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NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 2, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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# Nuh riots spill over, mob kills cleric in Gurugram

Death toll rises to five; curfew clamped in Nuh

PTI ■ GURUGRAM/CHANDIGARH

Mobs killed a cleric in a late night attack on a mosque, torched an eatery and vandalised shops as communal violence that began in Haryana's Nuh spilled over into Gurugram, taking the death toll to five, police said on Tuesday.

A mob set fire to an under-construction mosque in Gurugram's sector 57 and shot dead the naib imam past Monday midnight. And two more men succumbed to their injuries after the previous day's Nuh attack, which has claimed four lives.

Over 50 people, including 10 policemen, were injured in Mod in Nuh, a police officer said. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar called the attack a part of a larger conspiracy, while the Vishva Hindu Parishad demanded a probe by the NIA.

Authorities clamped a curfew Tuesday morning in Nuh district. Security forces held flag marches in adjoining districts as well and several peace



Police personnel outside Anjuman Mosque which was set ablaze in the Sector 57 area, in Gurugram district on Tuesday. Some people in the crowd opened fire at the people present in the mosque as the violence that erupted in neighbouring Nuh district spread to Gurugram over an attempt to stop a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession. PTI

committee meetings were organised.

Hours after mobs targeted a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession — opening fire, pelting stones and torching cars — at Khedla Mod in Nuh, rioters burnt vehicles and shops in Gurugram's Sohna town. No casualties were reported there as police dispersed the Sohna mob by 9 pm Monday.

But past midnight, another group set fire to the under-construction Anjuman Masjid. The 26-year-old naib imam, Saad, and another man were injured as the mob opened fire. The imam, a native of Bihar, died in hospital, an official said. Five people were rounded up in connection with the attack on the mosque.

On Tuesday afternoon, a

mob shouting Jai Shri Ram slogans set fire to a roadside eatery in Gurugram's Badshahpur. A couple of shops in the market nearby were also vandalised, police said.

The fire brigade doused the flames. When police reached the spot, the rioters — said to be around 70 — fled on their vehicles, officials said.

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# SC outraged at 'breakdown of law & order' in Manipur

Court terms State police probe 'tardy', summons DGP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed its outrage over the complete breakdown of law and order and constitutional machinery in Manipur. The court criticised the investigation conducted by the State police, describing it as "tardy" and "too lethargic."

It demanded the personal presence of the Director General of Police (DGP) during the hearing of various petitions related to the mayhem in the northeastern State on Monday.

Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, heading the bench, found the law enforcement machinery responsible for unbridled ethnic violence, stating that the State police had lost control over the law and order situation.

The court sought specific details from the State Government regarding the date of occurrence of the incident and the registration of both "zero FIR" and regular FIR in the case. It also inquired about the number of accused named in the more than 6,000 FIRs



Firefighters try to douse a fire that was set in the houses of Kuki-Zo community by miscreants in the violence-hit Manipur, in Imphal on Tuesday. The fire also engulfed more than a dozen houses of migrants from Bihar, Haryana, and Naga people PTI

registered so far and the steps taken for their arrest.

During the hearing, Chandrachud orally remarked, "The investigation is so lethargic, FIRs are registered after so long, arrests not made, statements not recorded..."

"There is a complete breakdown of law and order and constitutional machinery in the State."

The tension escalated in

Manipur, already tormented by unabated ethnic violence, after a May 4 video emerged showing two women from one of the warring communities being paraded naked by a mob from the other side.

"One thing is very clear that there is a long delay in registering the FIR in the video case," Chandrachud further commented.

The Manipur Government

informed the bench that it had lodged 6,523 FIRs in response to the ethnic violence that erupted in May.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre and the Manipur Government, disclosed that the State police had lodged a 'zero' FIR in connection with the stripping and parading incident of the two women naked.

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# Delhi Services Bill tabled in LS amid Opp's protest

Shah terms Opp's objection political; BJD breaks ranks with Opposition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday introduced the contentious Delhi Services Bill in the Lok Sabha, with the Opposition alliance 'INDIA' strongly denouncing the legislation as a "graveyard for cooperative federalism," while Home Minister Amit Shah dismissed these objections as "political."

Breaking ranks with the opposition parties, BJD, backed the Government saying the SC order gives Parliament the power to bring the Bill. BJP member of Lok Sabha Pinaki Mishra said the Government



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks in the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, in the Lok Sabha amid sloganeering by Opposition MPs during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Tuesday. The Bill will replace the Delhi Services Ordinance PTI

has brought the law pursuant to the Supreme Court's judgment. "How can you challenge the legislative competence?" he asked.

During the Monsoon Session's ninth day, the Lok

Sabha once again witnessed familiar slogan-shouting of the Manipur issue, with Opposition members demanding a response from the Prime Minister.

