

**OPINION 6**  
 NO-CONFIDENCE  
 MOTION, NO GOOD

**WORLD 8**  
 EU LEADER CITES UKRAINE INVASION TO  
 WARN AGAINST CHINA'S AGGRESSION

**MONEY 10**  
 SENSEX SNAPS  
 2-DAY FALLING STREAK

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BURMAH TO  
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 12 SPORT



## SC slams Manipur crime analogy, delay in FIRs

Offence against Manipur women 'horrendous', don't want State cops to handle it: Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court made a strong observation on Monday regarding the horrific incident of sexual violence against two women in Manipur, stating that it was "horrendous" and could not be justified by comparing it to similar incidents in other States.

The bench, comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, responded to advocate Bansuri Swaraj's argument, who sought to highlight violence against women in West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, stating that these incidents should also be taken up by the apex court alongside the Manipur incident.

The apex court heard a series of petitions on Manipur violence, including petitions



filed by two women from the Kuki tribe who were paraded naked in public. Chandrachud emphasised that the case involved an unprecedented magnitude of violence against women in communal and sectarian violence, and it could not be justified by comparing it to incidents elsewhere.

"Crimes against women take place all over the country. This is part of our social reality. Presently, we are dealing with something which is of unprecedented magnitude and pertains mainly to the crimes against women."

There is a situation of communal and sectarian strife in Manipur," said Chandrachud, reiterating that

the court is focusing solely on the Manipur situation.

During the day-long arguments, the apex court expressed displeasure over the delays in registering FIRs and arresting the accused persons.

The bench sought information from the Manipur Government by Tuesday about the steps taken so far in the FIRs lodged, stating that it does not want the State police to probe the matter as they virtually handed over the women to the rioting mob.

The CJJ suggested that the court may constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) or a committee comprising former judges to monitor the situation in the strife-torn state, subject to hearing the law officers rep-

resenting the Centre and Manipur on Tuesday.

The bench listed several pleas on Manipur violence for hearing on Tuesday.

The bench questioned the Manipur police's delay in registering an FIR in the video case and transferring it to the magisterial court after one month and three days.

It also expressed concerns that the women were allegedly handed over to the mob by the police.

When Attorney General R Venkataramani sought time to respond to the queries, the bench emphasised the need for a healing touch to the state, considering the loss suffered by the affected people.

The court asked the State Government to provide details about the number of 'zero FIRs' registered in the state due to ethnic violence and the arrests made so far. A zero FIR can be filed in any police station regardless of whether the offence was committed within its jurisdiction.

The court sought objective assistance and suggested the formation of a committee of woman judges and domain experts or a committee comprising both woman and male judges.

Continued on Page 2

## Mobs attack VHP rally, 2 dead, DSP shot in head

Nuh clash spreads to Sohna; inspector shot in stomach, dozen cops hurt

PTI ■ GURUGRAM/CHANDIGARH

Two home guards were shot dead and about a dozen policemen injured Monday as a mob in Haryana's Nuh district tried to stop a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession, pelting stones and setting cars on fire, police said.

As news of the violence in Muslim-dominated Nuh spreads, mobs in adjoining Gurugram district's Sohna set ablaze four vehicles and a shop. Protesters blocked a road for hours.

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij said three companies of Central forces were being airlifted to the State. Prohibitory order banning the assembly of people were clamped in Nuh and Gurugram districts.

An official said about a dozen policemen were injured in the Nuh violence. Eight of them were taken to Gurugram's Medanta Hospital. Among the injured Hodal Deputy Superintendent of Police Sajjan Singh was shot in the head and an inspector in the stomach.

The home guard, identified as Neeraj, died in hospital. Another home guard too died.

Police said the vehicles set ablaze were part of the procession, or belonged to them. A



Miscreants throw stones at a religious procession as security personnel take position, in Nuh, on Monday. In Inset: An injured member of the religious procession shows bricks thrown at him

video clip showed at least four cars on fire. Another purported video showed two damaged police cars. The clip contained sound of gunfire.

Police lobbed teargas shells in an attempt to disperse the mobs. Mobile internet services were suspended in Nuh district till Wednesday to contain the "intense communal tension", the Haryana Government said.

State Home Minister Vij said the State Government has despatched additional forces from neighbouring districts. "We are also trying to send forces by helicopter," he told PTI.

According to police, VHP's 'Brij Mandal Jalabhishek Yatra'

was stopped by a group of young men near Nuh's Khedia Mod and stones pelted at the rally. Cars were then set ablaze.

People in the procession also hurled stones back at the youths who had stopped them, reports said. Later, many took refuge in a temple as police tried to evacuate them to safety. The yatra was flagged off from Gurugram's Civil Lines by BJP district president Gargi Kakkar. A police contingent was deployed with the procession.

According to some claims, the trigger for the clash was an objectionable video posted on social media by a Bajrang Dal activist in Ballabhgarh.

There were also reports that Monu Manesar, a cow vigilante booked earlier for the murder of two Muslim men whose charred bodies were found in Bhiwani district in February, was supposed to join the procession.

The vigilante, however, told PTI that he did not participate on the advice of the VHP, which feared that his presence would create tension. There were also threats on Twitter daring him to come to Nuh.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar appealed for calm in Nuh, invoking the slogan "Haryana Ek Haryanvi Ek" (Haryanvis are one).

Continued on Page 2

## Top Ministers rap Opp for scuttling Manipur debate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday lined up its senior Ministers to corner the Opposition for "running away" from a discussion on the Manipur issue.

Union Minister and Leader of the Upper House, Piyush Goyal, along with BJP MPs from the northeast region, said, "Again today, the Opposition doesn't want this discussion to take place. There must be some reason why they are running away from a discussion."

Union Minister Anurag Thakur also accused the Opposition of running away from a debate in Parliament on the ethnic violence in Manipur and wondered what was the use of getting elected if they wanted to raise issues on the streets.

"If you have to raise issues on the streets, then what is the use of getting elected to the House," Thakur told reporters outside Parliament asserting that the Government is ready for a debate on the situation in Manipur.

Finance Minister Nirmala



Sitharaman joined them in accusing the Opposition of having a "mindset as black as the clothes they wore" and of not being "concerned about Manipur". "It is clear that the Opposition has been shedding "crocodile tears" over the situation in the State," Sitharaman told reporters as both Houses of Parliament were adjourned following uproar over the demand by INDIA bloc parties that Modi should speak on the issue first before any discussion.

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## Opp seeks time with President to inform about ethnic strife

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The INDIA delegation which visited Manipur recently has decided to seek a meeting with President Draupadi Murmu to apprise her of the overall ethnic strife in the northeastern State.

The 21-member delegation aims to present a comprehensive picture of the situation to the President and seek her intervention in restoring peace and harmony in the region. During the visit to

Manipur, the delegation met with victims and visited relief camps to assess the ground situation, which has been marred by civil unrest since May 3. Following their return, the delegation leaders briefed floor leaders of Opposition parties on the findings of the visit and strategised for the remaining days of the Monsoon session.

The coalition, with Congress parliamentary party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge in attendance, convened a meeting in Parliament House to discuss the course of action moving forward. Congress leader in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who was part of the delegation, highlighted the gravity of the situation in Manipur, emphasising the demand for a discussion on the no-confidence motion. He urged all political parties, including the ruling BJP and its allies, to visit Manipur and witness the ground realities firsthand to comprehend the urgency of the situation.

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## Delhi Services Bill in LS today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Services Bill, which grants the Centre authority over the city Government on administrative services and transfer of officers in the nation, will be introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday with "significant changes."

The Aam Admi Party (AAP)-run Government in Delhi is at odds with the Central Government over the latter's control of officer transfers in the Delhi State.

The Bill's introduction in Parliament is expected to lead to major protests by the Opposition alliance INDIA, of which the AAP is a part.

The Central Government had issued an ordinance to override the Apex court's order, granting the Arvind Kejriwal Government the power to transfer officials.

Officially known as the Government of National



Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, it will replace an existing ordinance. The ordinance has triggered an ongoing war of words between the AAP and the Centre, with the former claiming it shows disrespect to the apex court.

The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Delhi Government on May 11, giving it control over most services in the Capital city, except for public order, land, and police matters. On May 19, the Centre introduced an ordinance to override the top court's order, which had granted the elected Government in Delhi the authority to handle the transfer and appointments of

bureaucrats. The Bill has undergone significant changes; three provisions that were part of the ordinance have been dropped from the Bill.

The Bill removes a provision from the ordinance that previously prevented the Delhi Assembly from making laws concerning 'State Public Services and State Public Service Commission'.

Section 3A, which was added through an ordinance, said that the Delhi assembly wouldn't have the power to make laws related to services. This has now been deleted from the bill.

The bill now, under Article 239AA, empowers the Centre to establish the National Capital Civil Service Authority (NCCSA).

Previously, the NCCSA had to submit an annual report of its activities to both Parliament and the Delhi Assembly.

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## PM begins meet with BJP MPs to boost prospects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an eye on the Lok Sabha Polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held the first of a series of meetings with BJP MPs on Monday. These meetings will continue until August 10.

These meetings represent a significant step forward from the recent grand meeting of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners in the national Capital, which was presided over by Modi earlier this month.

According to sources, Modi chaired groups of Cluster-1 meetings with NDA MPs from western Uttar Pradesh, Bundelkhand, and Brij regions. The meetings were scheduled at Maharashtra Bhavan. During these sessions, he met 42 MPs from Uttar Pradesh (Paschim, Braj, and Kanpur-Bundelkhand).

Continued on Page 2

## SC rejects CBI's plea against HC stay on probe against DKS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday rejected the CBI's plea against the Karnataka High Court's order granting an interim stay on a probe into a case involving alleged disproportionate assets acquired by Deputy Chief Minister and Congress State president DK Shivakumar.

A bench comprising Justices B R Gavai, C T Ravikumar, and Sanjay Kumar dismissed the CBI's petition after senior advocate A M Singhvi, representing Shivakumar, informed the court that the matter was already pending adjudication before the High Court's division bench.

Continued on Page 2

## RPF cop shoots senior, 3 passengers on train

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

In a shocking incident, a Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel on Monday morning shot dead four people, including an RPF Assistant Sub-Inspector, on-board a running train near the Palghar railway station in Maharashtra. He was later arrested when attempting to run away.

"Four casualties, including the ASI, have been reported in the firing incident inside the Jaipur-Mumbai Central Superfast Express (12956). The accused has been arrested. DCP North GRP has been informed," said the RPF regarding the incident.

The accused, RPF Constable Chetan Singh,



Family members of Assistant Sub-Inspector Tika Ram Meena, who along with 3 civilians was shot dead by RPF Constable Chetan Singh (Inset) onboard the Jaipur-Mumbai Central Express, at Shatabdi Hospital in Mumbai, on Monday

opened fire from his official automatic weapon around five in the morning, killing another RPF colleague, ASI Tikaram Meena, who was in charge of escort duty, along with three passengers on the train, which was en route to Mumbai.

The firing of 12 rounds occurred after an altercation over a communal issue on board. While three of the dead passengers were identified as Asgar Abbas Ali (48) and Abdul Kadar Mohamed Hussain Bhanpurwala (64), the identity of the third passenger is being ascertained.

Meena was a resident of Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur, and Singh is from Hathras in Uttar Pradesh.

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## Address Gyanvapi 'historical blunder', Yogi urges Muslims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath made a public appeal on Monday, calling on the Muslim petitioners involved in the Gyanvapi mosque case to suggest a proposal to address what he referred to as a "historical blunder" for calling Gyanvapi a mosque.

"The walls of Gyanvapi are 'screaming' and calling it a mosque will cause a dispute.... What is the trident doing there in the mosque? We did not keep it. There is a jyotirlinga and deities are there," he said during an interview to ANI here on Monday.

His remarks came just three days before the awaited verdict of the Allahabad High Court. The HC had previously stayed the Archaeological



Survey of India survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex, initiated by a Varanasi court to ascertain whether the structure was built upon a temple. During an interview to ANI, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath questioned the presence of a trident on the mosque premises, stating that it creates disputes regarding the mosque's identity.

He expressed the Government's desire to find a solution to this long-standing issue, emphasising the need for a proposal from the Muslim side to rectify the perceived historical mistake. "I think there should be a proposal from the Muslim side to fix the historical blunder. We want a solution to this mistake," said the CM.

Continued on Page 2

# Mamata accuses Modi of letting Manipur burn

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The ruling Trinamool Congress on Monday passed a censure motion in the Bengal Assembly condemning the ongoing Manipur violence — that has left more than 160 people dead and thousands of others displaced — and criticizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi for failing to restore peace in the violence-hit State.

Opposition BJP which asked for a similar debate on the post-panchayat election violence in Bengal but failed to get their demand ratified staged a walk-out with its leader Suwendu Adhikari threatening to move not only the Supreme Court but also exploring possibilities of getting the BJP-ruled states to bring similar motions in the respective Assemblies. Speaking for the motion — tabled by Bengal Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sovandeb Chattopadhyay — Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee questioned the BJP Government's ability to contain the Manipur crisis.

Coming down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ignoring the situation, Banerjee said, "if the Prime



Minister is unable to restore peace in Manipur, then let us (INDIA) be allowed to restore peace."

"It was a matter of 'shame,' that Modi was making foreign trips while Manipur was burning, she said, adding the Prime Minister's treatment of the crisis showed his approach towards the north-eastern State.

Earlier reading out the motion Chattopadhyay said, "the violent clashes that have been taking place in Manipur for the last three months have severely affected not only the image of the state of Manipur but also of the whole nation."

The BJP led by Adhikari staged a walkout post the Chief Minister's statement wondering

why matters of one State should be discussed in the House of another.

"This is illegal and unconstitutional ... because law and order is a State issue and cannot be discussed in the Assembly of any other State," Adhikari said adding "at the most it can be discussed in Parliament."

Claiming that the Motion itself was judicially contemptuous Adhikari said that "once the Supreme Court had taken a suo motu cognizance of the matter there was no scope of any other authority be it a State Assembly to take up the issue for discussion ... it is a sub-judice matter," adding, "Mamata Banerjee has invoked Manipur in Bengal because

she wants to divert the attention from panchayat poll violence that has already left more than 50 people dead ... and atrocities on women that has been taking place every day in Bengal... I have protested the move in the Assembly ... I will protest against it outside also..."

Reacting to his statement, Speaker Biman Banerjee said he knew the rules better than Adhikari. "If he wants to go to the Supreme Court he may go ... we can also go to the Supreme Court," he said adding, he had "acted according to the rule book."

Reminding that there was no democracy in Bengal and that all elections were won in the State through violence, the Opposition Leader said, "when we wanted an adjournment motion to discuss the panchayat poll violence ... when we wanted to discuss the atrocities on women in Bengal ... our demands were not entertained ... illegally they have passed this censure motion ... if they can do it here I also assure this Government that I will urge the other States including Yogi Adityanath ji to introduce a censure motion on Bengal violence in their States Assemblies too."

# MoU signed for promotion of tourism in Kashmir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

To further promote tourism and adventure sports activities the Ministry of Defence Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Government of UT of J&K for the transfer of Defence land measuring 139.04 acres situated at Tattoo Ground as one of the most attractive destinations, he said.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha presided over the MoU signing ceremony at Raj Bhawan.

The Ministry of Defence was represented through the Local Military Authority of Tattoo Ground Garrison and Defence Estate Officer Kashmir Circle Srinagar. The land will be handed over by the Ministry of Defence within a period of 120 days.

The Lt Governor termed the MoU as a momentous occasion in developing major tourism space in J&K UT.

Hailing the Army for its cooperation, the Lt Governor said the administration and security forces are dedicated to the welfare of the people.



We will make honest and dedicated efforts to fulfil all the conditions of the MoU and develop tourism and other related activities in such a way that the tourists visiting Kashmir valley find Tattoo Ground as one of the most attractive destinations, he said.

The Lt Governor also discussed with the senior Army officers the 'Mera Mati Mera Desh' campaign to honour the martyrs and preparations for Independence Day events.

Lt General Rajiv Ghai, GOC 15 Corps; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Vijay Kumar, ADGP Kashmir; Vijay Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; senior officers of the Army and UT Administration were present on the occasion.

# SC to hear bail pleas of convicts in Godhra train carnage case today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said it will hear on Tuesday the bail pleas of some of the convicts against whom specific allegations were made in the 2002 Godhra train burning case, which plunged Gujarat into a communal conflagration.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said the pleas will be heard on August 1.

"We have distributed the cases in four categories. In one group is where death penalties were commuted (into life imprisonment) by the high court. The other is of the convicts who have a specific part to play. We have said non-bail (in the second category). The third one is of the people who had peripheral presence and were part of the mob," the bench said.

The fourth category is of those who are old and have been facing some kind of problems, it said, adding there was one convict whose wife had cancer.

The bench asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Gujarat government, to provide the chart to senior

advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for the convicts.

"We will have it tomorrow," it said.

The top court on April 21 had granted bail to eight people sentenced to life imprisonment in the 2002 Godhra train burning case.

Earlier, the convicts who were granted bail were -- Abdul Sattar Ibrahim Gaddi Asla, Yunus Abdul Hakk Samol, Mohammad Hanif Abdulla Moulvi Badam, Abdul Rauf Abdul Majid Isa, Ibrahim Abdulrazak Abdul Sattar Samol, Ayub Abdul Gani Ismail Pataliya, Soheb Yusuf Ahmed Kalandar and Suleman Ahmad Hussain.

The top court, however, had refused to grant bail to four convicts -- Anwar Mohammad Mehda, Saikat Abdulla Moulvi Ismail Badam, Mehboob Yakub Mitha and Siddik Mohammad Mora -- after Solicitor General Mehta opposed their applications highlighting their role in the incident.

Senior advocate Hegde, appearing for the convicts whose bail petitions were rejected, requested the bench to adjourn the hearing on their applications, saying there is a festival (Eid-ul-Fitr) on April 22.

# Opp seeks time with...

From Page 1

The meeting saw varied viewpoints among the members. Some suggested finding a middle ground to facilitate the discussion, stating that the masses are more concerned about finding a resolution rather than the Parliamentary rules cited by the Opposition. On the other hand, TMC and DMK leaders asserted that the new Opposition alliance should maintain its position, as upheld since the beginning of the Monsoon session.

TMC leader Derek O'Brien stressed the need for a comprehensive discussion on Manipur under the Emergency Rule, rather than the shorter Rule 176, to thoroughly address the pressing issues faced by the people of Manipur.

The Opposition meeting also brought attention to the fact that walkouts by Opposition parties had allowed the government to pass bills without proper discussion, highlighting the significance of allowing proceedings to address critical matters, including the Manipur situation.

The INDIA alliance leaders will inform the public about their further course of action on Manipur after the meeting with President Draupadi Murmu.

# Top Ministers rap Opp for scuttling Manipur...

From Page 1

"When he (Modi) stands up to reply what noise and disturbance they create. They did not have the courtesy to listen to him. Today they insist. What an irony," Sitharaman said.

Slamming the Opposition for its demand for Modi's statement, Sitharaman said, "Why do you want to presume that everything has to start and end as per your demands? Are you concerned about Manipur or are you doing politics?"

She asked opposition parties to tell Parliament what they heard during their recent visit to the violent-hit northeast state.

"They are shifting the goalposts," she said.

"Like the black shirts they wore in protest, their intentions are also black."

Her ministerial colleagues from the ruling party also hit out at the opposition over continuing disruptions in Parliament.

Goyal rejected the opposition's criticism of the government for pushing its legislative agenda in Parliament and not taking up the no-confidence motion, saying neither rules nor precedents make it mandatory for the ruling party to prove its majority first.

The Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha told reporters that everyone knows the government enjoys a two-thirds majority in Lok Sabha and the numbers strongly favour it.

# SC rejects CBI's plea...

From Page 1

The Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing on behalf of the CBI, stated that the agency had also filed a separate plea against the stay granted by the division bench. He argued that both the pleas, including the one challenging a similar stay order by the single-judge bench, should be considered together.

Justice Singhvi countered by saying that the CBI's plea was against the interim orders, and the matter was already at the stage of final adjudication before the High

Court.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court said, "Since the present special leave petition arises out of purely an interlocutory order, we are not inclined to entertain the present petition. All questions available to parties are kept open for adjudication by the High Court."

In February of the same year, a single-judge bench of the High Court, led by Justice K Natarajan, granted temporary relief to Shivakumar in connection with a Rs 74 crore disproportionate assets case from 2020, which was under

investigation by the CBI. The central agency alleged that Shivakumar had amassed Rs 74.93 crore of wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income from April 2013 to April 2018 when he served as the energy minister in the Congress-led Karnataka government.

The CBI filed an FIR against him in October 2020, accusing him of corruption based on the findings of the Income Tax Department's searches conducted in August 2017 at approximately 70 premises linked to him.

# Delhi Services Bill in LS...

From Page 1

The bill eliminates this obligation, meaning the report no longer needs to be presented before these legislative bodies.

The bill dilutes provisions under Section 45D, which deals with appointing chairpersons and members of various authorities, boards, commissions, and statutory bodies in Delhi.

It does away with the requirement for 'orders' of ministers regarding proposals or matters to be referred to the central government before the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister.

The bill introduces a new provision stating that the Lieutenant Governor will now make appointments to Boards and Commissions formed by the Delhi government based on a list of names recommended by the NCCSA.

This list will include the Delhi Chief Minister's recommendations. The Boards or Commissions are established by laws passed by the Delhi Assembly.

# Address...

From Page 1

Swami Chakrapani Maharaj, the national president of Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, echoed Yogi Adityanath's call, viewing it as an opportunity for the Muslim petitioners to promote brotherhood and goodwill through their response.

However, Yogi Adityanath's remarks drew criticism from Hyderabad MP and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) leader Asaduddin Owaisi. Owaisi accused the chief minister of judicial overreach, considering that the Muslim side had already opposed the ASI survey in the Allahabad High Court, where the judgement is imminent.

The Gyanvapi mosque case gained widespread attention in 2021 when a group of women approached a Varanasi court seeking permission to worship deities within the Gyanvapi complex, located adjacent to the revered Kashi Vishwanath temple.

A subsequent video survey of the complex revealed an object claimed by some to be a shivling (a sacred symbol of Lord Shiva). The mosque management committee disputed this claim, asserting that the object was part of a fountain in the 'wuzu khana' (pool) used for washing hands and feet before prayers.

# RTI activist's murder: SC to hear K'taka Govt plea challenging HC order

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear the Karnataka government's petition challenging an order of the Karnataka High Court which acquitted all 12 accused in the 2012 murder of RTI activist and editor of 'Maha Prachanda' newspaper Lingaraju citing lack of corroboratory evidence.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Ahsanuddin Amanullah issued notices to those who were acquitted in the case and sought their replies.

