game. "I'm really looking forward to being a part of this series and for the challenge that India A will pose," McGrath said...

SCHEDULE First T20: August 7; Second T20: August 9; Third T20: August 11 (at Allan Border Field).

Courtney Sippel, Tayla Vlaeminck, Tahlia Wilson. One-day squad: Maitlan Brown (2nd and 3rd matches only), Maddy Darke, Sophie Day, Nicole Faltum (wk), Tess Flintoff, Kim Garth, Charli Knott (vc), Katie Mack, Tahlia McGrath (c), Grace Parsons, Megan Schutt (1st match only), Courtney Sippel, Tayla Vlaeminck, Tahlia Wilson.

RCB appoint Karthik as batting coach, mentor

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former India wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik, who announced his retirement from all forms of cricket last month, on Monday was appointed as batting coach and mentor by Royal Challengers Bengaluru.



intelligence and composure. I am eager to coach and mentor our batting group, helping them to not only refine their method but also to develop the keen match awareness needed to excel under pressure.

66.22 with a massive strike-rate of 187.36. He was given an emotional farewell after RCB lost the Eliminator to Rajasthan Royals.

Stay in moment, keep flexible mindset: Bindra's advice to Paris-bound Indian athletes

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

As India's first individual Olympic gold-metallist, Abhinav Bindra knows a thing or two about handling big-stage pressure and he has a simple piece of advice for those aiming for the podium in the upcoming Paris Games...



athletes to do their best and make us all proud. "I would just want them to give their best to stay in the moment, to remain flexible in mindset and just back the work that they had put in.

other track-and-field athletes. "Our athletes are performing well and they will win medals in the Olympics. Since Neeraj Chopra won the gold medal in the Tokyo Olympics, other athletes also want to win medals for their country," he said.

India overcome resilient South Africa to win one-off Test by 10 wickets

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India were made to wait a tad longer for the winning moment by centurion Laura Wolvaardt, but they eventually went past the line convincingly by 10 wickets on the fourth and final day of the one-off Test women's Test against South Africa here on Monday.

steered their side home comfortably. This is India's second 10-wicket triumph in Tests after scoring a similar win over the Proteas at Paarl in 2002.



batter to score a Test, ODI and T20I ton in the same year. However, Kapp was soon trapped leg-before by Deepti Sharma for 31, while Sneha Rana ousted Delhi Tucker for a duck as the tourists slipped to 266 for four.

anchor the innings but was dismissed for 122 when Rajeshwari Gayakwad trapped her in front to reduce the visitors 281 for five.

innings here. South Africa needed less than 50 runs to take the lead at this stage. Nadine de Klerk and Sinalo Jafta stuck together until the lunch break and SA were 302 for five then.

struggled to get the partnerships going. The next stand was worth 14 runs between De Klerk and Tumi Sekhukhune before the latter was run out for six.

and departed for 15 and they went to tea at 336 for eight. The hosts eventually conceded the lead in the final session. This was the third instance of India giving away the lead after enforcing a follow-on and the fifth overall.

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