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# 20 killed as crane crashes on workers constructing Nagpur-Mumbai e-way

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In yet another mishap involving the much-discussed Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway, at least 20 persons were killed, and three others injured when a girder-launching crane collapsed at Shahpur in Thane district in the small hours of Tuesday around 1 am.

The mishap took place between Sargaon and Sara Ambegaon near Shahpur when the Phase-III work of the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway was in progress.

A girder launcher weighing around 700 metric tonnes collapsed from a height of 90 to 100 feet on the workers involved in the construction of a bridge of the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway.

The information received by the Regional Disaster



Management Unit said that the mishap took place at 1.07 am on Tuesday at Satgaon near Shahpur. "The huge crane on the highway fell on the workers engaged in the construction of a bridge on the Expressway," official sources said.

Reports reaching here from the mishap site state that till the evening, as many as 20 bodies of the workers killed have been recovered, while three persons — who were rescued from the debris — are undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

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# Sharad keeps date, hails Modi for Tilak honour

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what ultimately turned out to be an apolitical function where he shared a platform with NCP chief Sharad Pawar amid a stand-off between the Government and the Opposition in Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Tuesday conferred with the prestigious 'Lokmanya Tilak National Award' instituted in memory of the legendary freedom fighter and journalist Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Pune.

Apart from Pawar, who was the chief guest at the function, Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Ministers of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, president of Tilak Smarak Trust, Dr Deepak Tilak, vice president of Tilak Smarak Trust, Dr Rohit Tilak, and Trustee of Tilak Smarak



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Congress leader Sushilkumar Shinde at the Lokmanya Tilak National Award ceremony, in Pune on Tuesday PTI

Trust, former CM Sushil Kumar Shinde among others were present on the occasion.

On a day-long visit to Pune when he launched several development projects, including the flagging of trains on Pune Metro, laying the foundation for houses constructed under PMAY, and inauguration of a "waste to energy" plant, both Modi and Pawar main-

tained propriety of the occasion and chose not to bring in politics into the event.

Pawar said, "Lokmanya Tilak award is of considerable significance. We are all happy that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been chosen by the Tilak Smarak Mandir Trust, as this year's nominee for this prestigious award."

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## CAPSULE

### PATNA HC UPHOLDS CASTE SURVEY IN BIHAR

**Patna:** In a shot in the arm for the Nitish Kumar Government in Bihar, the Patna High Court on Tuesday upheld the caste survey ordered by it as "perfectly valid" and "initiated with due competence".

### BRIGADIERS & ABOVE TO DON COMMON UNIFORM

**New Delhi:** The Army has implemented the dress regulation wherein officers of the rank of Brigadiers and above will don a common uniform to enhance more synergy in the senior leadership. P4

### NO STAY ON DEFAMATION SUIT AGAINST RAJ CM

**New Delhi:** A Delhi court on Tuesday refused to stay the proceedings in a criminal complaint filed by Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for alleged defamation but allowed the Congress leader to appear before a metropolitan magistrate through video conference.

# Govt's control over Parl 'Hitlershahi', alleges Opposition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All channels of communication between the ruling BJP and the Opposition alliance, INDIA, seem to have broken down completely, leading to a continuous exchange of attacks and counterattacks on a daily basis.

The Opposition coalition fired a fresh salvo on Tuesday, condemning the conduct of the Centre as "dictatorship" and accusing the BJP, its supporters, and certain sections of the media of destabilising peace, harmony, and democracy in the country.

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, labeled the Government's control over Parliament through presiding officers as "Hitlershahi." Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi also criti-



cised the BJP, its supporters, and the media for adding fuel to the instability in the country.

Kharge, along with several Opposition parties, including BRS, DMK, JMM, and AAP, expressed their frustration during a press briefing after he was continuously denied the opportunity to speak in the Rajya Sabha since the beginning of the Monsoon session.

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# Divyang dragged out of home, assaulted in Jaipur market

PNS ■ JAIPUR

A mentally challenged woman was paraded on the streets and subjected to a brutal assault by a violent mob in Kalyan Nagar on July 20.

A video footage showed a crowd forcibly dragging the woman from her home and subjecting her to a vicious attack in a local market, even resorting to dousing her with dirty water.

Shockingly, both men and women participated in the assault, unleashing kicks and punches on the defenseless victim. The intervention of the police eventually put an end to the harrowing ordeal.

The incident was triggered by a board on a house wall, bearing derogatory words, a lotus flower, and BJP references, which incited the anger of the locals.

This anger turned into an aggressive attack on the house and the mentally challenged woman living there. The mob



forcefully broke into the house, mercilessly beating her and dragging her through the bustling market, inflicting further harm by pulling her hair.

Despite the prompt arrival of the Malpura police at the scene, the assault persisted, even with the officers' presence. However, Constable Dholi Bai and her colleagues displayed exceptional courage in rescuing the victim and safely taking her to the police station.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the woman was suffering from mental health issues.