Additional Advocate General Aman Panwar and advocate V N Raghupathy appeared in the case on behalf of the state.

The Karnataka government has moved the apex court against the November 4, 2022 order of the high court acquitting the accused.

Lingaraju was attacked by three armed men near his house on November 20, 2012 while he was drawing water from a public tap.

His wife Uma Devi, who was with him on that day, filed the complaint and also named Govindaraju, a former Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) corporator, as a suspect.

She alleged that Govindaraju suspected Lingaraju's hand in a Lokayukta raid on his house and harboured a grudge against him.

Police filed the charge sheet against 12 accused - Rangaswamy, R Shankar, Raghavendra, Govindaraju, Gowramma (wife of Govindaraju), Chandra, Shankar, Umashankara, Velu, Loganatha, Jaheer and Suresh.

After the completion of the trial, the Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge court on October 28, 2020 found the accused guilty and sentenced them to life imprisonment.

They were also sentenced under other charges under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

All the accused approached the high court in appeal.

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रकल्प, अस्पाई निर्माण इकाई (मुकुमल्लम)

उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम

पञ्जाक:125/Nivida/52 दिनांक : 31.07.2023

E-Tender Notice

S. No.	Name of Scheme	Tentative Cost of project (including G.S.T)	Completion Period
1.	1- Construction of proposed Residence (Type-4) Qtr. At Reserve Police Line, Almora, Uttarakhand	Rs. 80.23 (including G.S.T)	12 Months
	2- Construction of Administrative Block for Reserve Police Line at Almora, Uttarakhand	Rs. 404.26 (including G.S.T)	12 Months
	3- Construction of Barrack, Guard Room & Boundary Wall for Reserve Police Line at Almora, Uttarakhand	Rs. 202.41 (including G.S.T)	12 Months

2. Name and Address of Officer Inviting the Bid :- General Manager (Admin), Head Office, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Dehradun

3. Date and Time of Availability of bid documents in the portal :- 01/08/2023 - 15.00 Hrs.

4. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the Portal :- 16/08/2023 - 17.00 Hrs.

Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://uktenders.gov.in" General Manager (Admin)

# SC slams Manipur...

From Page 1

The court will define the extent of its intervention based on the responses received.

"We would also want to know the package for rehabilitation being provided to the state for affected people," said the apex

court. Mehta also suggested that the trial may be conducted outside Manipur.

The Supreme Court had expressed deep concern over the video showing the violence and stated that using women as instruments for perpetrating violence is "simply unacceptable in a constitutional democracy."

The court directed the Centre and the Manipur government to initiate immediate remedial, rehabilitative, and preventive steps and report back on the action taken.

On July 27, the Centre informed the top court that it had transferred the probe into the case involving the two women to the CBI and asserted the government's "zero tolerance towards crimes against women." The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) urged the top court to transfer the trial of the case outside Manipur for a timely conclusion. So far, seven people have been arrested in the case.

Noted lawyer Kapil Sibal represented the two women and highlighted the significant delays in registering the case by the Manipur Government.

Earlier in the day, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre and the State Government, informed the bench that the Union of India had no objection if the apex court decides to monitor the investigation in the cases of violence. Mehta also suggested that the trial may be conducted outside Manipur.

The Supreme Court had expressed deep concern over the video showing the violence and stated that using women as instruments for perpetrating violence is "simply unacceptable in a constitutional democracy."

The court directed the Centre and the Manipur government to initiate immediate remedial, rehabilitative, and preventive steps and report back on the action taken.

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# Mobs attack VHP rally, 2 dead, DSP...

From Page 1

Former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda also asked people to maintain peace and brotherhood. Nuh MLA Aftab Ahmed and former legislator MLA Zakir Hussain also issued similar appeals.

Home Minister Vij said

he was in regular touch with senior officials.

"Our first priority is to bring the situation under control. We are appealing to all to maintain peace," he said. He told reporters it will be determined later who was responsible for the violence.

# RPF cop shoots senior, three...

From Page 1

Two other RPF jawans were accompanying them, and the police is recording their statements, RPF said.

It added that Singh is known to be short-tempered.

Inspector General of RPF (Western Railway) Praveen Sinha briefed the media, stating, "He had a short fuse, he was quite hot-headed. There was no altercation. He just lost his temper and shot his senior, then fired at whoever he saw."

"Constable Singh fired on Party Incharge ASI Meena from his ARM Rifle and one unknown Passenger at Coach No B 5, and then fired on two other unknown Passengers in Coach No S 6 and Pantry car

attached to the train. At about 6:18, the train reached Borivali, and four dead bodies were retrieved by GRP and RPF officers and staff. The passengers are yet to be identified. Constable Singh has been detained, and his ARM recovered," stated the RPF in the official statement.

The Western Railways stated they are conducting a high-level inquiry. The accused was posted in Lower Parel, they said.

After killing his senior, the constable went to another bogie and shot dead three passengers.

The RPF constable opened fire inside the moving train after it crossed Palghar Station, pulled the chain, and got out of the train near Dahisar Station,

# PM begins meet with BJP MPs to boost...

From Page 1

BJP president JP Nadda and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari were actively coordinating with NDA leaders.

Union Minister Arjun Munda expressed his belief that such meetings with PM Modi would strengthen the NDA.

The Prime Minister also held another meeting with 41 MPs from West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha.

the Chief Public Relations Officer of the railways said. He was caught by police at Mira Road with the help of Government Railway Police and RPF officials.

According to railway officials, four RPF personnel, including the accused, were escorting the Jaipur-Mumbai Central Express from Surat station in Gujarat on Monday.

The four-member team earlier escorted Dadar-Porbandar Saurashtra Express up to Surat station the previous day. On the return journey, the escorting party was guarding the Jaipur-Mumbai Central Express, a senior railway official said. The escort parties generally have four to five personnel

of the GRP and RPF in a long-distance train. They provide security to trains in their respective railway divisions, and thereafter, counterparts from other divisions take over the responsibility of guarding the trains.

Western Railway's (WR) chief public relations officer Sumit Thakur stated that the accused constable was attached to the Lower Parel RPF post, while ASI Tika Ram Meena was attached to the Dadar RPF post. The Jaipur-Mumbai Central Express departed from Jaipur station in Rajasthan at 2.01 pm on Sunday and reached Surat station, where the escort party boarded the train, at 2.47 am on Monday.

# Delhi Services Bill undemocratic: AAP

Poses threat to Delhiites, undermines principles of judiciary, jeopardises federal system, says Raghav Chadha

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Monday strongly condemned the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, calling it a blatant display of undemocratic and illegal legislative actions, unprecedented in the history of the Indian Parliament. According to him, this Bill not only poses a direct threat to the people of Delhi but also undermines the principles of the Indian Judiciary and jeopardises the future of our federal system.

Chadha expressed deep concern over the underlying message conveyed by the BJP to the public — that electing a non-BJP Government would be met with hindrance and obstruction. He emphasised that this negates the significant mandate given by the two crore people of Delhi to



Arvind Kejriwal's historic majority.

"Additionally, the Bill directly contradicts the honourable Supreme Court's ruling in favor of the elected Government of Delhi, which upheld the authority of the Arvind Kejriwal Government, including matters related to the bureaucracy," he said. The speed at which the BJP Government overturned this judgment within just eight days raises doubts about the integrity of the judiciary, Chadha added.

Chadha cautioned against the dangerous precedent set by this move. He believed it could serve as a template for future attempts to destabilise non-BJP State Governments across the country. The replication of such

ordinances and mechanisms in other regions poses a serious threat to the Indian constitution and democratic values.

Drawing attention to the BJP's political motives, the AAP MP highlighted their repeated failures to form a Government in Delhi over the last 25 years. The people of Delhi have consistently chosen non-BJP Chief Ministers, from Sheila Dikshit's Congress Government from 1998 to 2013 to Arvind Kejriwal's resounding mandate since 2013. "As a consequence, the BJP has become politically irrelevant in Delhi, prompting their desperate attempt to wrest power from the AAP and render the Delhi Government ineffective through this ordinance" he said.

# Full body scanners to be deployed in phased manner at airports: BCAS chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Full body scanners will be deployed at airports in a phased manner and the process is expected to start at major airports within a year, BCAS chief Zulfikar Hasan said on Monday and stressed that there will not be any privacy issues as those have already been sorted out worldwide. He also said that there will be options for passengers who have health issues in case they cannot use such scanners.

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has set a deadline for the end of next year for the deployment of full body scanners at airports.

At a briefing in the national Capital, Hasan said BCAS has given a deadline but there are procurement cycle issues as airport operators get these machines from the same two or three vendors around the world.

To begin with, full body scanners will be deployed at major airports like Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

"We will deploy full-body scanners and it will be in a phase-wise process. We have given orders for a few airports and we hope that this process will start in major airports in a year or so," Hasan said.

According to him, there



will be options for passengers who do not want to use the full-body scanners due to health issues.

To a query about possible privacy issues with respect to using full-body scanners, the BCAS chief said that such issues have been sorted out worldwide and in India also.

The Director General of BCAS was speaking at an event to mark Aviation Security Culture Week which will be celebrated from July 31 to August 5.

Meanwhile, BCAS, last year,



recommended installation of scanners based on computer tomography technology at airports whereby passengers will not be required to take out electronic devices from their hand

baggage before going through the scanner.

Currently, the scanners used at airports provide a two-dimensional view of the objects inside hand baggage.

Installation of such scanners is also expected to help in speeding up the security check-in process at airports.

India is one of the fastest-growing civil aviation markets in the world and in June, domestic air passenger traffic grew 18.78 per cent to around 1.25 crore compared to the year-ago period.

# Delhi Police launches campaign to sensitise people about threats ahead of I-Day, G20 summit

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Independence Day and G20 summit, the Delhi Police has launched an anti-terror campaign to sensitise people about possible threats and urged them to be its "eyes and ears", officials said on Monday. Delhi Police spokesperson Suman Nalwa said the department is using internet memes and posters to create awareness and spread its messages on different issues.

"We have used memes so that the message registers and stays with people and carries forward. In addition, we have used a responsible citizen route campaign as well to stress upon the collective fight against terror by the agencies as well as the people of India," the official said.

"Independence Day and the G-20 summit are important events for the whole nation and we are proud that the Delhi Police is ensuring safe and peaceful celebrations of these events," Nalwa added. Police also urged people to report stolen vehicles by dialling 112 to avoid their use in crime or terror activities. Similarly, people have been asked to report anyone with suspicious behaviour.

# Special needs students from Govt schools to represent India at World Scout Jamboree

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A remarkable achievement awaits as a group of eight students with special needs (CWSN) from Delhi Government Schools are set to represent India at the prestigious 25th World Scout Jamboree in South Korea.

On the eve of departing for South Korea on Monday night these students received encouragement from Education Minister Atishi during a meeting. Notably, this marks the first time in the history of the event that a contingent of children with special needs is participating in the World Scout Jamboree.

Atishi expressed her belief that participating in this international event will play a significant role in building the students' self-confidence and self-esteem. She emphasised the importance of inclusive education and how this opportunity will contribute to their career



development while facilitating cultural exchanges with students from other countries.

The Education Minister took immense pride in the fact that eight special needs students from Delhi Government schools are representing India at this global event, showcasing the abundance of talent among students in these schools, awaiting the right opportunities.

Atishi lauded the students with special needs for inspiring not just their peers but everyone else as well. Their participation sends a powerful message to the world, highlighting how hard work and talent can break barriers and change societal percep-

tions towards individuals with special needs. She reiterated Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's vision of ensuring equal opportunities for all children, and these students will exemplify this vision on the world stage, proving their mettle beyond doubt.

The Education Minister reminisced about a time when representation of Delhi or the country in international competitions by students from Government schools seemed inconceivable. However, under Kejriwal's leadership, education took precedence, leading to world-class exposure and education for children from eco-

nomically weaker sections in Delhi, she said.

"The Kejriwal Government remains steadfast in its commitment to the holistic development of every child in Delhi, including those with special needs. To achieve this, Government schools are equipped with top-notch facilities, providing students with special needs a nurturing environment for growth and excellence. As a testament to this commitment, a group of 12 members, including eight CWSN students from Delhi Government schools, will participate in the 25th World Scout Jamboree in South Korea. The entire expenses of this visit are being covered by the Kejriwal Government," she said.

The 25th World Scout Jamboree, scheduled from August 1 to August 12, 2023, focuses on fostering leadership and life skills in participants through scouting activities, encouraging them to become active and responsible citizens.

# LG reviews progress on civic infra, G-20 Summit preparations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor, VK Saxena, on Monday, conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing works related to civic infrastructure and preparations for the forthcoming G-20 Summit in the national Capital. Saxena chaired a crucial meeting with the heads of the District Monitoring Committees, appointed through an order dated July 19. The meeting was attended by key officials, including the Chief Secretary, Chairman NDMC, VC, DDA, Pr. Secretary (PWD), Pr. Secretary (E&F), and representatives from other stakeholder agencies.

Recent heavy rains and flooding had adversely affected the pace of work and caused damage to completed projects, particularly in the Central District along Ring Road/ Yamuna and the Samadhi Complex. In response, the LG reassessed the situation and emphasised the need for focused efforts, stressing on inter-agency coordination.

The District Monitoring Committees, led by senior IAS officers as coordinators, along with respective DMs, DCPs, DCs (MCD)/Secretary NDMC, and Chief Engineer (DDA), are responsible for identifying gaps in their jurisdictions and ensuring their rectification with the support of rel-



evant departments/agencies such as PWD, Delhi Metro, E&F, I&FC, DJB, DIAL, and DISCOMS, among others.

A total of 61 crucial roads and 23 hotels, connected to the upcoming summit, spread across seven districts, are being meticulously monitored by the LG for maintenance, enhancement, and revitalisation.

New Delhi District has the most significant number, with 32 roads and 17 hotels, followed by just two roads and one hotel in South-West District.

The projects are distributed across New Delhi, South East, South, Central, Shahdara, South West, and East districts. Additionally, North, West, North West, and

North East districts have identified a few similar projects.

During the meeting, it was noted that the progress thus far has been satisfactory, with the remaining work expected to be completed by early August. Saxena directed the Monitoring Committees to conduct daily inspections and monitoring visits at the sites under their jurisdiction during the early morning and late evening hours. Coordinators were instructed to provide daily ATRs (Action Taken Reports). The LG also emphasised seamless coordination among the Heads of Departments (HoDs) and will conduct another review later this week.



# Withdraw order allowing commuters to carry liquor in trains: CTI to DMRC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Traders' body on Monday said it has appealed to the DMRC, urging it to take back its decision to allow commuters to carry two sealed liquor bottles in Delhi Metro trains.

The Chamber of Trade and Industry, in a statement, alleged that anti-social activities will increase if liquor is permitted to be carried inside trains and said that a delegation of the traders' body will meet DMRC chief Vikas Kumar to discuss the issue. e Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has given permission to carry two sealed bottles of liquor (per person) in the Metro. Now there is an opposition to it. The CTI has written a letter to DMRC's Managing Director, Vikas Kumar (on this matter), the statement said.

CTI Chairman Brijesh Goyal has requested that the DMRC should "withdraw its decision", alleging that anti-social activities can increase if carrying of a liquor bottle in the metro is allowed.

"If someone takes a bottle inside, opens it and starts drinking, how will it be stopped," the CTI said in the statement. CTI Women's Council president Malvika Sahni claimed that

she has "received calls and messages" from several women that permission should not be given to carry bottled liquor in the Metro.

The Metro network spans Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. These states have their own excise policy. This decision should be withdrawn, the statement said.

The DMRC in June permitted commuters to carry two sealed bottles of alcohol per person on Delhi Metro trains. Earlier, carrying alcohol was banned in the Delhi Metro except on the Airport Express Line.

Within a month of the DMRC's decision, the Excise Department of the city government red-flagged the relaxation and sought it to be changed for being contrary to the law.

According to the Excise Act, only one sealed bottle of liquor like rum, vodka and whisky could be carried from one state to another, a senior Excise Department officer recently said.

The Metro trains ferry commuters between Delhi and NCR cities like Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurugram, and Faridabad, and allowing two sealed bottles to be carried by any person will violate the Act, the officer said.

# Fatehi records statement in court in defamation case against Jacqueline

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Actor Nora Fatehi on Monday recorded her statement before a Delhi court in a criminal complaint she has filed against actor Jacqueline Fernandez for allegedly defaming her by "unfairly dragging" her name into a Rs 200 crore money laundering case involving suspected conman Sukesh Chandrashekar.

Fatehi, a Canadian citizen, gave her statement before Metropolitan Magistrate Kapil Gupta in the complaint which has arrayed 15 media organisations as accused.

Fatehi accused Jacqueline Fernandez and the media houses

of ruining her reputation in the public eye through false narratives.

"They have called me a gold digger and accused me of having a relationship with a con artist Sukesh Chandrashekar..." she told the court, adding that this has caused her financial loss and harmed her reputation.

Fatehi claimed that she had nothing to do with the case.

"I feel that I have been used as a scapegoat in this case in the media to safeguard certain people, and because I am an outsider, I have been used as a soft target and I want compensation for all the damages caused to my career," she said.

The imputations made by

the accused caused prolonged and unnecessary harassment, loss of work and cyberbullying, she added in her statement.

Fatehi, in her complaint, has said she has "a pristine reputation apart from a rapidly progressing career which has quite obviously threatened her rivals who are unable to compete with her on a fair footing".

A defamatory statement was made by Fernandez in "bad faith" and with "mala fide intention" and was circulated by the media houses with an intent to defame her, she alleged.

Fatehi claimed that the allegations made by Fernandez that she had received gifts from Chandrashekar were wrong.

# Gehlot moves court against summons in defamation plaint by Union Minister

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday moved a Delhi court against the summons issued to him in a criminal complaint filed by Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat seeking the Congress leader's prosecution for alleged defamation. Gehlot filed the appeal before an Additional Sessions Judge against an order passed by a magistrate court, which had summoned the Congress leader on August 7 following Shekhawat's complaint over his remarks related to the alleged Sanjivani scam.

The matter is likely to come up for hearing in the sessions court on Tuesday.

The case is related to throu-



sands of investors allegedly getting duped of about Rs 900 crore by the Sanjivani Credit Cooperative Society.

Shekhawat, the Union 'Jal Shakti' Minister and MP from Jodhpur, has alleged in his complaint before the metropolitan magistrate that Gehlot has been making defamatory remarks against him over the alleged

# Job firm employee keeps wife on payroll for 10 yrs illegally, booked

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In an unusual case of financial crime, an employee of a private recruitment company allegedly worked out an innovative plan to fraudulently put his unemployed wife on the payroll and ensured that regular salary was paid to her for more than 10 years, causing a loss of crores to the firm.

After realising in December last year that its records were manipulated, the Delhi-based company conducted an internal enquiry that established the crime. Last week, it got an FIR lodged with the Delhi Police, which has launched further probe.

The matter pertains to ManpowerGroup Service Private Limited, which provides staffing and recruitment services to several companies.

According to the complaint that ManpowerGroup has filed with the police, one of its employees, Radhaballav Nath, who joined the firm in 2008 as an assistant manager (finance) and was subsequently promoted to the position of manager (finance), allegedly worked out a plan to generate a regular source of income for his unemployed wife at the company's cost.

As the company attaches high priority to data privacy, it had allowed accessibility to the monthly payroll and reimbursement data to only three officers -- the director (human resources), the chief human resource officer (CHRO) and Nath.

Nath was an interface between the outside payroll vendor and the other departments of the company, such as HR and finance. He used to send



the data related to new joinees, those who left the organisation, the working employees' attendance etc. To the payroll vendor to prepare the monthly pay register. After preparing the monthly pay register, the vendor used to send it back to Nath, who further forwarded it to the director (HR) and from there, it was sent to the CHRO for the final approval.

The CHRO used to approve it and mail it back to the director (HR), who then forwarded it to Nath as the final pay register. Nath was responsible for sending the final pay register to the bank for the release of salaries.

It was at this juncture, before sending it to the bank, that Nath used to manipulate it and insert his wife's name, the company has alleged.

"The modus operandi adopted by Mr Radhaballav Nath was that after receiving the approved excel file containing the payroll data from the office of the CHRO, Mr Radhaballav Nath used to insert an additional row having his wife's name, Sasmitha Raul @ Sasmitha Nath, in the said excel sheet containing the payroll data," the company's complaint, which was converted into an FIR, said.

It added, "Along with inserting the name, he used to add the

salary amount in his wife's name. He also used to tamper with his own salary figure. Thereafter, the manipulated payroll file used to be uploaded to the bank portal by Mr Radhaballav Nath, through which the salaries of all ManpowerGroup employees used to be transferred."

The internal investigation of the company found out that Nath used to upload the manipulated payroll file on the bank's portal using the computer system of another employee, who also works as a manager (finance). After uploading the file, he used to delete it from the system.

"Mr Radhaballav Nath was suspended on December 11, 2022 and an internal committee was constituted by ManpowerGroup, which sought his presence to explain the discrepancy noted in the team meeting dated December 8, 2022," the FIR said.

It further added that on being confronted with documents, Nath admitted that he had illegally transferred Rs 3.6 crore to his wife's bank account from 2012 onwards. He also admitted that he inflated his own salary and transferred Rs 60 lakh to his account over the last several years, totalling a loss of Rs 4.2 crore to the company.

# Parl chaos: Govt for Manipur debate, Opp insists on PM's statement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Government once again asserted it was ready for a discussion on the Manipur issue and the Opposition insisted on Prime Minister's statement, the proceedings in Parliament remained disrupted and the standoff continued between the ruling party and the Opposition without any thaw.

While the Lok Sabha proceedings remained derailed, the Government managed to pass the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023, with a voice vote before the House was adjourned for the day.

In the Rajya Sabha Opposition parties continued to protest demanding a statement from Prime Minister. The discussion, however, could not be taken up amid protests from Opposition parties demanding Modi's presence in the House.

which is after the lunch break.

Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankar informed the house that he had received 65 notices asking for a discussion on Manipur under Rule 267.

When Dhankar asked the house whether he should read out the names of all the 65 members who had given notices, Goyal stood up and said that there is no need to do so and accused the opposition of blocking the parliamentary process. "They are trying to block parliamentary processes; they are trying to misuse the liberty given to all the honorable members," the Union minister said.

"This is reflective of their mentality. When the government has already agreed to a debate on Manipur they have already spoiled nine important days of the house. The country is watching that the debate could have happened on the first day itself.

"Are they running away from debate? What are they trying to hide? The opposition should introspect. We want a discussion on Manipur even today right now under 176.



There is no need to read any names. Let the proceedings begin and discussion takes place at 2 pm today," he added.

When the house reconvened in the afternoon, Dhankar said that the government is ready for the short-duration discussion.

As opposition MPs continued to raise slogans of "Pradhan Mantri sadan mein aao (Prime Minister come to Parliament)", parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi

accused the opposition of not being serious about a discussion on Manipur.