After a week of diligent investigation, the police managed to apprehend seven suspects in connection with this appalling incident.

The authorities are committed to ensuring justice is served for the victim and to prevent such acts of violence in the future.

# Killer RPF cop tried to 'strangle' witness, sent to 7-day remand

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

On a day when RPF constable Chetan Singh, who shot dead his immediate superior and three other passengers on board the Mumbai-Jaipur Superfast Express, was remanded in police custody till August 7, it has now emerged in the investigations that the accused constable had an altercation with colleagues and removed the safety catch of the assault rifle.

An eyewitness to the incident has meanwhile claimed that the accused had tried to strangle him.

Singh (33) was produced before the Magistrate's court in Borivali, which remanded him to police custody till August 7.

The Government Railway Police (GRP) told the court that Singh was not cooperating with the agencies and giving

evasive replies to the investigators.

An enraged Chetan Singh, who was part of a four-member escort security team on board the train, opened fire on ASI Meena from his ARM Rifle inside the B-5 coach. He later shot dead Abdul Kadir, a passenger from Madhubhani town in Bihar.

Still in a fit of rage, he killed an unidentified man in the pantry car before moving to the neighbouring S-6 coach, where he shot a bangle seller from Jaipur.

The police have recorded the statement of Amay G. Acharya, 26, an RPF constable posted in Mahalaxmi in Mumbai. The statement is part of the FIR. In the statement, Acharya has narrated the sequence of events and the behaviour of the accused.

Continued on Page 2

# Patna HC upholds caste survey

## Mahagathbandhan rejoices, BJP on defensive

PTI ■ PATNA

In a shot in the arm for the Nitish Kumar government in Bihar, the Patna High Court on Tuesday upheld the caste survey ordered by it as "perfectly valid" and "initiated with due competence".

A division bench comprising Chief Justice K Vinod Chandran and Justice Partha Sarathy passed the order rejecting a bunch of petitions challenging the survey, which was ordered last year and began earlier this year.

The bench, which had reserved its judgement on July 7, said in its 101-page-long verdict, "We find the action of the state to be perfectly valid, initiated with due competence, with the legitimate aim of providing development with justice."

The judgement began with the note: "The action of the state in carrying out a caste survey... And the vigorous challenge raised to it on multiple grounds... Reveal that despite attempts to efface it from the social fabric, caste remains a reality, and refuses to be swept aside, wished away or brushed aside nor does it wither away or



disperse into thin air."

The judgement, which came less than three months after the court had stayed the survey, shocked the petitioners who vowed to challenge the order before the Supreme Court.

"After studying the judgement, we will move the Supreme Court," senior advocate Dinu Kumar, counsel for one of the many petitioners, told reporters soon after the bench pronounced its verdict in an open court.

The ruling 'Mahagathbandhan' (Grand Alliance) in the state, which had so far been content with a countrywide caste census being adopted as a key agenda by the

opposition grouping INDIA, was predictably elated.

Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav took to Twitter to reiterate the promised benefits of the survey while taking potshots at the BJP, which rules the Centre, for being reluctant to order a caste census while proffering "false pride of having an OBC prime minister".

Statements hailing the judgement and chiding the BJP also came from the JD(U), to which Chief Minister Nitish Kumar belongs, and the CPI(M) Liberation and the CPI(M), both of which are a part of the ruling coalition but support the government from outside.

The BJP was left busy deflecting the blows, pointing out that it had "always supported" the caste survey, and backed it when the cabinet nod came for the exercise, while the party still shared power in the state.

Notably, the ambitious exercise, for which a budgetary outlay of Rs 500 crore has been laid by the cash-strapped state government, was undertaken after the Centre made it clear that headcount of social groups other than the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes would not be undertaken as part of the census.

The stand was not well received in the political circles in Bihar where the numerically powerful OBCs have dominated the political space since the Mandal churn of the 1990s.

Leaders like Lalu Prasad, the RJD supremo who is the father of the Deputy CM, and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, both of whom owe their rise to the Mandal wave, were of the view that a headcount of all castes was necessary since the last time such an exercise was undertaken was in the 1931 census.

# India's e-waste grew exponentially to 16L tonnes in 2021-22: Report

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

From 7 lakh tonnes in 2018, e-waste in the country has grown exponentially to alarming 16 lakhs tonnes in 2021-22, according to the government data tabled in Parliament recently. And there is no stopping this menace in view of increasing influx of electronics and electronic products in India particularly post-Covid where work from home has become a new norm.

While industries contribute to 70% of e-waste, Indian households contribute to almost 15% and the rest comes from discarded or 'end of life' electrical and electronic equipment (EEE). India is one of the fastest growing consumers of discarded or 'end of life' electrical and electronic equipment (EEE). India is the third-largest producer of e-waste after China and the US. More than 95% of this waste is handled by the informal sector.

Various studies have shown that disposal and recycling has not been very encouraging. In 2020-2021, India processed just 3.4 lakh tonnes of e-waste, suggesting that the remaining was left to pollute the environment. If not discarded



properly, e-waste could affect soil through the leaching of hazardous contents from landfills, water through the contamination of rivers, wells, and other water sources, and air due to the emission of gases during the burning of e-waste.

Citing data available from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Union Minister of State for Environment Ashwini Kumar Choubey in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha recently said that e-waste generated in the country is from twenty-one (21) types of EEE notified under the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016.

In 2017-18, 7,08,445 tonnes was generated, in 2018-19 (7,71,215 tonnes), in 2019-2020 (14,96,121) in 2020-21(

13,46,496.31) and in 2021-22 at least 16,01,155.36 tonnes of e-waste the country produced, said the Minister.

In 1st April, 2023 the e-waste policy was enforced with an aim to manage e-waste in an environmentally sound manner and put in place an improved Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regime for e-waste recycling wherein all the manufacturer, producer, refurbisher and recycler are required to register on portal developed by CPCB.

The new provisions are expected to facilitate and channelize the informal sector to the formal sector for doing business and ensure recycling of E-waste in an environmentally sound manner.

# Killer RPF cop tried to 'strangle'...

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"Around half an hour after we started, I went to ASI Meena to submit a report. Constable Chetan Singh and three ticket inspectors were with him. Meena told me that Singh is not feeling well. I touched him to see if he was running a fever, but I could not figure it out," Acharya said in his statement.

According to him, Meena was telling him that he had at least two hours of duty left. However, Singh was in no mood to listen. "ASI Meena then called our Inspector, and he instructed that the Mumbai Central control room be informed.

Officials at the control room, too, said Chetan Singh must complete his duty and then get treated in Mumbai. Meena tried to explain to him, but he was not listening," he told the police.

Witness Acharya then accompanied Singh to the B-4 coach where he was lying down on a vacant seat, but he could not rest for long.

After some time, he went to Acharya and asked for his rifle, but the latter refused and advised him to relax.

# PMLA probe: ED raids premises linked to Hero Motocorp brass

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday conducted searches at the premises linked to Hero Motocorp executive chairperson Pawan Munjal and others as part of its money laundering investigation in a case related to holding of undeclared foreign currency.

The agency conducted searches at the residential and business premises of the 69-year-old businessman, who is the promoter of the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturing company, in the national capital and neighbouring Gurugram.

The searches were launched soon after registering a case against the accused in the case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED's PMLA case is based on a complaint filed against Munjal by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), an investigative arm of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).

The ED has also taken into account a Customs department case against Munjal and an executive belonging to a



"third party service provider" company that was hired by Hero MotoCorp to accompany and look after the travel and logistics arrangements for the businessman during a business trip to London in August 2018, sources said.

Customs authorities had apprehended the executive on an input from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), they said.

The Income Tax Department in March last year had searched the premises of Munjal and Hero MotorCorp as part of a tax evasion investigation.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the administrative authority for the IT Department, had said during these searches, the tax authorities found alleged illegal business expenses of over Rs 800 crore and records showing that Rs 60 crore worth "unaccounted" cash used to purchase land in Delhi and role of some shell companies.

The automobile company had then said in a regulatory filing that it was a "law-abiding corporate, with robust internal financial controls" and its "financial statements are duly audited".

Hero MotoCorp became the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturer in 2001, in terms of unit volume sales in a calendar year, and has maintained the top slot for the past 20 consecutive years. It has its presence across 40 countries in Asia, Africa, and South and Central America.

# Court refuses to stay defamation proceeding in case against Raj CM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday refused to stay the proceedings in a criminal complaint filed by Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for alleged defamation but allowed the Congress leader to appear before a metropolitan magistrate through video conference.

Special Judge of the MPs, MLAs court M K Nagpal said Gehlot's physical and personal appearance as an accused before the magisterial court on August 7, 2023 may not be practically convenient and necessary but he saw no reason for staying the proceedings. A magisterial court has summoned the Congress leader on August 7 following Shekhawat's complaint over Gehlot's remarks linking him to the alleged Sanjivani scam.

"Though physical and personal appearance of the petitioner as an accused before the ACMM in the above said case on August 7, 2023 may not be practically convenient and necessary, but this court sees no reason or ground for staying the proceedings of above complaint case or as to why appearance cannot be filed by petitioner in the said court through Video Conferencing (VC) mode," the judge said. The judge listed the matter for further hearing on Gehlot's application against the proceedings on August 19, and directed Sekhawat to file his formal reply and detailed arguments on facts as well as on law, saying legal and factual issues being raised by both sides can only be considered and appreciated by the court after the arguments.