"If they are serious about a discussion on Manipur let it begin. We are ready for the discussion right now. Whether they are serious or not let them tell the country," he said.

The opposition's position was reiterated by Congress chief and leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge when Dhankar asked him if he was ready for a dis-

cussion at 2 pm.

"I have already given a notice under 267 and this is the 9th or 10th day that all INDIA parties are giving notices to discuss Manipur. We want 267 (discussion). Many of our people have visited Manipur, we are requesting the PM to give a statement," he said.

Congress chief spokesman and member of the upper house

Jairam Ramesh said the India parties stuck to their

position in the Rajya Sabha that PM must make a statement in the House on what has happened in Manipur over the past 90 days on which he has maintained an eloquent silence and thereafter there should be a debate and discussion

"The INDIA parties want this under Rule 267 which means given the seriousness of the issue being raised all other business of the House gets suspended till the debate is over. It is not the INDIA parties that are running away from a debate on Manipur. It is actually the PM who is running away from giving a statement in the Rajya Sabha," Ramesh said.

In the Lok after it reassembled after first adjourned HRD Minister Dharmendra Pradhan during question hour answered queries of BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on the strengthening educational standards in the "aspirational and backward districts" in Jharkhand.

Speaker Om Birla had earlier adjourned the House till 2 pm after conducting proceedings for about 13 minutes.

The proceeding went in the

middle of the noisy scenes during question hour with opposition shouting slogans "PM sadan main aao", "PM Jawab do" and shouts of "shame-shame".

When the House resumed Kirit Solanki was in the chair and house papers were laid amidst the Bedlam and slogans by opposition benches on the Manipur issue.

Amidst the noisy scenes Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur moved the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha for its consideration and passage further to amend the Cinematograph Act, 1952. The Bill was earlier passed by the Rajya Sabha.

As Thakur spoke about the power and the popularity of Indian cinema and its "soft power", the opposition was in no mood to allow the proceedings to continue in the house.

The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill lays down a three-year jail term and a fine of up to 5% of a movie's production cost for those making

its pirated copies. It introduces three certifications under the 'UA' category, UA 7+, UA 13+ and UA 16+, which means that children younger than the given age limits can access such movies with parental guidance.

The Bill, already passed by the Rajya Sabha similarly without discussion, primarily aims at curbing piracy and simplifying licensing.

Outside the Parliament, the BJP leaders accused the opposition of the double talk. On short duration discussion on Manipur in Rajya Sabha, Leader of the House, Piyush Goyal along with BJP MPs from the northeast region, said "Again today, the opposition doesn't want this discussion to take place. There must be some reason why they are running away from a discussion."

BJP MP and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman accused the opposition of having a "mindset as black as the clothes they wore" and of not being "concerned about Manipur" and "shedding crocodile tears

## Attached one of largest PFI arms training centres: NIA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cracking down further on the terror activities of the Popular Front of India (PFI), the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday said it has attached one of the oldest and largest arms and physical training centres of the banned outfit in Kerala.

This is the sixth PFI arms training centre and the 18th property of the outfit to be attached by the NIA in Kerala as 'proceeds of terrorism' under the provisions of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

On March 17, the NIA filed a chargesheet against 59 accused, including the PFI as an organisation, in the case registered at the agency's office in Kochi.

"As part of its continuing investigations in the case, NIA has now attached this training centre spread over 10 hectares. The Green Valley Academy, Manjeri, Kerala is managed by 'Green Valley Foundation' (GVF) and was used by the cadres of National Development Front and subsequently by the PFI into which it merged," the NIA said in a statement.

PFI had been using the



property for imparting arms training, physical training, and training on use and testing of explosives to its cadres, identified to be part of their 'Service Wing'. The facility was also used to harbour several 'PFI Service Wing' members after they committed crimes, including murders, the agency said.

"The Centre was further being used to impart radical and rabid type of ideological training in PFI's divisive and communal agenda and policies to its trained operatives, cadres and members. Offices of PFI and its frontal organisations were functioning from this premises under the guise of educational institutions," it said.

The five other PFI training centres attached previously by NIA in Kerala were Malabar House, Periyar Valley,

Valluvanad House, Karunya Charitable Trust and Trivandrum Education and Service Trust (TEST). Another 12 PFI Offices, used by the outfit's leadership to organise training in arms and physical training, ideological propagation, and training for commissioning of various crimes, including murders and terrorist acts, have also been attached, it said.

NIA investigations have revealed that the PFI has been running many such training centres in the guise of charitable and educational trusts formed by the outfit's members or leaders. Investigations have also revealed that PFI had hired several buildings for running their training camps and activities relating to terror and violence.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached six immovable assets having book value of Rs 6.02 crore belonging to former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi, daughter Misha Bharti, Vineet Yadav (husband of Hema Yadav, daughter of Rabri Devi and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav) and Shiv Kumar Yadav (father-in-law of Hema Yadav) besides private firms AB Exports Pvt Ltd and AK Infosystem Pvt Ltd., both companies owned and controlled by family members of Lalu Prasad Yadav on money laundering charges in the Railway job-for-land scam.

Investigation was initiated by ED under Prevention of Money Laundering Act based on an FIR registered by the CBI against former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi and others. A total of six immovable properties situated at New Delhi, Ghaziabad and Patna being proceeds of crime, have been provisionally attached under PMLA, 2002. The properties attached include the residential premise situated at D-1088, New Friends Colony,



New Delhi owned by A B Exports Pvt Ltd. Two land parcels situated at Mahuabagh (Danapur), Patna of which one each is owned by Rabri Devi and AK Infosystems Pvt Ltd have also been attached, the ED said.

Further, one land parcel owned by Misa Bharti has been attached at Bihta, Patna. Apart from this, a portion of two industrial plots, one plot each registered in the names of Vineet Yadav, husband of Hema Yadav and Shiv Kumar Yadav, father-in-law of Hema Yadav, situated at Industrial area, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad have also been provisionally attached, the agency said.

The property situated at D-1088, New Friends Colony, New Delhi is an independent four-storied bungalow, registered in the name of A B

Exports Private Limited, which was shown to have been acquired in 2011 at a value of mere Rs 4 lakh. Despite being declared as the registered corporate office of various companies under the control of the members of the Yadav family, the same is being used solely for the residential purposes, which was also revealed during the search operation conducted at the said premises on March 10, 2023, it further said.

In this case, seven land parcels were acquired by family members of Lalu Prasad Yadav (the then Minister for Railways during the period 2004-09) from the candidates irregularly appointed (as Substitutes) and their family members, as a quid pro quo for Group D jobs in Indian Railways.

## ED raids Haryana Cong MLA's companies under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ED on Monday said it has raided Haryana Congress MLA Dharam Singh Chhoker and companies owned and controlled by him in a money laundering case and seized four luxury cars, jewellery worth Rs 14.5 lakh and Rs 4.5 lakh in cash, in a money laundering case linked to alleged cheating of homebuyers.

The four luxury cars included two Mercedes Benz cars and two Toyota Fortuner SUVs, officials said.

Chhoker, 59, is a legislator from the Samalkha Assembly constituency in Panipat district is stated to be the "owner and promoter" of the Mahira real estate group along with his sons Sikander Singh and Vikas Chhoker.

The action under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) came after the ED launched searches against the Chhoker, Sai Aaina Farms Pvt Ltd (now Mahira Infratech Pvt Ltd), other companies of the Mahira Group and some others on July 25, the ED said in a statement.

Eleven locations in Samalkha, Gurugram and Delhi were raided by the



agency.

The money laundering case stems from an FIR registered by the Gurugram Police against Sai Aaina Farms Pvt. Ltd. for "cheating and forgery" as it is alleged to have collected about Rs 360 crore from 1,497 homebuyers under the affordable housing scheme on the promise of providing dwelling units in Sector 68 of Gurugram, the agency said.

However, it failed to deliver the houses and missed multiple deadlines, it said.

"The home buyers have been holding protests/dharnas since one year against the Mahira Group seeking delivery of the promised houses at the earliest," it said.

The ED also alleged that Chhoker, his sons and other key employees remained "absent" during the searches and have "not joined the investigation till date".

## India, Oman to review Def ties during Navy chief's three-day visit



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Oman will review the entire gamut of their robust defence ties during Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar's three-day visit there starting Monday, navy officials said here.

Giving details of his schedule, they said the visit aims to consolidate existing bilateral defence relations and high-level discussions with military leadership of the Sultanate of Oman.

During the visit, the Navy chief will call on General Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Nu'amani, Minister of Royal Office, and hold bilateral discussions with his counterpart Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser bin Mohsen Al-Rahbi, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) and with Major General Matar bin Salim bin Rashid Al Balushi, Commander of Royal Army of Oman. Kumar will also visit key defence and training installations in Oman, officials said.

Coinciding with the visit, Indian Navy's indigenously designed and constructed Guided Missile Destroyer INS

Visakhapatnam arrived at Port Sultan Qaboos, Muscat on Sunday for a three-day port call, during which various naval cooperation events are scheduled with the Royal Navy of Oman, which will culminate with a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) on 03 Aug 23, they said.

Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman engage with each other under numerous foreign cooperation avenues, which include operations, training and exchange of subject matter experts in various fields.

The 13th edition of the bilateral naval exercise Naseem Al Bahr, an important biennial activity initiated in 1993, was conducted off Oman in 2022, and the next edition is scheduled in 2024.

Both navies also engage extensively under the aegis of various multilateral constructs such as Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). The relationship between Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman is in consonance with the Indian government's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region' (SAGAR).

## No Def offset obligation lapsed in 5 years: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The quantum of Defence offset obligations for which claims have been submitted is \$ 6.85 billion, the Government said on Monday.

Replying to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt said no offset obligation has lapsed during the last five years.

Under India's offset policy, the foreign defence entities, for all contracts worth Rs 2000 crore or more, are mandated to spend at least 30 per cent of the total contract value in India through procurement of components, transfer of technologies or setting up of research and development activities.

However, the offsets are not applicable to procurements under 'fast track procedure' and in 'option clause' cases if the same was not envisaged in the



original contract. Further, no offsets are applicable in contracts under intergovernmental agreements.

"The total value of all offset contracts is USD 13.21 billion. The quantum of offset obligations for which claims have been submitted is USD 6.85 billion. The quantum of offset due is 0.12 billion US dollars so far," Bhatt said.

He was asked about the total value of all offset contracts, the quantum of offsets

obligations paid so far along with the quantum of offsets dues by defence contractors.

Bhatt said penal action is taken against defaulting vendors as per the relevant provisions of the defence offset guidelines under the applicable defence procurement procedure.

"Assessment of the quality of offsets is not provided as bid evaluation criteria in the defence offsets guidelines under the extant defence procurement procedure," he said.

## 3K money laundering, 12K FEMA cases registered by ED in last 3 years: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has registered 3,110 cases under the anti-money laundering law and over 12,000 complaints to probe alleged foreign exchange violations over the last three years, the Government informed Parliament on Monday.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary told Lok Sabha in a written reply that the ED has recorded cases on the basis of a "risk-based robust mechanism" under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) and the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA). The number of cases recorded under the PMLA in 2020-21 was 981, during 2021-22, it rose to 1,180 and there were 949 cases dur-



ing 2022-23, he said in the reply. The total money laundering cases registered in these three years stand at 3,110.

Similarly, the federal agency booked 2,747 cases under the FEMA during 2020-21; 5,313 during 2021-22; and 4,173 cases in 2022-23. So a total of 12,233 FEMA cases were registered by the ED in the last three years.

He also gave the details of PMLA and FEMA cases registered by the ED in the same

time period in Rajasthan, while replying to a specific question about the northern state.

During the last three years in Rajasthan, 99 cases have been recorded under the PMLA and proceeds of crime amounting to Rs 836.23 crore have been attached.

Further, proceeds of crime amounting to Rs 2,214.92 crore have been confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority (of the PMLA) during the last three years, the minister said.

## Stroke incidents in India increased by 37% since 1990: ICMR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indicating a disturbing trend, a study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has revealed that the crude incidence rate of stroke has increased in India by 37 per cent from 1990 to 2019.

No wonder that stroke is the second-commonest cause of death in India. About 1.85 million strokes occur every year in India with nearly one stroke every 40 seconds and one stroke death every 4 minutes. Contrary to the general perception, more cases of strokes are being reported from

the rural areas where health infrastructure remains compromised.

Citing the findings of the study conducted by the country's premier research institution ICMR, Minister of State for Health Satya Pal Singh Baghel said that the population-based stroke registry is more in rural areas of Ludhiana in comparison in urban areas of Punjab's largest industrial city.

He was responding to a query in Lok Sabha recently. Baghel said that the ongoing population-based registry in Dibrugarh (Assam) observed that hemorrhagic stroke is



more prevalent in the rural population, which accounts to 65.1 per cent of the total stroke cases and most of the stroke patients are younger.

The minister further said that ICMR's National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR) is also conducting 38 hospital-based

stroke registries and six population-based registries.

Amid worrying trend what has come as a solace is that the age standardized incidence as well as disability adjusted life years have decreased by 8.8 percent and 33.4 percent respectively, as per the statement made by the Minister.

Commenting on the surge in stroke cases, Dr (Prof) MV Padma Srivastava, a renowned neurologist in the country and Professor of Neurology at AIIMS Delhi said, "in spite of these alarming figures, many Indian hospitals lack the necessary infrastructure and organization

required to treat stroke patients quickly and efficiently and do not deliver adequate stroke care. The stroke services across the country especially in public sector hospitals are deficient in many aspects," she said.

"One of the solutions for this deficiency in rich and poor resource settings in India is to adopt Telesstroke models in poor resource settings. Implementation of Telemedicine/Telesstroke facilities is an important step for bridging the economically and geographically challenged and underprivileged sections of the society," she suggested.

# Lakhs of devotees throng Kashi Vishwanath Temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Lakhs of devotees thronged the dwadasa jyotirlingas Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) on the fourth Monday in the auspicious month of Shrawan and on the occasion, the Jyotirling was decorated with Bhagirathi Shringar. As this year, the Shrawan month is of two months due to 'Adimaas' (extra month), the rush at KVT and other famous Shiva temples of the city and its outskirts would continue to be seen for one more month till August 31. During such 'Adimaas' period, heavy rush of pilgrims is also seen to do their Panchkoshi Parikrama Yatra.

The devotees saw the attractive Gangadhar Bhagirathi Shringar of Lord Shiva at KVT this time whereas during the last three Mondays, the idol was decorated as Chal Pratima, Gauri Shankar and Amrit Varsha Shringar respectively. Like the previous Mondays of the auspicious month, this time also, long queues of people including thousands of saffron-clad Kanwariyas crawled towards the KVT throughout the day and by the night over six lakh devotees offered prayers there. By the noon, the number of devotees reached the temple for jalabhishek has crossed three lakh figure mark.

Right from the wee hours after Mangla aarti, the devotees started thronging the temple and there were continuous lines of devotees on both sides of the temple including Maidagin and Godowlia as well as Lalita Ghat (Ganga



Dwar). As thousands of kanwariyas arrived here carrying the sacred Gangajal from Sangam in Prayagraj walking about 125 kms, the echoes of traditional slogan 'Har Har Mahadev', along with 'Bol Bom' resounded in the air throughout the day. For the conveniences of the devotees, at several places big LED screens were installed to display the activities of garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) as the devotees were not allowed to touch the Shivaling and they offered jalabhishek through big metal structures from outside the garbhagriha.

In view of the rush of devotees, elaborate security arrangements were made and no vehicles were allowed to move between Godowlia and Maidagin throughout the day. To maintain law and order, the devotees were checked at many

places through metal detectors. Senior administrative and police officers were present there to keep watch on the stock of situation in KVC premises. All the activities were also watched through various CCTV cameras. To avoid congregation the devotees were asked to move towards Gyanvapi only through barricading and Rapid Action Force (RAF), para-military and PAC jawans were deployed both inside and outside of the premises.

Besides, there was heavy rush of devotees at all famous temples including Mahamritunjya Mahadev (Daranagar), Gauri Kedareswar (Kedar Ghat), Jogeshwar Mahadev (Ishwargangi), Omkleshwar Mahadev (Chittanpura), Teel Bhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli),

Sarangnath Mahadev (Sarnath) and many others in the city areas. In the outskirts, a heavy rush of devotees was seen at Markandey Mahadev, located near the confluence of rivers Ganga and Gomti at Kaithi village on Varanasi-Ghazipur highway. Besides, rush was also seen at all the Shiva temples located on Panchkoshi Parikrama Marg including Karmeshwar Mahadev, Bhim Chandi, Rameshwar Mahadev, Panch Pandava and Kapildhara. Apart from these famous temples, heavy rush of devotees was also seen at Vishwanath temple in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) premises and Shool Tankeshwar Mahadev and scores of all others as the city is famous for having the replicas of all the dwadasa jyotirlingas.

# Panchkoshi Marg in bad shape: Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Provincial president of Congress (Prayagraj Zone) and former UP Minister Ajay Rai expressed concern over the bad shape of Panchkoshi Parikrama Marg. He was on his five days religious journey and it was the fourth day when on Monday evening he reached the fourth parao (halt) at Panch Pandava (Shivpur). When he reached Shivpur, Mahant Shankar Puri Ji Maharaj of the famous Annapurna Temple gave his blessings to Ajay Rai.

Earlier, prior to his departure from Rameshwar Mahadev temple, Rai said that it was his third Panchkoshi Yatra and this time, he found that the route was in bad shape and due to this the devotees are facing a lot of inconveniences. He strongly criticised the government for not paying attention towards the route.

"Not a single basic facility has been provided for the Panchkoshi Yatris by the district administration as well as the state government. There are

no street lights and due to this, the pilgrims face a lot of problems.

Besides, neither there is any arrangement for medical treatment for the pilgrims, nor there is any arrangement for toilets," he alleged.

Flaying the district administration for its tall claims, the Congress leader said that women pilgrims face a lot of difficulties in absence of proper toilets and other facilities on the route.

Among those who also welcomed Ajay Rai when he

reached his fourth halt at Shivpur were district party chief Rajeshwar Singh Patel, city president Raghavendra Choubey, former district president Prajanath Sharma, Shri Prakash Singh and others and he was accompanied by Manish Morolia, Dharmendra Singh, Neelu Singh, Ghanshyam Singh, Rajan Dubey, Dr Om Prakash Rai, Anwar Pappu, Anil Singh, Sunil Rai, Manoj Dwivedi, Rajeev Ram, Arun Singh, Shyam Babu Singh, Pappu Singh, Vijay Singh and many others.

# Farm exports from Purvanchal jump up 248 per cent

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The initiatives taken by both the central and state governments to promote the exports of agricultural products have started bringing fruitful results as there has been an increase of 404 metric tonnes of exports in the financial year 2022-23 as compared to the financial year 2021-22. At the same time, there has been an increase of 248 per cent in the exports of farm products in the first quarter of this year in comparison to the same corresponding period last year. With the opening of Integrated Pack House for Food and Vegetable Exports, the possibility of fur-

ther increase in exports cannot be ruled out.

With the help of Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEEDA), the export of vegetables and fruits to farmers is increasing every year. And now by becoming entrepreneurs, farmers are able to sell their produce not only in the country but also in foreign countries and the popularity of farm products of Purvanchal (eastern UP) is spreading abroad. The hard work of the farmers and the strategy of the Yogi government is now paying off.

APEEDA's Deputy General

Manager Dr CB Singh said that with the help of the state government, the production of vegetables and fruits has started matching the demand of the international market.

The result of which is that the demand for Purvanchal's perishable products has started increasing in the international market.

There has been an increase of 248 per cent in exports in the first quarter of the financial year 2023-24 as compared to the first quarter of the financial year 2022-23.

In the same financial year 2021-22, 157 metric tonnes and 561 metric tonnes of vegetables and fruits have been

exported in the financial year 2022-23.

The exports have jumped up with the help of the state government after the opening of APEEDA office in Varanasi in the year 2020.

APEEDA had sent green chillies to Britain for the first time in April 2020 during the corona pandemic period. The agricultural products like green chillies, okra, parwal, green peas, mango, litchi, banana, kundru, guava, mango, arvi, drumstick, bottle gourd, jackfruit, arvi, brinjal, amla, melon etc are now being exported from the city to the Gulf countries, Europe, Nepal, Bangladesh etc.

# BJP mayors to go to Gujarat for training

VARANASI (PNS): All the mayors of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) elected recently will go to Gujarat for training so that they can know their responsibilities as the people's representatives and accountability towards the public. Besides, the district panchayat members of the party will also have training in Prayagraj on August 21 and 22. This information has been given by the regional president of the party (Kashi Region) Dilip Singh Patel. The purpose of such training is that there will be no lack of efficiency in their performance if they have been elected for the first time or for the second time on the post of Mayor or chairperson in the state, he said, adding that for this, the party has chalked out a comprehensive strategy. "Everyone will be trained. For

this, they will also be sent to Gujarat and Haryana so that they can discharge their responsibilities well after getting training. Due to this, there should be no lack of efficiency in their sure accountability towards the public. Preparations are being made to send all the mayors of BJP to Gujarat for training under the programme," said Patel.

He said that apart from this many new programmes are going to be held at the party level and under this, there will be Mandal-wise tiffin meetings every month. Apart from this, the training of all the elected BJP district panchayat members of UP will be held in Prayagraj on August 21 and 21. Along with this, training of all elected BJP corporators of Varanasi and Prayagraj Municipal Corporations will be

held in Varanasi in the last week of August and the training of all the elected district panchayat chairpersons of BJP is proposed to be held at Surajkund in Haryana on August 7 and 8.

**36 ELDERS LIVING IN 'MUMUKSHU BHAWAN':** Having a wish to attain salvation after the death, as many as 36 elders are living in 'mumukshu bhawan', constructed adjacent to Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir in the premises of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham. Two old aged persons have booked the beds for the same. There is a religious belief that one gets salvation after the death in Kashi (Varanasi) and keeping this in view, the 'mumukshu bhawan' has been constructed in the premises of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham. Having a wish to pass their last time near

Lord Shiva particularly in the auspicious month of shrawan, the elderly devotees decided to live in 'mumukshu bhawan' and as many as 36 such persons are living here in the present with a wish to attain salvation, its manager Kaumudi Kant Apte informed, adding that two more have booked the beds to live and the beds have been reserved for them. There are a total of 40 beds in 'mumukshu bhawan'. To pass their last times with a wish to attain salvation, the old aged persons across the country are coming here to live, he informed further. There is a facility of television for the inmates to watch religious serials, the manager informed, adding that the inmates are also listening to katha being organised in the premises of Dham.

# Advocates protest against Vijay Mishra's arrest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Advocates associated with the District Bar boycotted judicial work and staged a chakka jam in front of police office near Kutcheri to protest against the arrest of Atiq Ahmad's advocate Vijay Mishra who had been taken into police custody from a hotel in Lucknow on Saturday night and was sent to jail on Sunday.