The judge directed the metropolitan magistrate not to insist on physical presence of Gehlot on August 7, when the hearing is scheduled to take place before the magisterial court, and permit him to join the proceedings through VC.

# Govt's control over House 'Hitlershahi'...

From Page 1

The INDIA bloc of Opposition parties is also scheduled to meet President Draupadi Murmu to present a memorandum following the visit of 21 MPs to strife-torn Manipur last weekend. They seek her intervention to save the northeastern state from further turmoil.

Kharge, on behalf of the Opposition parties, has sought time from Murmu to discuss the Manipur issue, and the leaders, along with the 21-member delegates, are expected to be at Rashtrapati Bhawan on Wednesday around 11.30 am.

Addressing the media near Vijay Chowk (near Parliament House), Kharge alleged that he was insulted in Parliament as he was not allowed to speak despite being the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha.

He accused the BJP of trying to threaten and intimidate Opposition parties, asserting that INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) would continue to fight to protect democracy and the Constitution.

"INDIA will not be intimidated, and it was not formed to run away," Kharge stated, surrounded by leaders from various Opposition parties.

He criticised the BJP Government, stating, "The

ing to threaten and intimidate Opposition parties, asserting that INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) would continue to fight to protect democracy and the Constitution.

"INDIA will not be intimidated, and it was not formed to run away," Kharge stated, surrounded by leaders from various Opposition parties.

He criticised the BJP Government, stating, "The

# Sharad keeps...

From Page 1

"In the past, prominent personalities like Indira Gandhi, Khan Abdul Gafar Khan, Abdul Kalam, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Dr Manmohan Singh, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma and Balasaheb Deoras had received this award. Prime Minister Modi has joined the ranks of these illustrious people. I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister on behalf of all of us."

Saying the honour bestowed on him at a place and institution directly linked with the Lokmanya as 'unforgettable', Modi dwelt upon the commonalities between Kashi and Pune as both are centers of scholarship and said, "When one receives an award, then the responsibilities come especially when the name of Lokmanya Tilak is attached to the award. I dedicate the Lokmanya Tilak Award to the 140 crore citizens of India. I am donating the cash prize to the Namami Gange Project..."

Instituted by the Tilak Smarak Mandir Trust in 1983 to honour the legacy of Lokmanya Tilak, Lokmanya Tilak National Award is bestowed on people who have worked for the progress and development of the nation and whose contribution can only be seen as remarkable and extraordinary. It is presented every year on the 1st of August - Lokmanya Tilak's death anniversary.

# Nuh riots...

From Page 1

Traders downed shutters along the 20-km Badshahpur Sohna road, protesting over the Nuh violence.

In many housing complex in Gurugram, adjacent to the national capital, people were on edge.

There were also unconfirmed reports that Muslim residents in some parts of the district were leaving their homes, at least temporarily.

But the administration denied this, and appealed to people not to spread rumours. Gurugram authorities also announced that schools and educational institutions ordered closed on Tuesday will reopen Wednesday, except for those in Sohna.

In the Sohna violence on Monday, five vehicles and three shops were damaged, according to the administration.

Haryana CM Khattar, who took a review meeting, said the Nuh violence appeared to be part of a "big conspiracy". He warned of strict action against the culprits. "No rioter will be spared," he said.

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij also claimed the violence was "engineered".

"Somebody masterminded it but I don't want to reach any conclusions. We will investigate this and every single person responsible will be brought to justice," he said.

In Delhi, VHP joint general secretary Surendra Jain claimed that the Nuh attack was carried out against Hindu devotees "in a pre-planned manner" during a religious procession and was "incited" by some Congress leaders from Haryana.

He also alleged intelligence failure by the state government, and also called for an NIA investigation.

CM Khattar said 16 paramilitary and 30 Haryana Police companies are deployed in Nuh, where 44 FIRs were registered and 70 people taken into custody.

At least 120 vehicles were damaged during the violence in the district. Of these, 50, including eight belonging to police, were set ablaze as mobs tried to stop the VHP's Brij Mandal Jalabhishek Yatra to some temples in the district, officials said.

Security has been tightened at temples and mosques following the Nuh violence and the attack on the Gurugram mosque, an official said.

On Monday, Mobile internet services were suspended in Nuh and Faridabad up to Wednesday. Prohibitory orders were clamped in the adjoining districts. Educational institutes were ordered to remain shut on Tuesday in Gurugram, Faridabad and Palwal districts as a precautionary measure.

# 20 killed as crane crashes on workers constructing...

From Page 1

Those killed comprised two engineers, five staffers, and 13 workers. At the time of the mishap, 25 to 27 persons were working at the construction site.

Teams of NDRE, SDRE, and Thane Municipal Corporation were involved in the rescue and relief operation.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar — who were away in Pune attending the various programmes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi — spoke and took stock of the situation at the mishap site by talking to the local MLA Daulat Daroda.

On its part, the Maharashtra Government has

launched an inquiry into the incident.

The CM announced a compensation of ₹500,000 for the families of each deceased worker and free treatment for the injured.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased, while the injured persons would get ₹50,000.

"Pained by the tragic mishap in Shahapur, Maharashtra. My deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who are injured. NDRF and the local administration are working at the site of the mishap, and all possible mea-

sures are being taken to ensure proper assistance to those affected," Modi tweeted.

It may be recalled that the 701-km long 'Hindu HridaySamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg' Phase I was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 11, 2022.

With 600 km of Expressway construction complete, the focus is now on the connection between Igatpuri and Mumbai — a distance of 101 km.

The Samruddhi Expressway has earned the notoriety of being a 'killer highway' where there were earlier 30-odd mishaps on the Nagpur-Nashik stretch, involving as many as 130-odd deaths.

# Delhi Services...

From Page 1

Before adjourning for the day, the Government managed to pass three bills - the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2023; the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023; and The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order Amendment Bill, 2023 - amid protests and sloganeering by the Opposition MPs in the well of the house.

Amidst loud sloganeering by the Opposition MPs, the Government introduced the Delhi Services Bill in the afternoon session when it resumed proceedings at 2 pm following its first adjournment in the morning.

The Speaker allowed Opposition members to make their points before Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai introduced the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the House. Speaking on the issue, Shah termed the objections from the Opposition parties 'political' and said the Lok Sabha has been given the power to bring any law on Delhi. He also cited the Supreme Court's recent judgment on this issue.

"Constitution has given the House, power to pass any law regarding the State of Delhi. Supreme Court judgment has clarified that Parliament can bring any law regarding the

state of Delhi. All objections are political. Please permit me to bring this Bill," the Minister said amid sloganeering from opposition MPs.

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury termed the Bill a "graveyard" for cooperative federalism while AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi said it was "in violation of Article 123.

"The Government is making graveyard of cooperative federalism. This Bill takes away the power to make laws in service. The Delhi Government should have the power to make laws in services. It raises serious concerns about the Centre's intention," Chowdhury said.

The Congress leader said according to the Constitution services are State subjects and accused the Centre of "violating the Constitution" and over-looking the order of the Supreme Court.

He said the ordinance is aimed at making the apex court order which "restored" powers to the Delhi Government, "ineffective".

Revolutionary Socialist Party's N K Premachandran said, "I am vehemently opposed to the Bill" as he said it was beyond the legislative competence of the House.

At this point, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi intervened and said that Parliament was fully competent to pass the Bill.

# SC outraged over...

From Page 1

The State police had arrested seven people, including a juvenile, concerning the video case. Mehta also mentioned that the State police recorded the statement of the women after the video surfaced.

Earlier in the day, the top court directed the CBI not to record the statements of the victim women as the court was scheduled to hear a batch of petitions on the issue at 2 pm.

The bench, also comprising justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, noted the submissions made by lawyer Nizam Pasha, representing the two women, that the CBI had asked them to appear and depose during the day.

The top court had already described the video as "horrendous" on Monday, following reports that the police handed the helpless women over to the rioting mob. The court raised questions about the delayed registration of the FIR and proposed the idea of setting up a committee of retired judges or an SIT to oversee the probe. The situation in Manipur remains deeply concerning, and the court is closely monitoring the developments.

# Delhi Services Bill will transform democracy into babucracy: AAP

‘Bill gives all the powers of Govt to LG & babus, is an insult to Delhiites’

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has vehemently criticized the Government Of National Capital Territory Of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023 (GNCTD), warning that it will lead to the transformation of democracy into ‘babucracy’.

Senior AAP leaders Raghav Chadha and Sanjay Singh, both members of the Rajya Sabha, expressed grave concerns over the GNCTD Bill, stating that it is even more detrimental to democracy, the constitution, and the people of



Sanjay Singh



Raghav Chadha

Delhi than the previous ordinance. Chadha described the Delhi Services Bill as the most undemocratic and illegal piece of legislation ever tabled in Parliament.

He raised alarm over Bill’s provisions that strip all powers from the elected government of Delhi and transfer them to the Lieutenant Governor and bureaucrats, effectively replacing democracy with ‘babucracy’. The Bill empowers the bureaucracy and Lieutenant Governor with overriding

authority, leaving no power with the elected government, which is an insult to the 2 crore people of Delhi who democratically elected the Kejriwal government with a historic majority”, he said.

He shed light on the BJP’s political motives behind targeting the Delhi government, emphasizing that the BJP has continuously failed to form a government in Delhi, and all six chief ministers in the past 25 years were non-BJP. In their desperation, the BJP aims to

undermine the Aam Aadmi Party and the Delhi government through this bill as they are unable to accept the success of Arvind Kejriwal and his party. Explaining the grave implications of the Bill, Raghav Chadha pointed out that officers can refuse to implement decisions taken by the cabinet of the Delhi government and will scrutinize each minister’s decisions.