The District Bar Association (DBA) condemned the arrest of Vijay Mishra, a member of the association, and demanded that he should be set free and charges against him be withdrawn. The agitation was led by Narendra Kumar Shukla. He said if the demand of the advocates is not fulfilled within 12 hours, roads will be blocked in different areas here. The administration was apprehensive of agitation by the advocates on Sunday itself, that is why Vijay Mishra was kept for seven hours at a trans-Yamuna police station instead of Dhoomanganj police station. He had been produced before the magistrate on Sunday itself under tight security arrangements. All the gates of Kutcheri had been closed after taking Vijay Mishra in and were opened to take him to Naiin Central Jail from there.

On Monday morning the Bar office-bearers convened a meeting and decided to boycott judicial work. After a meeting a mob of over 100 lawyers observed a chakka jam at the



police office. Apart from being involved in the conspiracy to murder advocate Umesh Pal there are several criminal cases against Vijay Mishra.

**COMPLAINT:** A complaint against a police sub-inspector was lodged at Dhoomanganj police station after five months after the intervention of National Women Commission. The woman who had allegedly been sexually harassed had been running from pillar to post since February 1, when she had visited Dhoomanganj police station with a complaint against a policeman who was earlier a

constable and later became sub-inspector.

The 24-year-old woman claimed they were students of the same coaching in Katra and had been preparing for UP Police and VDO examinations in 2018. After selection as police constable in 2019 he was posted in Jaunpur. They remained in contact through mobile phone. The woman's marriage was settled in Rae Bareilly, but the constable allegedly asked her to refuse to the proposal as he was interested in marrying her. He visited her house thrice in March 2020 and promised to marry her. In December 2020 she lost

her mother and he visited her place when her father was not there. During this period they entered into a physical relationship.

In June 2022, he was selected as an S-I and then he allegedly refused to marry her, switched off his phone in January 2023 after threatening her. The woman went to Dhoomanganj police station, but could not get any justice. After lodging complaints with officers, she even contacted the top brass, but to no avail. Ultimately she moved the NCW and on its intervention, a formal complaint was registered against the S-I.

# Petals showered on devotees, Kanwariyas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

On the fourth Monday of the auspicious month of Shrawan, flower petals were showered on devotees and on saffron-clad Kanwariyas from the sky by the district magistrate and district police commissioner here on the instruction of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

District Magistrate Sanjay Khatri and Police Commissioner Ramit Sharma boarded a helicopter in the morning with quintals of rose petals which were showered on the Kanwariyas and devotees at the Sangam nose, Dashashwamedh Ghat, Mankameshwar and Padila Mahadev temples areas as a mark to Shiva devotees.

Thousands of Kanwariyas collect Ganga waters from the Sangam area here in their pitchers and plastic containers to offer to Baba Vishwanath of Kashi. Most of them cover this 130 km distance on foot. For their convenience three lanes of the six-lane highway between Prayagraj and Varanasi are reserved and no vehicles are allowed on that particular side of the highway. Heavy vehicles have been diverted while light vehicles are plying up and



Flower petals being showered on devotees in Prayagraj from helicopter

down using only one side of the road. This arrangement will continue till the end of the month of Shrawan.

Reports of showering petals are also pouring in from Varanasi, Ayodhya and Meerut.

Long queues were witnessed at Shiv temples where devotees waited for their turn for hours with milk and Gangajal in their hands. Thousands reached the Sangam to take a holy dip in the sacred waters of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati, before reaching the temples.

**RENOVATION WORK:**

In the absence of any tender, the fate of renovation work of Zero Road bus station hangs in balance. The regional manager, UP Roadways, Prayagraj is sitting with fingers crossed, waiting for instructions FROM the top brass.

The Civil Lines and the Zero Road bus stations of Prayagraj were to be renovated on PPP model before Mahakumbh. The bus stations are to be redeveloped completely with an investment of about Rs 150 crore, but the officers are surprised to know that no party is interested in renovating Zero Road bus sta-

tion. Tenders for Zero Road bus station renovation work were floated twice, but to no avail.

The Civil Lines bus station is being redeveloped by Omax company and is all set to start work in two phases from next month. For Civil Lines bus station redevelopment on 1,800 sq metre a fund of Rs 110 crore has been allocated and tender was floated for the same. It went in favour of Omax which has decided to complete work in two phases to avoid any inconvenience to passengers. The work is to be completed within October 2024.

For Zero Road bus station a budget of Rs 39 crore was allocated for redevelopment on 6,265 sq metre area. Tender was floated but no positive response was received. The tender process was repeated, but once again the fate was the same.

Now the officers are worried as to how the work will be completed before Mahakumbh. Regional Manager MK Trivedi said redevelopment of Zero Road bus station was to be done on PPP model. Tenders were floated twice, but no party showed interest in this project. Now the decision has to be taken by the headquarters as to what is to be done.

# Prayagraj police to become hi-tech

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Prayagraj police will become hi-tech with the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI) ahead of the Mahakumbh 2025. The Prayagraj police has started the exercise of installing CCTV cameras at mobile towers, liquor shops and petrol

pumps under Operation Drishti. On the special initiative of the Director General of Police, Prayagraj police is running Operation Drishti from July 10, the nodal officer of which is Abhinav Tyagi, DCP Traffic, DCP Abhinav Tyagi has received special training in AI. Due to which he has been

entrusted with the command of this operation. He is getting CCTVs installed with the help of his special team and police stations. So far, 700 cameras have been installed from the city to the rural areas. To monitor these CCTV cameras, control rooms will be set up at police stations with the coop-

eration of the public.

On the basis of dark spots of CCTV and hot spots of complaints on Dial 112, the places for installation of cameras of Operation Drishti are being selected. The teams of the police station have been given the task of marking such places where CCTV is not installed.

# DM inspects park, issues directives

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Divya Mittal inspected the Ram Chandra Shukla Park on Sunday in view of construction of the Kajali Memorial and renovation of the park. She directed the officials of the Nagar Palika Parishad to ensure cleaning of the park without delay and inform her. The PWD officials were directed to prepare a plan to make the spot as useful as possible for the people of the town. She directed the officials that the facility was to be equipped with the places to hold programmes in the campus regularly so plan was to be made accordingly. During the inspection she was accompanied by Additional District Magistrate (ADM/Finance and Revenue) Shiv Pratap Shukla,

sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Sadar Chandrabhanu Singh and other officials concerned.

**DISTRIBUTED:** Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel exhorted the youth to participate in the sports for the overall development of the personality. These views were expressed by her while distributing sport kits to yuvak mangal dals (YMDs) of the district at a programme organised by the Youth Welfare department and Pradeshik Vikas Dal (PVD) at City Club on Sunday. Speaking as the chief guest she gave a slogan 'Jo Khelega Woh Khilega' (The one who plays will bloom) and said the government was committed for betterment of the youth and sport kits were being distrib-

uted to the youth of the rural area under that spirit. She said the government was providing facilities to promote sports. She said the policy of the government is very clear to make available playing ground in each village and multipurpose hall in each block headquarters. As per the PVD the kits had been made available to 108 male YMDs and 108 to female mangal dals and total 175 kits were distributed on the day.

The programme was also addressed by MLAs Ratnakar Mishra and Dr Vinod Bind. DM Divya Mittal, Chief Medical Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS, Chairman Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP) Mirzapur Shyam Sundar Keshari, district president BJP Brijbhushan Singh, district president Apna Dal(S)

Ramlotan Bind and others were present.

**COUPLES REUNITE:** Under Project Milan programme five couples reunited on Sunday. At Police Lines a family counselling centre is working in which cases of family disputes are being settled through counselling. At the centre counsellors hold meetings of couples who are living separately due to misunderstandings. On the day the counsellors succeeded in convincing five couples to live together and extended best wishes for their bright future. The entire process was conducted in the presence of the incharge of the centre sub-inspector Shashi Tiwari, constable Neetu Yadav, counsellors Nirmala Rai, Dr Krishna Singh and others.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Vulnerable

The big number of missing women is a cause of concern; it must be probed

The data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and released by the Union Home Ministry is shocking. More than 13.13 lakh girls and women went missing in the country in the three years between 2019 and 2021, with Madhya Pradesh accounting for the highest at nearly two lakh, closely followed by West Bengal. Among Union Territories, Delhi recorded the highest number of such cases. In the Capital, 61,054 women and 22,919 girls went missing between 2019 and 2021 while in Jammu and Kashmir, the number was 8,617 and 1,148, respectively. This information was tabled in Parliament last week. The mind-boggling numbers must be taken seriously. Government data shows that 10,61,648 women above 18 years and 2,51,430 girls below that age went missing between 2019 and 2021 across the country. The report does not shed light on the reasons for such disappearances, but the sheer number is enough to point to a big racket of women traffickers. The disconcerting revelation of an escalating number of missing women in our society has jolted the nation to its core. The government data, released last week, paints a grim picture, highlighting the urgency of tackling this perplexing issue head-on. It is a matter that demands deep probe and calls for strict action. It is directly linked to the safety, rights and dignity of women.



As the data pertains to Covid period, it must be seen in the light where people were desperate to survive. Thus the root cause of the alarming increase in missing women lies in a complex interplay of socio-economic factors, deeply ingrained gender biases and systemic failures. Economic disparities, lack of educational opportunities and limited access to enforcing agencies relegate women to vulnerable positions and make them susceptible to exploitation and abduction. Moreover, the patriarchal mindset that continues to pervade many segments of society perpetuates the devaluation of women, perpetrating violence and human trafficking, leading to their disappearance. This is by no means the final analysis and must be probed by investigating agencies as well as social scientists to fathom the root cause. But in all likelihood, the traffickers took the vulnerability of the people in corona time as a golden opportunity to go on rampage. Though the Government has taken several initiatives for the safety of women, which include the enactment of The Criminal Law (Amendment), Act, 2013, for effective deterrence against sexual offences, the number of missing women has swelled to gigantic proportions. Besides, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018, was also enacted to prescribe even more stringent penal provisions. The Act calls for rapid completion of investigation and other procedures in rape cases. But the implementation of these laws leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, inadequate law enforcement, corruption and inefficiency in the criminal justice system have exacerbated the problem, leaving the families of missing women in perpetual anguish.

### PICTALK



Indian Army Gunners after its expedition to mark the first anniversary of the rechristening of Pt 5140 as Gun Hill in Drass. PTI

## Green hydrogen can end India's energy woes



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

India's distinct advantage in low-cost renewable electricity means that green hydrogen will emerge as the most cost-effective form

Green Hydrogen is increasingly becoming important to India's economic development and net-zero ambitions. A NITI Aayog report suggests, it can help abate 3.6 gigatons of cumulative CO2 emissions by 2050, which may prove to be a boon for the country if it succeeds in its endeavours. Several sectors like iron ore and steel, fertilizers, refinery, methanol, heavy-duty trucking, aviation and maritime shipping emit large amounts of carbon dioxide.



research, has highlighted that green hydrogen can substantially spur industrial decarbonisation and economic growth for India in the coming decades. The report, co-authored by NITI Aayog and RMI, underscores that green hydrogen produced by renewable energy through electrolysis of water will be crucial for achieving decarbonisation of harder-to-abate sectors such as fertilisers, refining, methanol, maritime shipping, iron & steel and transport.

NITI Aayog says - with emerging global momentum on hydrogen, India can situate this decarbonisation opportunity not just within the context of a low-carbon economy, but also as an enabler of energy security and economic development for the nation. Green hydrogen can potentially provide a replacement of fossil fuels in industrial processes and the next steps at the policy level could involve arriving at the

correct mix between mandates/regulations and price instruments. Given the right policies, India can emerge as the least-cost producer and bring down the price of green hydrogen to 1 dollar per kg by 2030.

While hydrogen can be produced from multiple sources, India's distinct advantage in low-cost renewable electricity means that green hydrogen will emerge as the most cost-effective form. The report concludes that hydrogen demand in India could grow more than four-fold by 2050, representing almost 10% of global demand. Given that the majority of this demand could be met with green hydrogen in the long term, the cumulative value of the green hydrogen market in India could reach 8 billion dollars by 2030.

There is significant global interest in green hydrogen and countries are in the first stages of formulating a strategy and this will ultimately decide the winners and losers of the hydrogen economy.

Near-term policy measures can bring down the current costs of green hydrogen to make it competitive with

the existing grey hydrogen prices. Government can encourage near-term market development by identifying industrial clusters and enacting associated viability gap funding, mandates and targets. Opportunities around research and development and manufacturing of components like electrolyzers need to be identified and appropriately encouraged with adequate financial mechanisms such as production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes to enable 25 GW of the manufacturing capacity of electrolyzers by 2028.

A globally competitive green hydrogen industry can lead to exports of green hydrogen and hydrogen-embedded low-carbon products like green ammonia and green steel that can unlock 95 GW of electrolysis capacity in the nation by 2030. It works in the world's most critical geographies and engages businesses, policymakers, communities and NGOs to identify and scale up energy system interventions that will cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent by 2030.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

# No-confidence motion, no good

The fate of the present no-trust motion is already known. The ruling BJP will easily win the motion, as the math favours Modi



KALYANI SHANKAR

The Speaker has admitted the notice given by the new Opposition coalition (INDIA) last week against the Modi government. It will be the second he has faced since 2014. Earlier this month, 26 opposition parties formed Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). Opposition parties are increasing the pressure on Modi as they gear up for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Socialist leader Acharya Kripalani brought the first No confidence motion against the Jawaharlal Nehru government in August 1963. Indira Gandhi faced the most number of no-confidence motions. She faced 15 during her 16-year tenure (1966-77 and (1980-1984) as prime minister. Charan Singh, V.P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar, H.D. Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral did not face any such motion.

The Opposition - sponsored motion comes after the Monsoon session faced continuous disruption on the Manipur issue. That was the last resort after it exhausted all other options to get a reply from Prime Minister. The fate of the present no-trust motion is already known. There will be no nail-biting excitement. The ruling BJP can easily win the motion, as the math favours Modi.

The BJP-led NDA has 332 members in Lok Sabha. The required majority mark is 272. The Jagan Mohan Reddy-led Yuva Jana Sramika Rhythu Congress Party (YSRCP), not a part of the NDA, has decided to back Modi with its 22 members in the Lok Sabha. The opposition bloc has a strength of 142 seats. The KCR-led Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), (not part of the INDIA bloc, has backed the Opposition. The Opposition knows it may not win the vote but claims it will win the perception war. The motion will pressure Modi to come before the Lok Sabha and answer the questions about Maniour clashes and other issues. Modi has remained silent for over 80 days. The ethnic clashes began in early May. It was between the majority Meitei group, who are overwhelmingly Hindus, and the mainly Christian Kuki and Naga tribes in the BJP-



ruled Manipur.

The clashes have caused widespread national and international anger after some disturbing videos have become public recently. A video of two women paraded naked by a mob sparked global outrage last week. A spokesman of the Biden administration also expressed condemnation. The face-off between the Government and the Opposition escalated over the issue, resulting in the non-stop disruption of Parliament since the Monsoon session began. Having a considerable majority, the Modi Government has nothing to fear, yet it refused to be accommodating towards the Opposition.

The Opposition is also confronting the Government with walkouts, noisy scenes, and slogan shouting. Both sides adopted an aggressive attitude. While it is the business of the Government to ensure the smooth running of Parliament, the Opposition must also provide constructive criticism. Both sides must change their attitude. Debate, discussion, and constructive criticism are fundamental parts of lawmaking. Prime Minister must now respond to the upcoming no-confidence motion and clarify all issues raised. The Opposition will undoubtedly utilize this debate



A THRIVING DEMOCRACY REQUIRES AN EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENT. AS PER THE CONSTITUTION, THE LEGISLATURE CARRIES THEM OUT, AND THE JUDICIARY ENFORCES THEM

as an opportunity to voice their concerns, making it crucial for the Prime Minister to clear doubts.

Parliament is weaker due to the need for more discussions and scrutiny of laws, as the members are called lawmakers for nothing. Recognizing the value of parliamentary debates in shaping public opinion is essential. Dismissing these debates as unproductive would be a mistake. The lawmakers debate bills before they vote on them. Expressing their concerns during a House session is essential. They have several avenues to voice their concern. They have the question hour, short notice questions, calling attention motions, adjournment motions and finally, a no-trust motion.

Since Independence, Indian Parliament has witnessed some excellent debates. But over the years, disruptions rather than debate have become the norm. So the debates and discussions have no place amidst noisy scenes. M.P.s from both sides must use debates and discussions to represent their constituents' views and allow for meaningful scrutiny of government policies. Even the former Chief Justice of India, N.V. Ramana, lamented that the Parliament did not have adequate discussions over scrutinizing the

laws. Lawmakers must ensure that necessary modifications and revisions are made to a bill to achieve its intended objective. And avoid it from being dismissed by the judiciary.

A thriving democracy requires an effective Parliament. As per the Constitution, the legislature creates laws, the Government carries them out, and the judiciary enforces them. It is essential to take action to implement necessary changes decisively. This includes ensuring that parliamentary institutions and procedures are practical and powerful tools.

The Modi government's significant majority in the Lok Sabha does not guarantee an effortless operation. The Opposition must identify and address the correct issues to be successful. Mere walkouts, shouting slogans, and causing disruptions in the House will not accomplish their objectives. There should be a more strategic and practical approach to achieving their goals. Political parties must immediately revisit their approach and prioritize constructive debates and discussions. The primary responsibilities of Parliament are budget scrutiny and lawmaking.

(The writer is a popular columnist. The views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### MISUSE OF CENTRAL AGENCIES

Sir — The recent decision by the Supreme Court to grant a further extension to Sanjay Kumar Mishra, the Chief of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), until September 15, has been met with disappointment and concern. This decision comes shortly after the court deemed his previous extensions as unlawful. The Narendra Modi-led government's misuse of Central agencies like the ED to target opposition leaders has been a recurring concern. With upcoming elections in several states, the fresh extension granted to Mishra has added to apprehensions that it could provide the government with another opportunity to target its political adversaries. This situation highlighted the importance of maintaining independence and integrity in institutions responsible for investigating political figures. Critics argue that the decision to ignore other senior officers in favour of granting further extension to Mishra could lead to stagnation and hamper accountability within the bureaucracy. This move has raised questions about the judiciary's priorities and shed light on concerns about potential political interference. To uphold democratic principles and maintain the credibility of investigative agencies, institutions must be shielded from any political influence.

The impartiality of these institutions is of utmost importance to ensure fair and transparent investigations into political matters but central investigating agencies lose their dignity and credibility under the NDA regime.

Bishal Kumar Saha | Murshidabad

#### TEAM INDIA IN TATTERS

Sir — Team India was no match for the weak West Indies side as we lost by 6 wickets with many overs left. Now the blame game will start and the team management will point out the absence of both Kohli and Rohit Sharma for the major loss before the ODI World Cup in India in September this year. Thus the so-called number-one side lost to a team that could not qualify for the World Cup and bowed out. Again, Jadeja

#### Project tiger, a success story



When the nation is almost habitual to hear regularly the death of non-resident Cheetahs brought from Africa and Namibia, just at that moment the tiger census (3682 tigers, 75% of the world tigers) gives us some joy in our life. From around 40,000 wild tigers in India at the start of the twentieth century. As India's human population grew, tiger habitats began to be encroached upon, their population fell to less than 2,000 by the early 1970s. But rampant trophy hunting and habitat destruction brought the numbers down drastically. Five decades later, India is home to 3,682 tigers according to the 2023 tiger census, which is about 75 per cent of their global population. Interestingly,

among these big cats in India the Royal Bengal Tiger of Sundarban, West Bengal enjoyed the status of a national animal.

Without any doubt, India has brought back tigers from the brink of extinction and is seeing its numbers leap forward, thanks to Project Tiger (from nearly 250 tigers in 1972 to 3,682 in 2023, clearly indicating that if Project Tiger had not happened, arguably India may have lost its tigers by now). Project Tiger started 50 years ago in 1973 when the count was just 268. It was launched by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (from the Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhnad to revive their population in the wild Project Tiger) and has managed to repopulate some of the Indian forests. It has been a success story, and the number of tigers in India has increased from 2,967 in 2018 to 3,682 in 2022, an annual rise of 6 per cent, according to the latest government data released on International Tiger Day. Since 1973, this is one of the greatest things Indian governments have done. Good to see the rise of the tiger population.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

is considered a number-done all-rounder but could not get a single wicket in 6 overs and could score 10 runs off 21 balls. The same team combination could not win an ICC-sponsored tournament in the last 10 years but the same team persisted without a change. We are just waiting for the World Cup in India to wipe out our barren period of a decade.

Jayanthy CK Maniam | Ghaziabad

#### WOMEN SAFETY IS A CONCERN

Sir — As per the report more than 13.13 lakh girls and women went missing in the country in three years between 2019 and 2021 and most of them were from Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat followed by West Bengal. According to the Union Home Ministry data, 10,61,648 women above 18 years and 2,51,430 girls below that age went missing between 2019 and 2021 across the country. The data was compiled by the National

Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

A total of 1,56,905 women and 36,606 girls went missing from West Bengal in the same period. In Maharashtra, 1,78,400 women and 13,033 girls went missing in the said period. In Odisha, 70,222 women and 16,649 girls went missing in the three years while 49,116 women and 10,817 girls went missing from Chhattisgarh in the said period. Among the Union Territories, Delhi recorded the highest number of missing girls and women. In the national capital, 61,054 women and 22,919 girls went missing between 2019 and 2021 while in Jammu and Kashmir, 8,617 women and 1,148 girls went missing in the said period. With this women are not safe in the country.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

FOCUS ON TAPA,  
AMRIT WILL FOLLOWTapa is penance and Amrit its reward,  
we must not worry about Amrit

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

This is the rule for us, human beings, on this earth planet. Lord Krishna has made it very clear in verse # 18.37, when He stated, "That which in the beginning is like poison, but in the result is like nectar, that happiness, the result of spiritual knowledge, is said to be goodness." What is not possible has been stated very clearly in the next verse, which is, "That, which is like nectar in the beginning due to the contact between senses and sense objects, but in the result is like poison, that happiness is said to be in passion. (18.38) Unfortunately, many want nectar now and nectar later also. They feel that they can cheat the system, but what happens to them? They end up cheating themselves out of peace and happiness.

Let us understand the word tapa (austerities) in this connection. The Geeta has plenty of information about it. "Properly honouring gods, Brahmins, teachers and wise persons, cleanliness, simplicity, celibacy and non-violence – these are called the tapa of the body." (17.14)

The word Amrit in the context of this article is a pleasant result. A few examples will clarify it. A student applies himself in proper ways for many years. Then, one day all his sincere efforts bear fruit and he lands a much sought-after lucrative job. The third example is of a yogi who is in search of a never-ending 'sukha' (Brahmananda). He abstains from external sense objects, which are not essential for his maintenance. Then, he begins to experience that sukha, that he had sought. (5.21)

What is our experience about tapa of body, mind and words? Beginning with the body it is not easy to properly honour gods, Brahmins, teachers and wise persons. Our 'ahankar' comes in the way. We have to force ourselves, which is what tapa is. Simplicity is another virtue, which does not come easy. In our attempt to be very smart, we complicate our lives. To restrain self from falling prey is tapa. People misunderstand the word celibacy. It is not abstaining from sexual activity; it is against what is not permitted by 'dharma' (righteousness). (7.11) Unfortunately, we want no restrictions on ourselves. That is why it is so difficult to practice tapa. Non-violence is also hard to bring into our daily lives.



Now the tapa of speech. Utterance, which is not agitating, is difficult to practice because we want to put down people and feel superior. Who is practising being truthful in these days of intense competition? Whatever sells is the mantra, not telling the truth. What is pleasing is just as difficult, because that will mean that the other person has some quality, in which he excels. The same goes for uttering something beneficial unless one is preaching, knowing full well how people hate being preached to. And the regular recitation of Vedic texts is avoided the most, because that may require us to change – a painful fact.

The third type of tapa is the mind. Satisfaction of the mind comes from living one's life satisfactorily. Pleasant peace is still more difficult; it requires peace, which comes from God only. Silence, which is not speaking unnecessarily, will keep most of us quiet for most of the time – a painful prospect. Self-control over the senses and the mind are still more difficult. How else is one going to indulge self in sense objects and thinking? Purity of emotions is at the top of the list, because it takes out lust, anger, greed, being pride, to name just a few.

Now we know why we want Amrit now and Amrit later. During tapa is a daunting task. Let us see if we can outsmart the system. Unfortunately, we fail miserably.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher)

A tribute to Tun Tun  
on her birth centenary

SANTANU GANGULY

Tun Tun aka Uma Devi is no more with us but she would always be remembered for her songs and comic scenes



Who doesn't know Tun Tun, the first female comedian in the Hindi film industry? Everyone is aware of the name Tun Tun, and some people also even know her real name Uma Devi, the singer and actress of the 60s. Tun Tun was the first female comedian of that decade, whose laughter started echoing in the hall as soon as she appeared on the screen.

Tun Tun was born on 11 July 1923, as Uma Devi Khatri in a small village near Amroha in Uttar Pradesh. Her parents had been killed due to the property dispute, when she was only two years old. Her brother Hari, who was 9 years older than Tun Tun, used to take care of her. But then after some time, Hari has also been murdered for the property by the relatives when Tun Tun was only about 4-5 years old and she became a complete orphan. It was the most devastating time of her life. Later in an interview, she said, that, she doesn't even recall what her parents looked like, only remembering she used to live in Alipur with her brother Hari.

During that childhood, she started working as a maid in the house of her relatives. When she was a little older, she learned that her parents and brother had been murdered to usurp their land. Uma Devi was fond of singing since childhood and wanted to come to Mumbai (then Bombay) and become a singer. In her village she met Akhtar Abbas Kazi, who was an excise duty inspector, he used to encourage Uma Devi to sing. Though she didn't have any formal training in singing she was very fond of singing and had a melodious voice. But in 1947 during the India - Pakistan partition, Akhtar decided to move to Lahore and unfortunately, young Uma again became completely supportless.

Uma Devi was determined that whenever she would get a chance to sing, she would sing for Naushad. One day she ran away from her relatives and came to Mumbai. Someone in Delhi gave him the address of director Nitin Bose's assistant Jawwad Hussain. She came to Mumbai and



UMA DEVI DESIRED THAT SHE WILL HAVE HER FIRST FILM WITH DILIP KUMAR, AND SHE WAS QUITE DETERMINED ABOUT IT

(Santanu Ganguly, is a Festival Curator, Writer and Filmmaker. views are personal)

met him and it was he who gave shelter to Tun Tun.

In 1947, when the country was being divided, AR Kardar was making the film 'Dard'. Uma Devi barged into his house one day and asked him where to find Kardar, as she wanted to sing in films. Though she was not familiar with film methods, he auditioned her and hired her on the spot. She made her debut as a solo playback singer in Nazir's Wamiq Azra (1946). She soon signed a contract with the producer-director AR Kardar, where Naushad was the music director, and went on to make a place for herself amidst the music stalwarts of that time, like Noor Jehan, Rajkumari, Khursheed Bano and Zohrabai Ambalewali.

Kardar liked Uma Devi's this particular style very much. He immediately called Naushad Sahab's assistant and asked him to take Uma Devi's test. Then she sang him the song 'Aandhiyan Gum Ki Yun Chali' from the film 'Zeenat'. He liked her song so much that he hired him for rupees 500 a month.

Uma Devi's first song was 'Afsana Likh Rahi Hoon' in the film 'Dard'. This song became a super hit. Akhtar Abbas Qazi liked this song of her so much that he left his country Pakistan and came to India and married her. Akhtar was an old acquaintance of Uma Devi, whom she used to call Mohan. He died in the year of 1992. They had two daughters and two sons.

In 1947, she had huge hits with "Afsana Likh Rahi Hoon Dil-e-Beqarar Ka", "Yeh Kaun Chala Meri Aankhon Mein Sama Kar" and "Aaj Machi Hai Dhoom Jhoom Khushi Se Jhoom", which she sang for actress Munawar Sultana in A.R. Kardar's Dard (1947), again under the music direction of Naushad, she also sang a duet; "Betaab Hai Dil

Dard-e-Mohabat Ke Asar Se", with Suraiya.

The success of Dard open the door for her that she next received Mehboob Khan's Anokhi Ada (1948), with again had two hit numbers, "Kahe Jiya Dole" and "Dil Ko Lagake Humne Kuch Bhi Na Paya". This brought her into the league of highly-rated playback singers of the time. She reached her peak in her singing career as a vocalist in director S.S. Vasan's Chandralekha (1948) made by Gemini Studios, Madras. She sang seven songs, including super-hit like "Saanjh Ki Bela" which remains her most accomplished song in her singing career. But unfortunately signing for Chandralekha also meant a breach of contract with producer-director Kardar, which led to Uma Devi's dwindling fortunes in the industry.

After this, she sang about 45 songs continuously, but because of her pregnancies and domestic responsibilities, she had to take a break from films. Her husband Akhtar used to work though, but as the family grew, it was difficult to manage the family with the salary. So she thought of working again. And after having four children, her weight was increasing continuously.

Meanwhile, she found that due to her older style of singing and limited vocal range, it was difficult to compete with rising singing stars like Gita Dutt, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle. Eventually, Naushad suggested to her that she should take up acting, because of her bubbly personality and wonderful comic timing.

Uma Devi desired that she will have to have her first film with Dilip Kumar only, and she was quite determined about it. Knowing this stubbornness, Naushad asked his friend, Dilip Kumar, to cast her in

one of his films, and she appeared in Babul (1950) with him, where Nargis was the lead actress. During the shooting of a scene with Dilip Kumar, she had a fall and Dilip Kumar jokingly said "aare yeh Tun Tun ko koi uthao" (please someone help this fatty lady to stand up). She quite liked the name, Tun Tun. Naushad Sahib named Uma Devi as Tun Tun. Which later became her identity and she was reborn as the first female comedian of n Hindi film industry.

She has acted in Guru Dutt's classics such as Aar Paar (1954), Mr. & Mrs. '55 (1955) and Pyaasa (1957). Then Tun Tun was a permanent comic relief in numerous Hindi films; a few years down the line, in the 1960s and 1970s. In Prakash Mehra's blockbuster Namak Halaal (1982) she has acted with Amitabh Bachchan. She acted in about 200 films in Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi, in her career spanning over five decades, and paired with the top comedy actors of her times such as Bhagwan Dada, Agha, Sunder, Mukri, Dhupal, Johnny Walker and Keshto Mukherjee. She was last seen in the film Kasam Dhande Ki (1990).

Owing to her popularity, the name Tun Tun has become synonymous with fat women in India. After the death of her husband in 1992, she distanced herself from films. The person who gave so much to the Hindi film industry, but in her last days she had to spend at a Chawl in Mumbai, where she was struggling to buy food and medicines. Even then she used to laugh at her poverty. Such is the real face of our film industry. They can burn their black money to make stupid meaningless films, but cannot spend a single penny for the welfare of the veteran, poor artists, and those who are destitute.

## Indian perspective on the global digital governance

India is a digital exemplar and is also keen to share best practices concerning digital security with others

Last weekend, I was watching a cartoon film on the LOTT platform with my four-year-old son. The film was based on the Indian epic the Mahabharata. In an encounter with Yaksha, Yudhishtira suggested that the mind is faster than the wind. The answer pushed my mind into a chain of thoughts. I realized, in today's world digital technology can come closer to the speed of mind. Besides, like the human mind technology transcends geographic, political, and economic borders.

Today, I came across the compelling address delivered by Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the G20 Conference on Crime and Security in the Age of NFTs, AI, and the Metaverse. Mr



ANIKET BHAVTHANKAR

Shah's speech served as a catalyst, reigniting my contemplation on the subject of technology. Notably, it reminded me of the profound essence encapsulated in India's G20 presidency's motto: Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, or one earth, one family, one future (signifying the unity of mankind, the interconnectedness of our planet, and our shared destiny).

The theme is perhaps relevant to digital technology too. In the context of the transcendental nature of digital technology, Mr Shah discussed the opportunities and challenges it has posed for the institution of the State. He further elaborated on the need to sensitize an individual about the positives and pitfalls of digital technology.

## DIGITAL EXEMPLAR

The world has acknowledged the calibre of India's human capital concerning the fields of IT and SaaS (Software as a Service). Besides, in the last decade, India has demonstrated that emerging technology could be the elixir for the emancipation of common citizens of the country. In this regard, Direct Benefit Transfer and Co-Win Applications for COVID vaccination are relevant projects. The success of India stack and especially Unified Payment Interface (UPI) has set an example for others to follow. Countries from Global South are keen to replicate the Indian model of digital public infrastructure with local suitability. Even, OECD countries are keen to understand

the success of India stack. Thus, India demonstrated that emerging technologies could positively touch human lives and transform the country into a digital nation.

## G20 AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

For the first time, the conference on emerging technologies was organized under the auspices of G20. Till now, G20 looked at emerging technologies from an economic perspective. However, cyber security is not just confined to an individual and has implications for national and international security. Emerging technologies provide scope for terror networks to execute clandestine activities in a disguised manner. The inherent vulnerabilities of the digital realm inevitably cast doubt on

the legitimacy and sovereignty of the State. Against this backdrop, the G20 forum emerges as a starting point to discuss the capability enhancement of States and international organizations to counter traditional and non-traditional threats like cyberterrorism. Discussion on cybersecurity at the G20 forum may augur well for global coordination on intelligence sharing among members.

## EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Mr Shah stressed that in India, heritage and technology-driven progress travel hand in hand. Indian tradition pushes for the (Madhya marge) middle path. This reflects in the approach of the Indian government towards the internet vision. India seeks to bal-

ance between the Laissez Faire approach threatening the existence of the State itself and isolationist structures of digital firewalls. Naturally, the Indian government is seeking the same vision on the global stage. Despite several attempts, a global agreement on the regulatory framework on cyberspace remained elusive.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

India seeks uniformity of laws on a global stage. However, it needs to place its house in order. India has multiple ministries and agencies that deal with various aspects of cyberspace. The Indian government has prepared a Digital India Bill, 2023. Kit will work in tandem with Digital Personal Data Protection Act, the National Data Governance Policy. It seeks to provide

holistic solutions to the modern challenges of cybercrime. India's market is a big consumer of data. More than 850 million Indian citizens have an online presence. Thus, the proposed bill may shape the contours of technology regulations on the global stage.

## THE WAY FORWARD

The nature of technology is omnipresent consequently threats are ubiquitous. Therefore, to counter the menace of new threats, governments need to work together with international institutions and civil society organizations. The state needs to build at least global understanding if not global regulation to ensure open, safe and secure cyberspace. Thus, G20 is an apt forum to discuss the security of emerging technologies.

# EU leader cites Ukraine invasion to warn against China's aggression

AP ■ MANILA

The leader of the European Union's executive commission cited Russia's invasion of Ukraine to warn against China's increasingly assertive actions in disputed Indo-Pacific waters and against Taiwan and said Monday that the EU would not tolerate aggression in either region.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen spoke at a joint news conference with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. after holding talks in Manila that aimed to bolster trade, economic and security relations.

The leaders announced the 27-nation bloc would resume negotiations with the Philippines on a free trade agreement that stalled in 2017 under Marcos's predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.

Von der Leyen also stressed the need for security cooperation, saying Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine showed how authoritarian leaders "are willing to act on their threats." "Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine shakes the foundation of the international order. It is in violation of the UN charter and the fundamental principles of international law, such as territorial integrity and sovereignty," she said.

"This is why Europe supports Ukraine's brave fight against the aggressor, because the illegal use of force cannot be tolerated, not in Ukraine, not in the Indo-Pacific," von der Leyen said. "Security in Europe and security in the Indo-Pacific is indivisible. Challenges to the rules-based order in our interconnected world affect all of us." "This is why we are concerned about the rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific," she said, adding that the EU backs a free and open Indo-Pacific "because an Indo-Pacific free of the threats of coercion is key to all our stability to our peace, and to the prosperity of our people."

Without naming China, von der Leyen reaffirmed the EU's recognition of a decision



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., right, walks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, left, during the arrival ceremony at the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila, Philippines on Monday.

by a UN-backed tribunal that invalidated China's territorial claims in virtually the entire South China Sea on historical grounds. China has rejected the arbitration decision as a sham and continues to defy it.

Von der Leyen's visit to the Philippines is a sign of improving ties after a stormy period between the EU and Duterte over human rights. It's the first such top-level visit in nearly six decades of Europe-Philippines relations.

The EU leader later spoke more bluntly against China at a business forum in Manila, where she warned that Beijing's increasingly aggressive actions in Asia "could also have global repercussions."

She criticised China's stance on the war in Ukraine, its increasingly aggressive actions in disputed Asian waters and its provocative moves against Taiwan. "China's show of military force in the South and East China seas and in the Taiwan Strait directly affects Philippines and other partners in the region," the EU leader said. "But it could also have global repercussions because any weaken-

ing of regional stability in Asia...affects global security, the free flow of trade and our own interests in the region."

Beijing has turned seven disputed reefs into missile-protected island bases in the last decade, further alarming Western governments and rival claimants, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

China's fleet of coast guard ships and swarms of militia boats have warned vessels from rival claimant states and the US military and its allies not to stray into its claimed territories in the disputed waters, which straddle one of the world's busiest sea lanes and are believed to be sitting atop undersea deposits of oil and gas. Von der Leyen urged Asian nations never to rely on a single supplier for energy and raw materials, citing how "Russia tried to blackmail us" by considerably cutting its natural gas supply to European countries after the EU imposed sanctions against Moscow over the invasion of Ukraine.

"We could not choose our neighbours, but we can choose

who to do business with and on what terms," she said. "We made a mistake with Russia."

The Philippines, she said, exports 90 per cent of its nickel ore to China "instead of processing it inside the country to create more jobs and added value," she said. "But this can change." There was no immediate reaction from China to von der Leyen's remarks. China has warned the United States and its allies from meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute. The Philippines came under intense EU criticism during Duterte's six-year term, mainly because of the bloody anti-drugs crackdown he oversaw that left more than 6,000 mostly petty suspects dead. Marcos succeeded Duterte in June 2022.

The killings sparked an International Criminal Court investigation as a possible crime against humanity. Duterte withdrew the Philippines from the ICC in 2018, but its prosecutor has proceeded to investigate the widespread deaths that occurred in the years when the country was still part of The Hague-based court.

# Russian missiles kill 4 in Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Russian missiles slammed into an apartment complex and a university building in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih Monday, killing four people and wounding scores of others as the blasts trapped residents beneath rubble, Ukraine's interior minister said.

One of the two missiles destroyed a section of the apartment building between the fourth and ninth floors, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said. Video showed black smoke billowing from corner units and burned out or damaged cars on a tree-lined street.

A 10-year-old girl was among those killed, officials said. Dnipro Gov Serhii Lysak said 53 people were wounded

in the morning attack, which also destroyed part of the four-story university building. Meanwhile, a Ukrainian artillery strike on partially occupied Donetsk province killed two people and wounded six in the regional capital, according to Denis Pushilin, the Moscow-installed leader of the illegally annexed province.

A bus was also hit as Ukrainian forces shelled the city of Donetsk multiple times Monday, Pushilin said. Neither side's claims could be independently verified.

A recent Ukrainian counteroffensive, deploying weaponry supplied by Kyiv's Western allies and aimed at driving Russian forces out of occupied areas, intensified last week. At the same time,

Ukraine has sought to take the war deep into Russia, reportedly using drones to hit targets as far away as Moscow.

Ukrainian drone attacks on Russia and Moscow-annexed territory, especially Crimea, have become more frequent. The latest strike, on Sunday, damaged two office buildings a few miles (km) from the Kremlin.

Russia has tightened security in the aftermath of that attack, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday, describing the assault as an "act of desperation." "The Kyiv regime is in a very, very difficult situation," Peskov said, "as the counteroffensive is not working out as planned." "It's obvious that the multibillion-dollar resources that have been transferred by NATO countries to the

Kyiv regime are actually being spent inefficiently," Peskov said.

"This raises big questions in Western capitals and great discomfort among taxpayers in Western countries."

Another Ukrainian drone targeted a district police department early Monday in Russia's Bryansk region, which borders Ukraine, but there were no casualties, the local governor said.

In Kryvyi Rih, which is the hometown of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, rescue crews searched Monday for people who were trapped in the wreckage of the two hit buildings.

The Kremlin's forces have occasionally targeted the city since they invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

## Denmark seeks to prevent Quran burnings

Helsinki (AP) — Denmark's foreign minister said Sunday the government will seek to make it illegal to desecrate the Quran or other religious holy books in front of foreign embassies in the Nordic country.

Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said in an interview with the Danish public broadcaster DR that the burning of holy scriptures "only serves the purpose of creating division in a world that actually needs unity."

"That is why we have decided in the government that we will look at how, in very special situations, we can put an end to mockery of other countries, which is in direct conflict with Danish interests and the safety of the Danes," he said. A recent string of public Quran desecrations by a handful of anti-Islam activists in Denmark and neighboring Sweden have sparked angry demonstrations in Muslim countries. Lokke said the Cabinet of Frederiksen is determined to find "a legal tool" to prohibit such acts without compromising freedom of expression, but he acknowledged that would not be easy.

# Clashes continue in Palestinian camp, death toll climbs to nine

AP ■ SIDON (LEBANON)

The death toll rose to nine Monday in three days of clashes between Palestinian factions at a refugee camp in Lebanon that have pitted members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party against Islamist groups.

A Lebanese lawmaker announced a cease-fire agreement late Monday but some gunfire continued afterward, and earlier efforts to broker a cease-fire had failed to stop the shooting and shelling through the narrow streets of the Ein el-Hilweh camp in southern Lebanon.

The violence began Saturday when an unknown gunman tried to kill Palestinian militant Mahmoud Khalil but instead fatally shot his companion. Full-blown clashes erupted Sunday when Islamic militants shot and killed a Palestinian military general from the Fatah group, Abu Ashraf al Armoushi, and three escorts as they were walking through a parking lot, according to a Palestinian official. The official spoke on condition of anonymity as he was



Members of the Palestinian Fatah group run to take position during a third day of clashes that erupted with Islamist factions in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Hilweh near the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon.

not authorised to talk to the media.

On Monday afternoon, after a meeting between Lebanese officials and security forces and Palestinian factions, Lebanese lawmaker Osama Saad, who represents the Sidon area where the camp is located, announced a new ceasefire agreement.

Saad earlier told The Associated Press that officials are "making extraordinary efforts to find serious, effective, lasting and stable solutions to

the situation inside the camp." On the ground, the intensity of the fighting decreased following the announcement, but sporadic shooting continued. A Lebanese army spokesperson confirmed Monday that at least nine people were killed at Ein el-Hilweh camp. Two soldiers stationed outside the camp were lightly wounded, Col. Fadi Abou Eid said. The Lebanese army mans a checkpoint outside and typically does not enter the camp, which is under the control of the Palestinian factions.

## Greek PM seeks better relations with Turkey

AP ■ NICOSIA (CYPRUS)

Greece's prime minister said Monday that his government wants to take full advantage of a developing positive political climate with neighbouring Turkey in order to improve bilateral relations despite a string of decades-old disputes.

But Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that doesn't mean Turkey does "substantially changed" its stance on key differences between the two countries and needs to "decisively abandon its aggressive and unlawful conduct" against Greece's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Turkiye and Greece remain at odds over maritime boundaries in the eastern Mediterranean, a dispute that affects irregular migration into the European Union, mineral rights and the projection of military power. Mitsotakis said that he agreed with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11-12 to initiate new "lines of communication" and

to maintain "a period of calm."

High-level talks between the two countries are expected to take place in the Greek city of Thessaloniki later this year.

However, the Greek prime minister said that Erdogan's outreach to the EU can't come at the expense of efforts to heal Cyprus' nearly half-century ethnic division.

Speaking after talks with Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, Mitsotakis said that he told Erdogan that improved European-Turkish ties can't exclude a Cyprus peace accord and that the issue can't be "left by the wayside." Turkiye and the break-away Turkish Cypriots have insisted on a two-state solution since July 2017 when the most recent round of UN-facilitated peace talks collapsed. That position overturned a long-standing agreement sanctioned by the UN Security Council in numerous resolutions that any peace deal would aim for a reunified Cyprus as a federation made up of Greek and Turkish speaking zones.

# Braverman toughens citizenship rules to block 'serious criminals'

PTI ■ LONDON

UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman has said that British citizenship will be blocked to "serious criminals" regardless of when or where the crime took place under the country's tightened norms effective from Monday.

The Indian-origin minister said she is cracking down on the misuse of Britain's nationality system by raising the bar for those applying for citizenship. The changes override previous rules under which some criminals could be granted British citizenship after a prescribed number of years of around 15 years had passed since the end of their sentence — regardless of the type of crime or where it was committed.

"British citizenship is a privilege. Those who commit crimes shouldn't be able to enjoy the breadth of rights citizenship brings, including holding a British passport, voting and accessing free medical care from the NHS (National Health



Service)," said Braverman. "I am cracking down on abuse of the UK's immigration and nationality system, by introducing a tougher threshold so that serious criminals cannot gain British citizenship. This is the fair and right thing to do for our country," she said. The British government crackdown involves strengthened rules applying to new applications from anyone who has received at least a 12-month prison sentence. The UK Home Office said it reaffirms the government's commitment to protecting UK borders and ensuring no one with

a criminal record can abuse the British immigration and nationality system.