The Lt. Governor will have the power to appoint chairpersons of boards and commissions, including the Electricity Board and Jal Board, impacting crucial decisions related to free water and electricity for the people of Delhi. Both the bureaucracy and the Lieutenant Governor can override the decisions of the Delhi government and its ministers, he said. On the other hand, Sanjay Singh asserted that even if the Central Government is

able to pass the GNCTD Bill in the Lok Sabha, the opposition has sufficient numbers in the Rajya Sabha to defeat the Bill there. He said that this Bill went against the decision of the Supreme Court, the Constitution, and the federal structure of the country.

Singh emphasized that the Bill is unconstitutional as it snatches away the rights of the elected Chief Minister of Delhi. Singh also highlighted that a pending no-confidence motion in the Parliament is a rare occurrence, further adding to the current political climate. Singh tweeted that it is another “Kejriwal-phobia” Bill brought by the BJP.

He shared his suspension from the House before introducing the Bill and appealed to the Prime Minister, challenging him to face opposition head-on and discuss the matter openly in the House.

# New team of Delhi BJP functionaries announced

Sushma Swaraj’s daughter Bansuri appointed secretary

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The new team of office bearers of Delhi BJP with many young faces, including party stalwart Sushma Swaraj’s daughter Bansuri Swaraj, was announced on Tuesday.

The newly appointed general secretaries were Harsh Malhotra, Yogendra Chandolia and Kamaljeet Sehrawat. The team announced by the BJP’s Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva also has many women functionaries.

Among the eight secretaries are Bansuri Swaraj, former Delhi chief minister Madan Lal Khurana’s son Harish Khurana and Imprit Singh Bakshi. Swaraj made her political debut recently with her appointment as co-convenor of

Delhi BJP’s legal cell. Former external affairs minister and senior BJP leader Sushma Swaraj passed away in August 2019 at the age of 67.

The newly appointed eight vice presidents included Vishnu Mittal, Dinesh Pratap Singh, former mayor Lata Gupta and former Mahila Morcha president Yogita Singh.

Satish Garg has been made the new treasurer of the party. Laxmi Nagar MLA Abhay Verma retained the post of chief spokesperson of Delhi BJP. Praveen Shankar Kapoor was given the charge of the key post of media department head. Vikram Mittal will handle media relations.

The 11 newly appointed spokespersons of Delhi BJP include Shikha Rai, Virendra Babbar, Vikram Bidhuri, Shubhendu Shekhar Awasthi, Ajay Sehrawat and Preeti Agarwal. Richa Pandey Mishra will head the Mahila Morcha of Delhi BJP. Young party leader Nikhat Abbas was appointed

Yuva Morcha general secretary. Former Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari dubbed the new team as a mix of “young and energetic” leaders.

The important post of Purvanchal Morcha president was given to Neeraj Tiwari who was serving as secretary in the previous team of Delhi BJP. Shashi Yadav was appointed as president of Delhi BJP Yuva Morcha.

Former Yuva Morcha president Sunil Yadav will be the new president of the OBC Morcha and Mohan Lal Gihara will head the SC Morcha, according to the list of office bearers released by the Delhi BJP.

The Delhi BJP president also declared the names of new presidents of 14 district units including Vijender Dhama (Mayur Vihar), Manoj Tyagi (Naveen Shahdara), Poonam Chauhan (Northeast Delhi), Raj Kumar Grover (West Delhi) and Raj Kumar Chautala (South Delhi).

# 52% of 85,853 students get seats in UG courses in DU's first list

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 52 per cent of the 85,853 candidates allotted seats in undergraduate courses in Delhi University (DU) colleges in the first round are women, officials said on Tuesday.

The seat allocation for undergraduate programmes is being done under the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS)-UG-2023.

In the first round of seat allocation, 45,287 seats have been allotted to women, while 40,565 seats to men, they told PTI. There is one transgender student also.

In a statement, the university said that “a total of 85,853 allocations have been done in the First CSAS round itself”. “This includes allocation to all programmes in all colleges in UR (unreserved), SC, ST, OBC (NCL), EWS and two super-numerary quotas, PwBD and Kashmiri Migrants,” it said.

The statement said those allotted seats include 71,578 students from the CBSE board, 3,028 from the ICSE board, and 2,344 students from the Bihar School Examination Board.

The university said that 2,02,416 eligible candidates were considered for seat allocation based on their preference of programme and college combination. As many as 7,042 candidates have got their first preference, the officials said.

There are nearly 71,000



seats across colleges under the university. However, the allotment of seats is higher than the number of seats to achieve optimal seat allocation. Twenty per cent extra seats have been allocated to unreserved, OBC and EWS categories while 30 per cent extra allotment has been made for SCs, STs and people with benchmark disabilities (PwBD) across programmes and colleges.