The updated rules are stricter and more specific on so-called "good character" requirements, which are a key condition to be granted British citizenship, and look at whether an individual has observed UK law as well as shown respect for the rights and freedoms of British citizens. The requirements include factors such as criminal convictions, immigration offending and serious behaviour like war crimes, terrorism or genocide.

According to the Home Office, there will be some exceptions to the stricter new rules, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, for example, if someone has mitigating circumstances that support an exceptional grant. Cases like this could include someone who committed a minor offence a long time ago but has made sufficient, positive changes that they are now considered to be of good character, it noted.

## Myanmar government extends emergency

AP ■ BANGKOK

Myanmar's military-controlled government has extended the state of emergency it imposed when the army seized power from an elected government 2 1/2 years ago, state-run media said Monday, forcing a further delay in elections it promised when it took over.

MRTV television said the National Defence and Security Council met Monday in the capital, Naypyitaw, and extended the state of emergency for another six months starting Tuesday because time is needed to prepare for the elections. The NDS Council is nominally a constitutional government body, but in practice is controlled by the military.

The announcement amounted to an admission that the army does not exercise enough control to stage the polls and has failed to subdue widespread opposition to military rule, which includes increasingly challenging armed resistance as well as nonviolent protests and civil disobedience, despite the army having a huge advantage in manpower and weapons.

The state of emergency was declared when troops arrested Aung San Suu Kyi and top officials from her government and members of her National League for Democracy party on February 1, 2021. The takeover reversed years of progress toward democracy after five decades of military rule. The military said it seized power because of fraud in the last general election held in November 2020, in which Suu Kyi's party won a landslide victory while the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development party did poorly. Independent election observers said they did not find any major irregularities. The army takeover was met with widespread peaceful protests that security forces suppressed with lethal force, triggering armed resistance that UN experts have described as a civil war.

# AUS ARMY HELICOPTER CRASH 4 crew members did not survive

AP ■ CANBERRA

The Australian army helicopter that crashed on Friday during a multinational exercise hit the water with a "catastrophic impact" and there is no chance its four crew members survived, officials said on Monday.

Australia's fleet of more than 40 of the MRH-90 Taipan helicopters, made by French Airbus, has been grounded since the crash and there are doubts any will fly again.

They will be grounded until crash investigators determine what caused the tragedy. The government announced in January it plans to replace them with 40 US Black Hawks. The Taipans' retirement date of December 2024 would be 13 years earlier than Australia had initially planned. Defence Minister Richard Marles said the search and rescue effort changed Monday to a victim recovery operation with no chance that Capt. Danniell Lyon, Lt. Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Joseph Laycock or Cpl. Alexander Naggs had survived.

"There was a catastrophic incident and with every passing hour, it is now clear that any hope of finding (the four crew) alive has been lost," Marles told reporters.

The helicopter crashed during a nighttime exercise with the United States and other nations near the Whitsunday Islands on the Great Barrier Reef. Marles had said on Saturday the helicopter "ditched," which refers to an emergency landing. But on Monday he would not rule out pilot error or disorientation in the dark causing the crash into the water. He urged against speculation about potential causes.

"There was a catastrophic impact on the helicopter when it hit the water," Marles said. "We will move through the process of putting the Black Hawks into service as quickly as we can ... and we

will not be flying MRH90s until we understand what has happened," Marles added.

The lost Taipan had been taking part in Talisman Sabre, a biennial US-Australian military exercise that is largely based in Queensland state. This year's exercise involves 13 nations and more than 30,000 military personnel.

The exercise was continuing on Monday with some changes near the recovery operation, Australian Defence Force Chief Gen. Angus Campbell said.

Campbell thanked the United States and Canada for their help in the search and recovery efforts, which he said was "not an easy operation."

The wreckage lay in the path of strong currents and tidal movements. It was too deep for standard diving operations.

Part of the airframe had been retrieved by Monday but most of the helicopter remained on the seabed, Campbell said.

It was the second emergency involving an Australian Taipan since March. The fleet was grounded after one ditched into the sea off the New South Wales state coast near the naval base at Jervis Bay during a nighttime counterterrorism training exercise. All 10 passengers and crew members were rescued.

Retired Maj. Gen. Fergus McLachlan was involved in integrating the Taipan into the Australian army when they arrived in 2007 and had been responsible for keeping them airworthy.

He said the Taipan did not have the proven record of the Lockheed Martin-designed Black Hawks.

"We bought into an unproven system. In real terms, it was a developmental aircraft and it has never really matured," McLachlan told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

"It was always a battle to maintain it and keep it flying," McLachlan added.

# Pope prepares church's future, legacy in Portugal visit

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

When Pope Francis made the first foreign trip of his papacy, to Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day in 2013, he urged young people to make a "mess" in their local churches, to shake things up even if it ruffled the feathers of their bishops.

As he embarks this week on another edition of World Youth Day, in Lisbon, Portugal, Francis in many ways has taken his own advice to heart. After 10 years as pope, Francis is accelerating his reform agenda and making revolutionary changes in personnel and policy that are definitely shaking things up. Unencumbered by the shadow of Pope Benedict XVI, who died seven months ago, and despite recovering from a second intestinal surgery in as many years, the 86-year-old



Francis is opening a frenetic second half of the year with his Portugal visit. He seems aware that he has a limited sweet spot of time to solidify the changes he believes are necessary for the 21st century church, and is looking to the next generation of faithful and leaders to execute them.

"The sense I get is that this is the consolidation phase of the pontificate," said papal biographer Austen Ivereigh. "He's laying the basis now, laying the

ground, for the future."

And no better place to put it on display than at a World Youth Day. The international rally, which St. John Paul II launched in 1986 to galvanise young Catholics in their faith, is expected to draw up to 1 million people for the first post-pandemic event of its kind. Francis' perennial social justice concerns about climate change, social inequality and fraternity, as well as Russia's war in Ukraine, are expected to be major themes.

Beyond Portugal, though, Francis' multifold strategy for laying the groundwork for the future is coming together and will hit significant marks in the coming months. His global canvassing of rank-and-file Catholics about their vision for the future comes to fruition this October with a big synod at the

Vatican. The meeting is intended to give direction on such hot-button issues as the place of LGBTQ+ Catholics and women in the church, and for the first time will feature women and young people voting on proposals alongside bishops.

"I really think that for Pope Francis, he felt that OK, now it's mature' and it would be good really to involve all the members, all the people in the synod as members" with the right to vote, said Sister Nathalie Beccuq, who is one of the key synod organisers.

To then implement the vision that emerges from the synod, Francis has been naming a slew of unusually young bishops for key archdioceses — in his native Buenos Aires, Madrid and Brussels, among others. At the same time, he's elevated several cardinals in their 50s — and

in some cases their 40s — including the auxiliary bishop of Lisbon who is organising World Youth Day.

Putting such young clerics in such important positions ensures a generation's worth of likeminded leadership in the Vatican and archdioceses around the world.

While not all are cookie-cutter proteges of Francis, many are seen as similarly pastorally minded and thus more game to implement his reforms, especially as the older generation of bishops and cardinals dies out.

After Francis is gone, the youngest of these new cardinals will have some three decades' worth of local leadership and conclave votes to select future popes, suggesting a generational and ideological shift in the church leadership is very much underway.



Pak suicide blast toll rises to 54 Those in power must curb terrorism: Imran

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

The death toll from the powerful suicide bombing at a political convention of a hardline Islamist party in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province sharply rose to 54 on Monday, police said as they intensified efforts to hunt down those behind the massive attack.

beginning campaign preparations ahead of elections in the coming months. Pakistan President Arif Alvi prayed for eternal peace for the departed souls. He also wished speedy recovery for the injured and emphasised timely medical assistance to them.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan sought a detailed report on the blast from police.

He also visited the Combined Military Hospital in Peshawar, where he met and inquired about the health of injured persons. Rahim Shah, a witness, told Dawn.com that more than 500 people were attending the convention when the blast occurred.

"We were listening to a bayan [sermon] when a powerful explosion knocked me unconscious," he said. Shah narrated that when he regained consciousness, there was blood everywhere. "People were screaming and even shots were fired," he added.

Sabeehullah, a 24-year-old JUI-F supporter who had his arm fractured by the blast, said the scale of injuries was horrifying. "There was utter



confusion, with human flesh, limbs, and body parts scattered throughout the area, alongside lifeless bodies. I found myself lying next to someone who had lost their limbs. The air was filled with the smell of human flesh," he was quoted as saying in the report.

The JUI-F chief, in a statement issued by the party's media cell, expressed grief over the incident. He sought an inquiry into the attack from

Prime Minister Sharif and the KP government. "May Allah raise the ranks of martyrs," Fazl said and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. He also appealed to JUI-F workers to immediately reach hospitals and provide blood donations.

In a tweet, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah vowed to bring the perpetrators of today's attack to justice.

"The cowardly acts of terrorists cannot dampen our

spirits," he said.

Former prime minister Imran Khan said he was saddened to learn about the blast and extended condolences to the victims' families.

"The rise in terror incidents across Pakistan particularly in KP, calls for an urgent need to reconsider our priorities," he said, adding that the authorities should focus on eliminating terrorism.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban government in Afghanistan, has condemned the attack. TTP spokesman Khalid Khurassani also condemned the blast. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks following the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in August 2021.

On January 30, a Pakistan Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up during the afternoon prayers in a mosque in Peshawar, killing 101 people and injuring more than 200 others. In February, heavily armed TTP militants stormed the Karachi Police chief's office in Pakistan's most populous city, sparking gunfire that killed three rebels and four others, including two police constables.

PTI ■ LAHORE

In a veiled jibe at Pakistan's powerful military establishment, former prime minister Imran Khan has advised "those in power" to shift their focus from "political engineering" to curb the rising wave of terrorism in the country.

Khan's statement came a day after Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province bordering Afghanistan saw a major terror attack in which at least 54 people were killed and more than 100 others were injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a political meeting of the hardline Islamic party — Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) — in Khar, the capital of Bajaur tribal district.

In a condolence message to the family members of those killed in the attack, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman in a tweet on Sunday said, "The rise in terror incidents across Pakistan particularly in KP, calls for an urgent need to reconsider our priorities."

"Those in power must shift their focus from political engineering to directing State's efforts & resources towards countering terrorism," he wrote.

Pakistan cannot afford another wave of terrorism, Khan said. Police on Monday said that an initial probe has suggested that the banned terrorist group ISIS is behind the suicide attack.

The powerful Pakistan Army, which has ruled the coup-prone country for more than half of its 73-plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in the country's politics as well as matters of security and foreign policy. Later, in his address to the nation on Sunday night, Khan said those in power had only one thing on their mind — how to prevent him and his party from returning to power in the upcoming general elections.

And for this, the government and the military establishment are using all their resources, the 70-year-old cricketer-turned-politician claimed.

"They should think of the country and the people instead of consuming their energies to contain the PTI," Khan said. The PTI chief also said the way the Shehbaz Sharif-led government unleashed atrocities on his party's women work-

Pakistan ex-PM moves SC against HC for not granting stay in Toshakhana case

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan approached the Supreme Court on Monday against the Islamabad High Court's decision to reject his plea seeking a halt on the criminal proceedings against him in the Toshakhana corruption trial.

Despite approaching the Islamabad High Court (IHC) twice, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Khan could not get relief in the case pertaining to the concealment of details regarding state gifts.

In his petition before the apex court, the 70-year-old Khan has appealed for a stay against the recording of his statement under Section 342, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. The petition contends that the trial, ongoing before District and Sessions Judge Humayun Dilwar, should be halted till the IHC issues its final decision on the matter, it said. It adds that a decision on the jurisdiction of the court was necessary before the trial could proceed.

The Election Commission of Pakistan on October 21 last year, disqualified the former prime minister in the Toshakhana case for making "false statements and incorrect declaration".

The case pertains to the allegations that Khan "deliberately concealed" details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana - a repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept - during his time as the prime minister and proceeds from their reported sales. Khan is accused of misusing his 2018 to 2022 premiership to buy and sell gifts in state possession that were received during visits abroad and worth more than Rs 140 million (USD 635,000).

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Pakistan, China ink 6 pacts to expedite coop under CPEC

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and China on Monday signed six key documents to help undertake the second phase of the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects under a new model, further cementing the all-weather strategic relations between the "iron brothers".

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng witnessed the signing ceremony held here to mark 10 years of the CPEC, a collection of infrastructure and other projects under construction throughout Pakistan since 2013.

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. In his remarks, Vice Premier He conveyed President Xi Jinping's message of China's firm support to Pakistan's prosperity and development.

He, who is a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party, underlined that Pakistan-China friendship was unique and had with-

stood the vicissitude of time due to deep fraternal ties between the peoples of the two nations.

He reiterated that as an "iron brother and strategic partner," China would continue its existing economic and financial support to Pakistan. He also conveyed Beijing's willingness to enhance Pakistan's agro and food exports to China. Both countries signed a document on the joint cooperation committee on CPEC; MoU on establishing an export exchange mechanism within the framework of CPEC; a protocol of phytosanitary requirements for the export of dry chillies from Pakistan to China and a Document on the final report on the feasibility study of realignment of KKH Phase-II.

Both sides also signed through diplomatic channels an MoU on the industrial workers exchange programme. Prime Minister Sharif expressed pleasure over the signing of documents and thanked the Chinese Vice-Premier for visiting Pakistan to celebrate 10 years of the CPEC.

He recalled that 10 years ago, the CPEC was signed between then Prime Minister

Nawaz Sharif and President Xi and implementation was started within no time.

Sharif said that under the CPEC, more than USD 25 billion in investment has taken place in sectors like power, road, hydel power, and public transport. "Now we are entering the second phase," the prime minister said.

"Today, we signed certain important documents which will further enhance cooperation and undertake the second phase of CPEC under a new model," he said. He said the second phase of the CPEC would feature business-to-business investment in agriculture and information technology to enable Pakistan to export its products according to Chinese standards and requirements.

Sharif also thanked President Xi for sending his special envoy to Pakistan, showing solidarity for people-to-people friendship and showing to the world that both countries were bound in a great and unique relationship.

"We are all-weather friends and iron brothers. This friendship will continue and will not tolerate any kind of obstacle in its way," Prime Minister Sharif said.

'Nawaz Sharif to be PM if PML-N returns to power'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif will be the next premier of the country if the party returns to power in the next general election.

Speaking on the Geo News programme on Sunday, Shehbaz said the three-time former prime minister who has been living in self-imposed exile in London since 2019 will return to the country in the next few weeks.

The premier said his elder brother Nawaz Sharif, 73, would face the law upon his return to Pakistan, adding that he was sent abroad on medical grounds on the basis of a medical report prepared on the directives of former prime minister Imran Khan.

Nawaz Sharif was disqualified in 2017 by the Supreme Court. In 2018, he became ineligible to hold public office for life after a Supreme Court verdict in the Panama Papers case. Before his departure to London on a four-week bail by the Lahore High Court on medical grounds, Nawaz Sharif was serving a seven-year jail term in the Al-Azizia Mills cor-



ruption case. Shehbaz Sharif said that a notification of the dissolution of the National Assembly will be sent to President Arif Alvi a few days ahead of the completion of the tenure at 12 midnight on August 12.

Shehbaz Sharif, also the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party president maintained that the PML-N would try to make seat adjustments with allied parties in the general elections, adding that the party would field its candidates in the constituencies where they could not reach a consensus. He said the caretaker set-up would be agreed upon after consultation with allied parties, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, and the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly Raja Riaz.

Single-digit inflation in SL for first time since eco crisis

Colombo (PTI):

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka on Monday said that its inflation has dropped to 6.3 per cent, a single-digit figure for the first time in two years, providing much-needed relief to the people amidst the worst financial crisis. In a statement, the Census and Statistics Office of the Sri Lankan government said that the overall rate of inflation as measured by the Colombo Consumer Price Index on a year-on-year basis is 6.3 per cent in July 2023 and it was down from 12 per cent recorded in June this year.

"The overall rate of inflation as measured by the Colombo Consumer Price Index on a year-on-year basis is 6.3 per cent in July 2023. This was down from the 12 per cent recorded in June," the statement said. The last time single-digit inflation was recorded was 5.8

W African nations threaten to use force if Niger's prez isn't reinstated within a week

AP ■ NIAMEY (NIGER)

West African nations have given Niger's coup leaders one week to reinstate the country's democratically elected president and have threatened to use force if the demands aren't met.

The announcement came at the end of an emergency meeting of West African countries Sunday in Nigeria, where the regional bloc, known as ECOWAS, convened to respond to last week's military takeover. President Mohamed Bazoum remains under house arrest and has yet to resign. "In the event the authority's demands are not met within one week, (the bloc will) take all measures necessary to restore constitutional order in the Republic of Niger. Such measures may include the use of force," said the statement. The bloc also imposed strict sanctions, including suspend-

ing all commercial and financial transactions between ECOWAS member states and Niger and freezing of assets in regional central banks.

Economic sanctions could have a deep impact on Nigeriens, who live in the third-poorest country in the world, according to the latest U.N. data. The country relies on imports from Nigeria for up to 90% of its power, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency.

The sanctions could be disastrous and Niger needs to find a solution to avoid them, the country's Prime Minister Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou told French media outlet Radio France Internationale on Sunday. "When people say there's an embargo, land borders are closed, air borders are closed, it's extremely difficult for people... Niger is a country that relies heavily on the international community," he

said.

The 15-nation ECOWAS bloc has unsuccessfully tried to restore democracies in nations where the military took power in recent years. Four nations are run by military governments in West and Central Africa, where there have been nine successful or attempted coups since 2020. In the 1990s, ECOWAS intervened in Liberia during its civil war. In 2017, it intervened in Gambia to prevent the new president's predecessor, Yahya Jammeh, from disrupting the handover of power. Around 7,000 troops from Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal entered, according to the Global Observatory, which provides analysis on peace and security issues. If the regional bloc uses force, it could trigger violence not only between Niger and ECOWAS forces but also civilians supporting the coup and those against it, Niger analysts say.

Skepticism prevails as Chinese leaders promise to back private businesses to spur slowing economy

AP ■ BEIJING

The Fangbiaogan Real Estate Agency in the southern city of Nanning is still waiting for China's post-COVID rebound. Home sales are 30-40 per cent below last year's depressed level after the economy barely grew in the latest quarter, according to the owner, who would give only his surname, Cai. He has cut staff by 80 per cent to 40

employees. Their income from sales commissions has fallen as much as 90 per cent.

"People are worried," said Cai. "They feel safer holding onto their savings instead of spending them."

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government is making ambitious promises to drag the economy out of that crisis of confidence aggravated by tension with Washington, wilting exports,

job losses and anxiety among foreign companies about an expanded anti-spying law. Its most striking pledge: To support entrepreneurs who generate jobs and wealth but have felt under attack over the past decade as the ruling Communist Party built up state-owned industry, tightened control over business and pressured them to pay for its technology and industrial ambitions. China has an

"urgent need" to "boost confidence in the outlook for the private economy," the Cabinet said in a July 19 announcement. Entrepreneurs and investors are waiting to see what tax, spending or other steps the ruling party might take — and whether it will rein in state companies that dominate banking, energy and other industries and that economists say are stifling growth.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the Public at large that Sh. Yogesh Karwar Oberoi S/o. Sh. Lajpat Nath Oberoi is the Title Holder in possession of Entire First Floor of Freehold Built Up Residential Property Bearing Plot No. 394, Block-A, Defence Colony, New Delhi measuring 247.00 sq. yards, as per the Registrar of Property vide Sale Deed dated 01.10.2009 duly registered as Regn. No. 12896, Addl. Book No. 1, Vol. Ck. 3545, Reg. 01-59 on C.C. 2009 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, New Delhi. That the original documents w.r.t. Plot No. 394, Block-A, Defence Colony, New Delhi, (i) Lease Deed dated 19.07.57, (ii) Permission to Sell dated 29.01.59, (iii) Sale Deed dated 13.02.59, (iv) Lease Deed dated 18.07.78, (v) Death Certificate dated 09.11.90, (vi) Substitution Letter dated 20.02.91, (vii) General Power of Attorney, Special Power of Attorney & Agreement to Sell all dated 20.04.92, (viii) Conveyance Deed dated 17.12.93, (ix) Sale Deed dated 26.05.94, (x) Power of Attorney executed by Sh. Armit Chopra to Sh. Kamal Chopra, (xi) Deed of Conveyance dated 09.05.96, (xii) Special Power of Attorney dated 08.04.2008, (xiii) Sale Deed dated 25.04.2008 and (xiv) Sanction for Construction Letter dated 04.07.2008 have all been lost, misplaced and are untraceable as on date, in lieu of which Information Report dated 30.07.2023 bearing LR No. 71244/2023 has been filed with Delhi Police. This notice is thus issued to Public at Large, (i.e. any Person(s), Company(ies), Authority(ies), Society(ies), Organisation(s), Financial Institution(s), Bank(s), HUF(s) etc., having any knowledge, custody or possession of the above mentioned lost/misplaced original documents or otherwise having any claims, rights, title, interests, possession etc. in the Schedule Property, by way of Ownership, Succession, Inheritance, Sale, Mortgage, Exchange, Charge, Lien, Gift, Trust, Encumbrance, or otherwise in relation to the Schedule Property by the Title Holder, may come forward with supporting documents, to be delivered to the undersigned within 7 days from the date of this notice, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110001 Mob.: +91-9876198328

General public is hereby informed that Mr. Gulshan Kumar, was the owner of the Property Bearing No. E-86, area 223.5 Sq. Yds., out of Rect. No. 27, Killa No. 9, Situated at the Abadi of D-Block, Gali No. 1, New Ground Plaza, in the area of Village Kurukh, Khas, Ilaah, Shandara, Delhi-110051, by virtue of GPA, AFS & Will dated 13.08.1991, who died. The above said property is to be financed & mortgaged with my client i.e. Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Ltd and the only surviving heirs of Late Mrs. Krishna Bhurjee are Asha Sharma, Mr. Pramod Kumar Bhurjee, Mr. S.S. Bhurjee, Mrs. Usha Sharma & Mr. Vinod Bhurjee. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110001 Mob.: +91-9876198328

Advertisement for Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, established under State Legislature Act No. 21 of 1969. The university has a 'University with Potential with Excellence' and 'Category-I University' recognized by UGC. It is an Expression of Interest (EoI) for leasing out a space to a Bank for setting up an ATM/e-Lobby. Interested parties may submit their Expression of Interest (EoI) to the Registrar, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, on or before 05-08-2023 by 04:00 PM in the prescribed EoI form under sealed envelope superscribing "Expression of Interest for ATM/e-Lobby" by Regd. Post/Courier only. The prescribed EoI form, detailed site plan and other terms & conditions may be downloaded from the website: http://online.gndu.ac.in

Advertisement for Verka Cooperative Milk Producers Federation Ltd. Notice Inviting Tender for purchase and supply of following items: 1. For Verka Mohali Dairy, 2. For Verka Bathinda Dairy, 3. For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy, 4. For Verka Patiala Dairy, 5. For Verka Ludhiana Dairy, 6. For Verka Ferozpur Dairy, 7. For Verka Jalandhar Dairy, 8. For Verka Cattle Feed Plant, Bhatiana, Khanna. The notice includes details of the items to be purchased, quantities, and submission procedures. A public notice is also included regarding the lost documents of Sh. Yogesh Karwar Oberoi S/o. Sh. Lajpat Nath Oberoi.

# Retail inflation for industrial workers rises to 5.57% in Jun

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation for industrial workers inched up to 5.57 per cent in June compared to 4.42 per cent in May this year, mainly due to higher prices of certain food items.

"Year-on-year inflation for the month stood at 5.57 per cent compared to 4.42 per cent for the previous month (May) and 6.16 per cent during the corresponding month (June 2022) a year before," a labour ministry statement said.

Similarly, food inflation stood at six per cent against 3.24 per cent in the previous month and 6.73 per cent during the corresponding month a year ago, it added.

The All-India CPI-IW (consumer price index for industrial workers) for June 2023 increased by 1.7 points and stood at 136.4 points. It was 134.7 points in May 2023.

On one-month percentage change, it increased by 1.26 per cent with respect to the previous month against an increase of 0.16 per cent recorded in corresponding months a year ago, it stated.

The maximum upward pressure in the



current index came from Food & Beverages group, contributing 1.62 percentage points to the total change.

At item level, Rice, Wheat, Wheat Atta, Arhar Dal, Moong Dal, Fish Fresh, Poultry Chicken, Egg-Hen, Apple, Banana, Brinjal, Carrot, Ginger, Cauliflower, Chili Green, Potato, Onion, Tomato, Cumin seed/Jira, Supari, Casual Wear, Canvas Shoes, Utensil, Medicine ayurvedic, etc. Are responsible for the rise in index.

However, it explained that this increase was largely checked by Mustard Oil, Palm

Oil, Sunflower Oil, Coconut Oil, Lemon, Mango, Kerosene Oil, etc., putting downward pressure on the index.

At the centre level, Angul-Talchar recorded a maximum increase of 8.5 points, followed by Raipur and Labac-Silchar with 6.8 and 6.3 points, respectively. Among others, 3 centres recorded an increase between 5 to 5.9 points, 2 centres between 4 to 4.9 points, 10 centres between 3 to 3.9 points, 11 centres between 2 to 2.9 points, 28 centres between 1 to 1.9 points and 26 centres between 0.1 to 0.9 points.

On the contrary, Mungel-Jamalpur recorded a maximum decrease of 1.1 points. Among others, 4 centres recorded a decrease between 0.1 to 0.9 points, it stated.

The Labour Bureau, an attached office of the Ministry of Labour & Employment, has been compiling the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers every month on the basis of retail prices collected from 317 markets spread over 88 industrially important centres in the country.

The index is compiled for 88 centres and All-India and is released on the last working day of the succeeding month.

# Fiscal deficit touches 25.3% of full-yr target at end-June: CGA data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's fiscal deficit at the end of the first quarter touched 25.3 per cent of the full-year target, government data showed on Monday.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit — the gap between expenditure and revenue — was Rs 4,51,370 crore as of end-June, according to the data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

The deficit stood at 21.2 per cent of the Budget Estimates (BE) in the corresponding period of the financial year 2022-23.

In the Union Budget, the government projected to bring down the fiscal deficit to 5.9 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the current 2023-24 financial year. The deficit was 6.4 per cent of the GDP in 2022-23 against the earlier estimate of 6.71 per cent.

Unveiling the revenue-expenditure data of the Union



government for the first three months of 2023-24, CGA said the net tax revenue was Rs 4,33,620 crore or 18.6 per cent of the BE for the current fiscal. The net tax revenue collection was 26.1 per cent at end-June 2022.

The central government's total expenditure in the first quarter stood at Rs 10.5 lakh crore or 23.3 per cent of BE. The expenditure had touched 24 per cent of the BE in the year-ago period.

Of the total expenditure, Rs 7.72 lakh crore was on the revenue account and Rs 2.78 lakh crore was towards the capital account.

Of the total revenue expenditure, Rs 2,43,705 crore was on interest payments and Rs 87,035 crore on major subsidies.

Fiscal deficit is the difference between the total expenditure and revenue of the government. It is an indication of the total borrowings that are needed by the government.



# India's forex kitty drops USD 1.98 bn to USD 607.03 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 1.987 billion to USD 607.035 billion for the week ended July 21, the Reserve Bank has said.

The overall reserves had increased by USD 12.743 billion in the second biggest rise in seven days in recent times to USD 609.022 billion in the previous reporting week.

It can be noted that in October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion. The reserves declined later as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments.

For the week ended July 21, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 2.414 billion to USD 537.752 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI last Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves were up by USD 417 million to USD 45.614 billion, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 11 million to USD 18.474 billion, the apex bank said.

The country's reserve position with the IMF was up by USD 21 million to USD 5.196 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.



# Sensex snaps 2-day falling streak

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed over half a per cent higher on Monday, snapping their two-day falling streak on buying in index majors Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services and firm global trends.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 367.47 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at 66,527.67 with 24 of its constituents ending in the green. The index opened lower but later rebounded from early lows and hit a high of 66,598.42 as power, oil, IT and metal shares advanced.

The NSE Nifty climbed 107.75 points or 0.55 per cent to end at 19,753.80. The broader index fell below the 19,600 level in early trade but later recouped losses and hit a high of 19,772.75 as most of its shares traded in the green. As many as 35 of Nifty shares advanced, 14 declined and one closed unchanged.

Sensex dropped by 547 points while Nifty lost 132 points in the last two sessions. The indices have gained in two out of the past seven sessions.

"Indian indices have resumed their rally, following the global market trend, as cooling inflation across the globe gave hopes of an end to the policy tightening era," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The latest positive development was the Eurozone's inflation slowing for the third consecutive month in July, coming in at 5.3 per cent, in line with market predictions, Nair said.

From the Sensex pack, NTPC jumped nearly 4 per cent after the company posted over 23 per cent rise in consolidated net profit in the April-June quarter of 2023-24.

Maruti Suzuki, which posted a two-fold growth in the

April-June net profit at Rs 2,525 crore and also announced the termination of its contract manufacturing agreement with parent firm, rose by 1.56 per cent. MSI will acquire Suzuki Motor Gujarat from Japan-based parent Suzuki Motor Corporation.

TCS rose by 1.96 per cent while Reliance Industries gained 0.80 per cent, helping the indices end in green.

Power Grid, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, Wipro and JSW Steel were among the other major gainers. Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Bharti Airtel and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

"Nifty resumed the uptrend on Monday after a two-day fall aided by positive global cues and buying in IT and metal stocks," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.31 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.86 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, utilities rallied 2.47 per cent, power jumped 2.33 per cent, metal (1.73 per cent), industrials (1.66 per cent), services (1.33 per cent), capital goods (1.32 per cent), IT (1.28 per cent) and commodities (1.25 per cent).

FMCG emerged as the laggard.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green.

European markets were trading on a mixed note. The US markets had ended in the positive territory on Friday. Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.25 per cent to USD 85.20 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,023.91 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

# Improved detection, reporting bring down bank fraud cases: MoS Finance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Improved detection and reporting, along with steps taken to check bank frauds, have resulted in a sharp decline in the occurrence of such incidence, Parliament was informed on Monday.

Sharing data, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said bank frauds have declined from Rs 77,544 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,650 crore in 2022-23.

Comprehensive steps, including measures to address security flaws/loop-holes and to strengthen the fraud risk management mechanism in banks, have been taken by the government, RBI and public sector banks (PSBs), Karad said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

Some of the measures include an

online searchable database of frauds reported by banks, in the form of the Central Fraud Registry has been set up to enable timely identification, control and mitigation of fraud risk and also to carry out due diligence during the credit sanction process and heads of PSBs have been empowered to issue requests for issuance of Look-Out circulars.

Besides, he said a National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal has been launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs to enable the public to report incidents on all types of cybercrimes and a toll-free number has also been operationalised to get assistance in lodging online complaints.

In addition, he said the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018, has been



enacted to provide for attachment of property of a fugitive economic offender, confiscation of such offender's property and disempowerment of the offender from defending any civil claim.

Directorate of Enforcement (ED), the agency mandated for the investigation and prosecution of cases under the

Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), has apprised that it has recorded 757 cases involving bank fraud in public and private sector banks under the provisions of PMLA in the last ten years and 36 cases in the current year, Karad said.

It has been noticed that in 10 cases, 14 persons have fled the country and of these, 6 persons have been declared as Fugitive Economic Offenders and 7 persons have been declared as Proclaimed Offenders, he added.

In cases where persons have fled the country, as of July 25, 2023, assets amounting to Rs 15,805.91 crore have been confiscated and assets amounting to Rs 15,113.02 crore have been restituted to the public sector banks.



# DGCA renews Jet Airways Air Operator Certificate with conditions: Senior official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

Aviation safety regulator DGCA has renewed with conditions the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) of Jet Airways until September 3, a senior official said on Monday. Cash-strapped Jet Airways stopped flying on April 17, 2019.

The AOC was re-issued on May 20, 2022. However, since the airline did not start operations, it expired on May 19 this year. "DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) has extended the AOC in respect of Jet Airways for a period up to 03.09.2023 only for the limited purpose of completing the ongoing CIRP," said the official.

The extension of AOC, however, is subject to certain conditions, he said. Earlier in the day, Jalan-Kalrock Consortium, the winning bidder for the bankrupt airline said in a statement that the DGCA has renewed the airline's AOC.

Last week, JKC announced the appointment of Jatinderpal Singh Dhillion as the airline's accountable manager. Earlier this month, two whole-time directors and a non-executive director were appointed at Jet

Airways. The conditional extension of the AOC has been granted considering that National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the appellate tribunal NCLAT "have granted extension (s)/exclusion(s) of time for implementation of the approved Resolution Plan up to 03.09.2023," the DGCA official said. As part of the conditions, Jet Airways will be required to undergo re-certification in accordance with the procedure contained in CAP 3100, as applicable for issuance of AOC and demonstrate compliance of all the applicable regulatory requirements afresh before commencement of flight operations, the official stated.

Besides, Jet Airways will submit a firm action plan for the revival of operations after the company is taken over by the SRA (successful resolution applicant) in accordance with the NCLT-approved resolution plan.

JKC emerged as the winning bidder for the grounded Jet Airways after an insolvency resolution process. However, the ownership transfer to JKC is yet to happen amid persisting differences between JKC and the lenders of the airline.

# Over 6.39 cr ITRs filed for 2022-23 fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 26.74 lakh people have filed their income tax returns on Monday until 1600 hrs, taking the total number of ITR filing for assessment year 2023-24 to 6.39 crore.

The last date for ITR filing by salaried persons and entities which are not required to get their accounts audited ends Monday midnight.

Last year, about 5.83 crore income tax returns were filed till July 31.

"6.13 crore #ITRs have been filed till yesterday (30th July). 26.74 lakh ITRs have been filed up to 4 pm today (31st July)," the Income Tax department tweeted. The I-T department asked filers to connect on [orm@ipc.incometax.gov.in](mailto:orm@ipc.incometax.gov.in) if they need any assistance.

Tax experts said that the rise in ITR filing is a reflection of broadening taxpayer base, improved compliance and the efforts taken by the revenue department to check tax evasion.

The income tax department has been extensively using information technology and data analytics tools to identify high-risk cases, and initiate enforcement actions in appropriate cases.

It also collects information on Specified Financial Transactions (SFT), above-notified thresholds, relating to cash deposits, credit card payments, purchase and sale of properties, purchase of shares and mutual funds etc.

# Paytm Chief Vijay seeks PLI scheme for payment devices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fintech company One97 Communications, which operates under the Paytm brand, wants the government to bring payment segment devices under the production-linked incentive scheme to boost local production, a top company official said on Monday.

Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said the company has started manufacturing soundbox devices in India even though local production attracts higher taxes compared to imported ones.

While announcing the launch of two new models of payment soundboxes, Sharma



said that India is a services-dominated country and there is a need to go towards manufacturing for job creation.

Making software in India and importing devices from China to operate — it is depriving the country of full advantage of the technology, he added.

"Paytm soundboxes are completely made in India. We have done indigenisation of soundboxes. As we all know, we are under pressure from one

new thing. When soundboxes come from overseas, duty is not levied on them but we are required to pay duties. My request to the government is to declare PLI on payment equipment," Sharma said. The company launched Paytm Pocket Soundbox and Paytm Music Soundbox for merchants.

Merchants using Soundbox get to hear about payment alerts when they receive money. With the new music soundbox, they will be able to connect their phone to the device and listen to music as well. "My imagination is that there should be 4-5 crore soundboxes installed in the next 3-5 years in this country," Gupta said.



# Walmart acquires Tiger Global's stake in Flipkart for USD 1.4 billion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

US retail giant Walmart has acquired the entire stake of Tiger Global for USD 1.4 billion at an enterprise valuation of USD 35 billion, sources aware of the development said. The e-commerce firm Flipkart was valued at 37.6 billion during the last funding round in 2021.

"Walmart has acquired a stake of Tiger Global for about USD 1.4 billion. The transaction took place at an enterprise valuation of around 35 billion," a source, who did not wish to be identified, said. When contacted, Walmart spokesperson confirmed that the retail giant has acquired additional shares of Flipkart from Tiger Global without sharing the financial details of the deal. "We value Tiger Global's involvement and support over the last several years. We remain confident in the future of Flipkart and are even more positive about the opportunity in India today than when we first invested. We continue to be impressed with Flipkart's progress and remain focused on building a healthy, sustainable and profitable business for the long term, ensuring Flipkart continues to grow in an emerging and dynamic market," the spokesperson said.

The JioBook will transform the way people learn, opening new opportunities for personal growth and skill development, the spokesperson added.

# Go First to return ₹597 cr to around 15.5 lakh passengers, NCLT issues notice to CoC & IBBI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Monday issued notices to the Committee of Creditors of Go First and insolvency regulator IBBI over a plea to refund Rs 597.54 crore to around 15.5 lakh passengers who booked tickets for travel on and after May 3.

The resolution professional (RP) of crisis-ridden Go First, which suspended operations on May 3, has approached the NCLT to seek permission for refunding money to passengers, some of whom booked flights till July 10.

Senior advocate Ramji Srinivasan representing RP said that this has been done as per the business plan to revive the grounded airline.

The NCLT bench comprising Mahendra Khandelwal and Rahul P Bhatnagar said that the feasibility and implementation of such a business plan should be "subject to suggestions of members of Committee of Creditors (CoC)".

The bench asked the Resolution Professional to take specific approval from the lenders over the refund of the amount.

Srinivasan said the CoC is aware of this, it has already envisaged the business plan and approved it. However, he sought time from the tribunal to check whether this particular refund plan has been approved by the



CoC or not.

The tribunal said as plans keep on changing, it would be better if a specific resolution over payment for refund is taken. It also wanted to know whether anyone has filed an objection to this refund plan.

On this, Srinivasan said it is done in the public interest and suggested bringing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), which is a regulator into this issue.

Agreed by this the bench has issued notices to the CoC of Go First and IBBI directing them to file their replies and posted the matter for the next hearing on August 7.

"We issue notice to the CoC, IBBI and direct them to file their replies. We will hear the case further on August 07," said NCLT.

Go First stopped flying on May 3, 2023, and approached voluntarily for initiation of CIRP against it, as it was unable to fly due to technical difficulties faced by the non-availability of engines from Pratt & Whitney.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### ICAI RECOGNISES BRPL DURING 18TH NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN COST MANAGEMENT

New Delhi: The best practices being followed by BSES are being increasingly recognised. BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) has been honoured with the much-coveted "National Award for Excellence in Cost Management - 2022" from the Institute of Cost Accountants of India. The prestigious award was received by the BRPL team led by CEO Vineet Sikka and CFO Surya Banerji on behalf of the organisation at a function in Vigyan Bhawan recently. This is the fourth time the discom has received this prestigious recognition.

### SBI RAISES ₹10,000 CRORE VIA UNSECURED LONG-TERM INFRA BONDS

New Delhi: Country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday raised Rs 10,000 crore at a coupon rate of 7.54 per cent through its third infrastructure bond issuance. The bidding ended on Monday and the proceeds will be used in enhancing its long-term resources for funding infrastructure and the affordable housing segment, SBI said in a statement.

### IRB INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPERS Q1 NET PROFIT FALLS

New Delhi: IRB Infrastructure Developers on Monday posted a 63 per cent fall in its profit after tax to Rs 133.77 crore during the April-June quarter, dragged by lower income.

## Key infra sector growth at 5-month high of 8.2% in June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Output of eight key infrastructure sectors expanded at a five-month rate of 8.2 per cent in June on healthy performance by sectors such as natural gas and steel, according to the official data released on Monday.

However, production growth was slower than 13.1 per cent recorded in June 2022.

## Reliance Retail unveils new JioBook laptop priced at ₹16,499

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Retail has unveiled its all new JioBook, a lightweight and pocket-friendly 4G-LTE powered laptop designed to cater to all age groups.

JioBook touted as 'India's First Learning Book' will be available at Rs 16,499 starting August 5, 2023, and customers can purchase JioBook from Reliance Digital's online and offline stores, as well as through Amazon.in.

The JioBook packs a punch with stylish design featuring matte finish, and ultra slim built, and is light weight at 990 grams. It features 4G-LTE and dual-band WiFi capabilities, powerful octa-core chipset for smooth multitasking, 11.6-inch

# JAPAN THRASH SPAIN 4-0 IN WOMEN'S WORLD CUP



AFP ■ WELLINGTON

Hinata Miyazawa scored twice and set up another as Japan stunned Spain 4-0 at the Women's World Cup on Monday to set up a clash with Norway in the knockout stage.

The Japanese delivered a lesson in clinical counter-attacking and led 3-0 at half-time to issue a World Cup warning against one of the title favourites.

The 2011 champions Japan topped the group to play another former winner in Norway while Spain will face Switzerland in the last 16.

Miyazawa's brace took her to four goals for the tournament while Riko Ueki and Mina Tanaka bagged the others for a hugely impressive Japan.

Boasting a host of European

club stars, Spain dominated possession in front of a crowd of 20,957 in Wellington.

But they didn't create a single clear chance as Japan soaked up pressure and broke with pace, with lethal effect.

It was a tactical masterclass from Japan coach Futoshi Ikeda, whose team denied space and time to Barcelona stars Alexia Putellas and Aitana Bonmati.

"The Spanish team, with that kind of offence, we decided to respond with a compact defence," Ikeda said.

"Once we recovered the ball, we tried to attack to the maximum at speed." Japan's three first-half attempts resulted in three blistering goals as their speedy front line took advantage of a disorganised Spanish defence missing injured captain Ivana Andres.

It was Japan's first win in five attempts over Spain.

Their 11 goals is the most by any team at the tournament while they're one of four sides yet to concede a goal.

Miyazawa is also the tournament's leading scorer, although she was denied a chance to add to her four goals when replaced at halftime.

A beaming Miyazawa said leading the race for the golden boot was a surprise and a "great pleasure".

"I never imagined it. All of the goals are because of the other players giving me the right passes. So it's everybody's goal, not just me," she said.

With both teams having already qualified after coasting past pool opponents Zambia and Costa Rica, sixth-ranked Spain were considered the

favourites to top the group.

Only needing a draw to do so, the Europeans controlled the ball for long periods but they had few answers when their opponents broke with speed.

**SPAIN IN SHOCK**

Spain coach Jorge Vilda conceded he'd been out-thought tactically.

"As the head coach I'm responsible for this defeat," he said.

"Yes I was surprised, they were exerting a lot of pressure. We had to break this low block that they had but we were not able to get past their lines to attack... and little by little they started scoring goals."

"We have not seen the best Spanish team yet and I'm convinced that against Switzerland the team will react positively."

## Raso stars as Aus surge into last 16

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Co-hosts Australia rescued their Women's World Cup hopes with a 4-0 thumping of Canada to sweep into the last 16 at the expense of the Olympic champions on Monday.

The Matildas came into the clash needing victory to ensure they made the knockout round after a stunning 3-2 defeat to Nigeria left them on a knife-edge.

They thrived on the pressure in front of more than 27,000 in Melbourne to consign Canada to an early flight home, with Hayley Raso scoring twice.

Australia top Group B ahead of Nigeria, who drew 0-0 with Ireland, and set them up for a clash against the second-placed team in Group D — likely Denmark or China — in the next round.

"I'm so, so proud of this team," said coach Tony Gustavsson. "The players, there's something special about this group."

In the press conference yesterday someone asked if this was legacy-defining, a crossroads moment for this team, and yes it was. But we didn't shy away from it," he added. "The way the players performed tonight, all the talk about Sam (Kerr), they just



went out and played their game, stayed true to who they are."

Talismanic striker Kerr remained on the bench as a precaution despite declaring herself available after a calf injury that had ruled her out of Australia's first two games.

Real Madrid's Raso put them ahead in the ninth minute, firing low into the corner after captain Steph Catley fed a teasing low cross.

They had a goal controversially disallowed 10 minutes before the break, but put it behind them and Raso made sure on their very next attack for her second with a close-range tap-in.

A shellshocked Canada made four changes at half-time, but the comeback never materialised and Mary Fowler bagged Australia's third from a

counter-attack before Catley sealed victory with an injury-time penalty.

"Everybody fought for each other, you could see that out there," said Raso. "We showed that never-say-die attitude and we're absolutely delighted."

But it was the end of the road for Canada, who would have been through with a draw.

"Reality is setting in but all credit to Australia, they were the better team," coach Bev Priestman said. "Football is cruel, it wasn't our night, and that is it."

**DREAM START**

Kerr was not risked but the home side were boosted by the return of Manchester City's Fowler, who replaced Kerr in their 1-0 win against Ireland but missed the Nigeria game with concussion.

Yet it was livewire Raso who gave them a dream start.

After a cagey opening, Catley was set free down the left and her curling ball found Raso, who took two touches before smashing it into the corner.

It was called offside, but VAR awarded the goal and the stadium erupted.

Australia thought they had their second when Fowler rifled home from close range, but after a long delay, VAR found that Ellie Carpenter was fractionally offside and it was disallowed — to the disgust of the home fans.

Unperturbed, they launched straight into another attack and this time the goal counted, with Raso making no mistake from two yards out.

Canada made wholesale changes at the break in a bid to revive their fortunes, but Australia resumed where they left off.

Raso and Kyra Cooney-Cross both went close before Fowler bagged the third in the 58th minute after Caitlin Foord beat the offside trap and cut the ball back.

Catley then stroked in a penalty at the death to wrap up the win after a Jessie Fleming foul was punished on review.

## Red Bull boss hails 'mind blowing' season as Verstappen cruises again

AFP ■ SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS (BELGIUM)

Red Bull boss Christian Horner described his team's form this season as "mind blowing" after Max Verstappen's latest display of dominance at Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix.

Verstappen romped to his eighth consecutive victory and 10th of the season to maintain Red Bull's total grip on Formula One after 12 of 22 races.

Asked about the prospects of completing an unbeaten season, Horner said: "I'm not going to project that far ahead. We'll come back after the break and try to keep this amazing momentum going."

Formula One will shut down for three weeks and return at the end of August with Verstappen's home Dutch Grand Prix, where he will seek to equal former Red Bull driver Sebastian Vettel's 2013 record of nine straight wins.

Verstappen's 45th career victory lifted him 125 points



clear of teammate Sergio Perez in the title race while in the constructors' championship, Red Bull lead with 503 points to Mercedes on 247.

On Sunday, Perez was second — Red Bull's fifth one-two of the season — and he has a 40-point lead over Fernando Alonso in the standings. Horner praised the team for their work in winning all 12 races this year.

"It's all about team-work and everyone doing their bit," he said. "It's what the team has done in the first part of this year and it's why we remain unbeaten so

far. It's mind blowing!"

"We need to keep this level going, but right now everyone deserves a well-deserved break."

Verstappen said his latest demonstration of dominance "was really enjoyable" especially as he had started sixth on the grid. "It's a new spot, that's for sure — P6. I knew that we had a great car. It was just about surviving turn one. We made all the right moves."

Such was Verstappen's superiority he had time to tease his race engineer over the team radio. As Gianpiero Lambiase

warned him about degradation and to conserve his tyres he joked that he might go faster instead — and take an extra pit-stop to give the team more pit-stop practice.

Their banter came as the 25-year-old Dutchman carved his way to a crushing 22-second victory ahead of Perez to complete a hat-trick of Belgian wins.

Told earlier in the race to "follow my instructions, please, and respect them", Verstappen was later told after pitting for fresh tyres that "you used a lot of the tyre on the out lap, Max. I'm not sure that was sensible".

Verstappen took little notice but responded with a fastest lap.

"I'd ask you to use your head a bit more," said his engineer to which he replied: "I could push on and have another stop, for pit-stop training."

"Not this time," said Lambiase curtly, emphasising a need for caution that the champion said he had respected.

"I did slow down," protested Verstappen after the race.

## Dortmund down sloppy Man United in Vegas friendly

AFP ■ LAS VEGAS

Borussia Dortmund punished Manchester United's defensive lapses on Sunday as the English Premier League giants wrapped up their North American tour with a 3-2 defeat to the Bundesliga side in Las Vegas.

A second-half strike by Dortmund substitute Youssouf Moukoko proved the difference in an entertaining clash at the Allegiant Stadium, home of the NFL's Las Vegas Raiders.

United manager Erik ten Hag named a virtual reserve team to start, leaving the likes of Marcus Rashford, Bruno Fernandes and new signing Mason Mount on the bench.

Yet United's makeshift starting XI were more than a match for Dortmund in the first half, dominating for long periods before Diogo Dalot handed the Red Devils the lead on 24 minutes with a long-range strike.

But Dortmund turned the game on its head in the closing minutes of the first half, with two goals in a minute from Netherlands international forward Donyell Malen.

The first came when United's defense failed to close down Karim Adeyemi's burst down the right.

Despite the attention of a cluster of United defenders, Adeyemi was able to square for Malen, who hooked in from close range.

Malen grabbed his second a minute later, this time seizing on a United howler when Victor



Lindelof lost possession inside the area trying to pass out from the back.

United were lucky not to go 3-1 down in the opening minutes of the second half, when another defensive slip, this time by Harry Maguire, allowed Sebastian Haller a shot on goal.

United goalkeeper Andre Onana saved and then watched in relief as Adeyemi blasted the follow-up wide with the goal gaping. United did get back on level terms in the 52nd minute, when Brazilian forward Antony swooped home a low shot from inside the area after a botched clearance by Dortmund veteran Mats Hummels.

Ten Hag rang in the changes with 30 minutes remaining, with Rashford instantly providing more of an attacking threat. But it was Dortmund who scored the decisive goal, with veteran Marco Reus working a clever opening to set up Moukoko for the winner.

## Saint-Maximin joins Saudi's Al-Ahli after Newcastle exit

AFP ■ PARIS

French winger Allan Saint-Maximin on Sunday signed a three-year deal with Saudi Arabia's Al-Ahli after leaving English club Newcastle as the cash-rich and ambitious Gulf kingdom's league snared another top-level player.

"We pick the best, and he's one of them," Al-Ahli said on social media.

The financial terms of the deal were not revealed but English press reports have estimated it to be in the region of £30 million (\$38.5 million). Saint-Maximin, 26, made 124 appearances for Saudi-backed Newcastle and scored 13 goals since joining from Nice in 2019.

## Fritz downs Vukic to win Atlanta ATP crown 'I don't know how I did it': Popyrin



AFP ■ MIAMI

World number nine Taylor Fritz shrugged off a second-set wobble to claim the sixth title of his career with victory over Alexander Vukic in the ATP Atlanta Open on Sunday.

US number one Fritz dug deep to overpower Australia's Vukic, ranked 82nd in the world, in 2hr 16min, winning 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4.

Fritz looked to be heading for a straight sets victory after taking two match points on Vukic's serve while leading 6-5 in the second set.

But Vukic showed great character to claw his way back from the brink, eventually holding serve with an ace to force a

tie-break.

The 27-year-old from Sydney then relied on his thunderous serve to grab the tie-break as Fritz was left ruing a golden chance to wrap up victory.

However the American regained his composure in the deciding set, claiming the decisive break in the seventh game to take a 4-3 lead before holding for 5-3.

Vukic then held comfortably but there was no way back as Fritz produced a dominant service game to seal victory.

A booming ace — his 16th of the tournament — brought up three match points at 40-0, and another powerful serve left Vukic flailing with a wild return to give the American the win.

AFP ■ UMAG (CROATIA)

Australia's Alexei Popyrin fought back from a set down and overcame cramping to shatter Stan Wawrinka's hopes of a first title in six years by winning the Umag clay-court title on Sunday.

The 23-year-old Popyrin, ranked at 90 in the world, came through 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-4 after two hours and 36 minutes on court to claim a second career title to add to his 2021 Singapore victory.

Three-time major winner Wawrinka, 38, was hoping to capture a 17th career title but first since Geneva in 2017.

Wawrinka recovered from 3-5 down in the opening set before claiming the tie-breaker.

Popyrin, 15 years Wawrinka's junior, levelled by pocketing the second set and was a break ahead in the first game of the decider which he immediately handed back.

The young Australian suffered cramping in the heavy, humid conditions and called for the physio but still carved out the key break in the ninth game before serving out for victory.

"All tournament I've been fighting battles that I don't know how I won. This one tops



it all," Popyrin said on court.

"I felt cramp, I felt (the muscle) strain but I managed to dig deep. I don't know how I won it."

"The physio said, 'If you go any more then it will be tough'. I said, 'There's no point in quitting now, I'm here in the final. If I lose, I lose. If I retire, I lose anyway. So I have a better chance of winning if I stay in', so that's what I decided to do."

Despite defeat, former world number three Wawrinka

## Hope for future despite New Zealand's painful World Cup exit

AFP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand's proud players hope their performances at the World Cup will be a turning point for women's football in the country despite the pain of an early exit.

Some of the team were in tears as the tournament co-hosts bowed out on Sunday in the group stage in front of a sell-out 25,000 crowd in Dunedin.

Their 0-0 stalemate with Switzerland meant they finished on four points along with Norway, but the Norwegians went into the last 16 with the Swiss thanks only to a better goal difference. It was not the ending the Football Ferns wanted but they have still broken records for the game in the traditionally rugby-mad country.

They opened the tournament with a stunning 1-0 win



over former champions Norway — New Zealand's first win at a men's or women's World Cup.

That landmark victory was played out in front of more than 42,000 at a sell-out Eden Park in Auckland — a record crowd for football in New Zealand.

A subsequent shock loss to the Philippines and the draw with Switzerland was not enough and many of the players were distraught afterwards.

But the disappointment soon gave way to pride and hope for the future of football in the country.

Captain Ali Riley, a veteran of five World Cups — none of which brought a win — said she didn't feel as shattered emotionally as she had following the team's previous early exits.

"I've left the other tournaments and the Olympics feeling so down," the US-based defend-

er told reporters.

"Feeling like I don't know if we can turn around and I don't know what the future of this programme is going to look like."

"Right now I just feel pride."

The Football Ferns' three games were all sold out and local media responded too. Even the country's iconic men's rugby team, the All Blacks, were shunted down to second-tier status in sports bulletins.

Former women's international Kristy Hill told Radio New Zealand she sensed the interest wouldn't be temporary.

"Going into this tournament New Zealanders didn't know women's football," she said. "They kept calling the Football Ferns the White Ferns (the women's cricket team)."

"These girls weren't household names and all of a sudden that changed at Eden Park."

# India hope their experiments work in series decider against WI

PTI ■ TAROUBA

India will be hoping the experiment of trying out Sanju Samson and Suryakumar Yadav in the middle-order works when they take on the West Indies in the ODI series decider here on Tuesday.

India, who have not lost an ODI series to West Indies since 2006, face a rare series defeat after their move to rest skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli backfired in the second game in Barbados.

As head coach Rahul Dravid pointed after the six-wicket loss on Saturday, India are looking at the bigger picture ahead of next month's Asia Cup and the upcoming World Cup will have another game to see the kind of impact the younger players can make in a must-win match.

"We will always look at the bigger picture. At this stage in the cycle, the Asia Cup and World Cup coming up we have to look at the bigger picture because of some of the injuries we have. We can't get worried about every single game, every single series, if we do that it will be a mistake," Dravid asserted on Saturday.

Suryakumar, who is struggling to make his all-round game work in the 50-over format, will be looking to bat long and make a match-winning contribution.

For someone like Samson, who has made umpteen comebacks but has not been able to make it count, the series decider presents a golden opportunity. He is likely to bat at number three like he did in the second ODI.

Opener Ishan Kishan has been impressive with the bat since the Test series but Shubman Gill is due for a big one after a quiet tour of West Indies thus far.

Hardik Pandya, who opened the bowling in the first two games, is gradually building up his workload. With the bat, he has been far from his best and



would be looking to get some runs under his belt before the five-match T20 series against the West Indies.

In the bowling department, tearaway fast bowler Umran Malik has a point to prove after going wicketless so far in the series. His pace surely provides India the X factor but he needs to improve on the skill and accuracy front.

Chinaman Kuldeep Yadav has been India's stand out bowler, leaving no room in the side for his good friend Yuzvendra Chahal, who is likely to be seen in action only in the following T20 series.

West Indies have little to lose and a series win over India will be a much-

needed shot in the arm after their failure to qualify for the ODI World Cup later this year.

Their bowlers have given Indian batters a hard time. Left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie has got the ball to turn sharply and pacer Romario Shepherd has used the short ball to good effect.

"The guys are going to come hard again. We keep speaking about the attitude, and today we displayed that. We need to replicate that and need to be more consistent with the bat and ball," said skipper Shai Hope, who will be high on confidence after an unbeaten 63 in the second ODI.

## THE TEAMS (FROM):

**West Indies:** Shai Hope (captain), Rovman Powell (vice-captain), Alick Athanaze, Yannic Cariah, Keacy Carty, Dominic Drakes, Shimron Hetmyer, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Gudakesh Motie, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd, Kevin Sinclair, Oshane Thomas.

**India:** Rohit (captain), Shubman Gill, Rituraj, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Sanju Samson (wicket-keeper), Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Hardik Pandya (vice-captain), Shardul, Jadeja, Axar Patel, Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Umran Malik, Mukesh Kumar.

# Bumrah set to make comeback as India's captain

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Fast-bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah is set to make a comeback into international cricket after being named as India's captain for the three-match T20I series against Ireland. In the squad, fast-bowler Prasidh Krishna also makes a return to the team.

The three T20I matches between India and Ireland will be played in Malahide on August 18, 20 and 23. India and Ireland played a two-match T20I series in June 2022, with the visitors winning the series 2-0, though the hosts came close to winning.

For the tour of Ireland, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma, Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, and Shahbaz Ahmed have also been included, with Rituraj Gaikwad appointed as vice-captain of the side.

Bumrah has been out of competitive cricket since late September last year, when he pulled out of the home T20Is against South Africa, after playing in two games against Australia. The recurrence of back injury resulted in him missing the Men's T20 World Cup in Australia. He had also missed the Asia Cup held last year in the UAE.

Bumrah attempted a comeback in January this year for the ODI series against Sri Lanka. But he was withdrawn on the eve of the ODI series opener at Guwahati, with the BCCI citing the need for him to build bowling resilience and calling the decision a precautionary measure.

He then underwent back surgery in New Zealand in March and has been on a recovery



route since then at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru. On the other hand, Prasad had been out of action since last year due to a stress fracture in the back which needed surgery and was also undergoing rehab at the NCA.

**India squad for T20Is**

**against Ireland:** Jasprit Bumrah (captain), Rituraj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed, Ravi Bishnoi, Prasad Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan

# MI New York wins Major League Cricket in US



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

MI New York has won the inaugural edition of Major League Cricket, the US T20 league, beating Seattle Orcas by 7 wickets.

Major League Cricket (MLC) is a professional Twenty20 cricket league in the United States. Six team representing major US cities participated in the tournament that started on July 13.

In the finals, Seattle Orcas scored 183 for loss of 9 wickets in their allotted 20 overs.

MI New York chased down a total of 184 in just 16 overs to win by six wickets with captain Nicholas Pooran leading from the front with an unbeaten hundred.

MI New York, which is owned by Indiawin Sports (a

Reliance company), "put on a series of captivating performances to win the inaugural edition of MLC at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Texas", a company statement said.

On the day of the final, when the men in blue and gold put on a supreme show to clinch the title, team owner Nita M Ambani, wife of billionaire and Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani, was pitch side.

Speaking on the momentous occasion, Nita Ambani described the atmosphere for the final as 'unbelievable and really exciting'.

She also hailed the impact of the tournament that has seen some of the best players in the world in action. "Just look at the atmosphere here. It looks like a festival of cricket. I think MLC is a momentous step in the

development of cricket in this region. Sport can be a bedrock of society and especially in the US it's a big part of the culture."

"So, for us to join hands with MLC and play our role in the growth and development of cricket in this region is fantastic. I'm enjoying every moment of it," she said.

MI New York is one of the five teams that are part of the Mumbai Indian franchise across the globe.

Speaking about the vision behind the same, she said, "It's been wonderful to see the growth of cricket around the world and especially MI going to the UAE, South Africa and now here in the US. We also have a women's team which I am very, very proud of. It was so wonderful to see these young girls coming from such diverse backgrounds coming and playing together as a team. It was very heart-warming."

Nita Ambani also hoped that the inaugural edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL) will be a game changer. "I'm a big supporter of girls in sports and I hope we can take it forward in every sport possible," she said.

She said Mumbai Indians have been a nursery of talent over the years. "At Mumbai Indians we pride ourselves on discovering and nurturing young talent - Hardik (Pandya), (Jasprit) Bumrah. We hope to do this not just in India but around the world."

# Prasidh Krishna returns to competitive cricket



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Raising hopes of his return to Team India white ball set-up, pacer Prasidh Krishna made a comeback to competitive cricket at the RSI grounds here on Monday during the KSCA T20 tournament for G Kasturirangan Memorial Trophy.

Prasidh took four wickets conceding 36 runs (4-0-36-4) for Mount Joy Cricket Club while playing against Sir Syed Cricketers.

This will be good news for selectors who will be soon picking teams for the upcoming white ball tour to Ireland and for the Asia Cup to be played in Sri Lanka.

This will also give an option to India when the bigwigs sit down to select the team for the ICC World Cup 2023 to be played across October and November.

However, Mount Joy could not chase down 156, getting restricted to 130 as Prasidh

remained unbeaten on 1. "Prasidh is fit and the day's performance will give him a lot of confidence. He has been bowling at nets at NCA as well, and he has bowled in a few other match situations as well recently. He was able to bowl his quota of 10 overs," said a source who has been tracking the bowler's progress.

Prasidh and Jasprit Bumrah, who is also under rehabilitation at the NCA, had recently bowled against a visiting Mumbai side at the Alur grounds here.

The 27-year-old Prasidh, who played 11 ODIs, last represented India in an ODI match against Zimbabwe in August 2022.

After that tour, he was picked up for India A's white ball series against New Zealand A in September 2022 but could not appear in that event due to a stress fracture.

Shardul Thakur had replaced Prasidh in India A squad for that series.

The stress fracture had also prevented Prasidh from playing for Karnataka in the Ranji Trophy knockout earlier this year.

The right-arm quick was expected to make a comeback during the IPL 2023.

But the lumbar stress fracture ruled him out of the event in February itself, as the Rajasthan Royals player later went under the knife. RR had drafted in Sandeep Sharma as his replacement.

# Kapil Dev Slams Indian Players For Poor Commitment Towards National Team



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

World Cup winning Indian captain Kapil Dev has questioned Indian players' commitment towards the national team. Kapil feels that players are keen to play in IPL even with minor injuries but when it comes to the national team, they are happy to sit out.

Over the last few years, team India has suffered a lot in big events owing to injuries to key players. Kapil questioned the status of Jasprit Bumrah, who has been out of the Indian team for nearly a year, and said if Bumrah does not get fit before the World Cup, it will be a big setback as BCCI wasted a lot of time hoping for him to get fit.

"What happened to Bumrah? He started working with so much belief, but if he's not there (in World Cup semi-final/final)... we wasted time on him. Rishabh Pant... such a great cricketer. Had he been

there, our Test cricket would've been better," Kapil said, to an interview with THE WEEK

**Kapil Dev Not Happy With Players' Intent Toward National Team**

Kapil further said that if a player has a minor injury, he will prefer to sit out of the national team but play in IPL with a similar injury.

"God is kind, it's not as if I never got injured. But today, they are playing 10 months in a year. Give a benefit of doubt to that, but everybody has to look after themselves. IPL is a great thing but IPL can spoil you also. Because, a little bit of injuries and you will play in IPL. A little bit of injuries, you won't play for India. You would take a break. I'm being very open about it," said the legendary all-rounder.

**Kapil Slams BCCI For Poor Management**

Kapil Dev also slammed the BCCI for poor management of the players and suggested that the board should have an idea of how much cricket they should play.

"If you have a small injury, you would play in IPL if it's an important game. At this stage, cricket board has to understand how much cricket they should play. That is the bottom-line. If today, you have resources, money, but you don't have three or five-year calendars. There's something wrong with the cricket board there," he further added.

# Rain frustrates Eng and Aus on final day of Ashes series

AP ■ LONDON

Rain was frustrating England and Australia in their hunt for a series-ending win on the last day of the fifth and final Ashes test on Monday. Australia went to lunch on 238-3, chasing 384 for the victory to clinch the series 3-1, but rain has prevented any more play so far at The Oval.

The Australians need 146 more runs to win while the English require seven wickets in their bid to draw the series 2-2 and prevent the tourists from completing a first Ashes series win in England since 2001.

Rain denied England a likely victory in the fourth test at Old Trafford, with a draw there ensuring Australia would retain the urn.

At The Oval, Australia recovered from losing three quick wickets early on Day 5 and was mounting a recovery through Steve Smith (40 not out) and Travis Head (31 not out), with their partnership up to 69 runs.



The English thought they had got Smith in the final over of the session but captain Ben Stokes, who took a fine, leaping, one-handed catch off the batter's glove, lost control of the ball as he brought his arm down and brushed his thigh. He was adjudged to have dropped the ball before having complete control.

Australia resumed on 135-0 and England finally found some seam movement and swing with a new ball, accounting for David Warner, Usman Khawaja and Marnus

Labuschagne in an 11-over spell in which the tourists hit just 34 runs.

Warner went for 60 in his final innings on English soil, edging Chris Woakes behind. The left-handed opener intends to retire from test cricket after the Sydney test against Pakistan in January and there was some applause from spectators for a player English crowds have enjoyed giving some friendly abuse down the years.

Woakes then removed Khawaja for 72, trapping him lbw, and a review by the batter proved to be a waste with replays showing it was plumb. Mark Wood then entered the attack with his express pace and found the edge of Labuschagne (13), with Zak Crawley taking a sharp catch at second slip.

With cloud cover and the floodlights on, more wickets seemed likely but Head - joining Smith in the middle - counterattacked and was soon faying veteran paceman Jimmy Anderson and Stuart Broad to the fence.

# Broad's retirement makes me 'more firm' to continue playing: Anderson

IANS ■ LONDON

Veteran England fast bowler James Anderson has revealed that Stuart Broad's retirement from the game after the end of the fifth Ashes Test at The Oval has made him "even more firm" in continuing to play the game.

Anderson is England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker with 690 scalps, with Broad set to end his Test career with 600 wickets. Anderson came into the fifth and final Ashes Test on the back of taking just four wickets in the series at an average of 76.75. His future has been a big talking point, especially with him turning 41 during the match.

"Not at all no. I am even more firm; I want to keep going. I have had a really disappointing series by my standards. I have not got the wickets I would have expected from myself. I don't think I have bowled particularly badly, I have just not...felt like I made an impact for the team that I would have liked and what I expect from myself," said Anderson to Sky Sports.



The right-arm pacer also said he feels good to continue, especially with England's next Test assignment after the Ashes being a five-match series trip to India from January 25 to March 11 next year. "My body is fine, my skills are fine. I think I'm bowling well enough. With the break we have got after this series, I want to go away and in my head, I think I want to keep working at stuff and make sure I got back to where I know I can be. Having that hunger and desire to go and do that makes it feel I want to keep going," added Anderson.

Talking about his long-time bowling

partner Broad's retirement announcement, Anderson admitted to being surprised to overhear it. "I was a little bit shocked when he told me. I respect his decision as he seems clear on what he wants to do."

On the rain-hit day four, Broad put an arm around Anderson before walking through Australia's guard of honour to resume England's second innings with the bat. Anderson expressed he felt honoured to see Broad pull off a six in Mitchell Starc's opening over of the day.

"Sunday morning was really special -- getting to walk out with him on the field, watch him hit his last ball in Test cricket for six. The crowd were amazing, the ovation he got was incredible and I felt really lucky to be out there and experience it."

"We both said when we saw that image if we put one photo in our house of our careers, it would be that one. We loved playing together. Neither of us could have achieved what we have without the other. It's incredibly special and I will definitely miss him," he concluded.