In colleges where last year withdrawals were less than five per cent of the sanctioned strength, 10 per cent extra allotments have been done for unreserved, OBC and EWS categories while 15 per cent extra allotment in SC, ST and PwBD categories

“While about 22,000 candidates have been allocated a seat from their first five preferences, 7,042 candidates got their first preference,” the statement said. “The candidates who have got a seat in the first

round will have to accept the seat by 4:59 pm Friday, August 4, 2023,” it said. Colleges will check the applications of candidates and process the “applications till 04:59 pm Saturday, August 5, 2023,” it said.

“Candidates whose applications get approved by the college will have to submit the fees by 04:59 pm Sunday, August 6, 2023. The college may ‘raise a query’ in case they seek any clarification from the candidate,” the statement said. Candidates who are offered a seat in the first round must complete admission formalities by the stipulated time, the DU said.

“Only candidates who would complete their admission process, including payment of fees, will be able to opt for an upgrade to participate in the second round,” it said. The university will announce the second round at 5:00 pm on August 10.

# Moosewala murder case: Gangster Sachin Bishnoi extradited from Azerbaijan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Gangster Sachin Bishnoi, who was allegedly involved in the murder of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, was extradited from Azerbaijan and brought back to India on Tuesday, officials of the Delhi Police said. He was produced in a Delhi court, which remanded him in police custody for 10 days. Officers from the Delhi Police’s Special Cell had travelled to Azerbaijan capital Baku to monitor the progress in the case. “Bishnoi alias Sachin Thapan was successfully extradited from Baku and brought to Delhi on Tuesday morning,” Special Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) HGS Dhaliwal said.

Sources claimed that Bishnoi was involved in the conspiracy and handling of the logistics for the murder. He was abroad at the time of the killing but tried to mislead investigators by claiming that he had shot Moosewala, they claimed. “Bishnoi left India before the murder of Moosewala. He first went to Dubai on a fake passport issued in the name of Tilak Raj Toteja

with an address of Sangam Vihar in south Delhi. He helped in the recce and also provided one of the vehicles used by the assailants. He tried to mislead the investigation as after the murder he claimed that he had killed the singer,” a source claimed.

When he was in Dubai, he felt that as India had good relations with the UAE, he could be extradited from there, and therefore, he went to Baku, the sources said. Bishnoi was detained in Azerbaijan last year in August and claimed that he was not in India when the incident occurred. The sources said that he had applied for bail in Azerbaijan which was rejected.

For the first time in the history of the Delhi Police, a fugitive criminal, Sachin Thapan alias Sachin Bishnoi alias Tilak Raj Toteja, has been brought back to India from Azerbaijan, they said.

The current operation was launched after the Special Cell received a tip-off that Bishnoi, who is the nephew of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, had left India in the name of Tilak Raj Toteja, they said.

# Tytlar moves Delhi court seeking anticipatory bail in 1984 riots case



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jagdish Tytlar moved a Delhi court on Tuesday seeking anticipatory bail in a case related to Pul Bangash killings during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The application was moved before Special Judge Vikas Dhull, who issued notice to the CBI and directed it to file its response by August 2, when the court is likely to hear the matter.

A court had on July 26 summoned Tytlar on August 5 after taking cognisance of a charge sheet in the case. The CBI had on May 20 filed the charge sheet against Tytlar in the case.

Three people were killed and a gurdwara was set ablaze in the Pul Bangash area here on November 1, 1984, a day after the then prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards.

# Minor grappler doesn't oppose Delhi Police's closure report

NEWDELHI: The minor wrestler, who earlier accused outgoing WFI chief and BJP MP Brj Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexual harassment, told a city sessions court on Tuesday she is satisfied with Delhi police’s investigation in the case and is not opposed to the ‘closure report’ it has submitted, the public prosecutor said.

The girl and her father made the submission before Additional Sessions Judge Chhavi Kapoor in an ‘in-chamber proceeding’, public prosecutor Atul Srivastava said. The court, after recording their statements, reserved its order

for September 6 on whether to accept the police report seeking cancellation of the case, the prosecutor said. The court had on July 4 sought response from the girl and her complainant father on the final report filed by Delhi Police seeking cancellation of a case.

The Delhi Police had on June 15 filed a report before the court seeking cancellation of case involving minor wrestler after her father made a startling claim midway through probe that he made a false complaint of sexual harassment against Singh to get back at him for perceived injustice to girl. SR

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**IV. Open E-Tender No.- IRCTC/RN/AMBERNATH/LOGISTICS/2023** for transportation and CFA services of Rail Neer Packaged Drinking Water for Rail Neer plant, Ambernath (Maharashtra). Last Date of Submission: 22.08.2023 up to 15:00 Hrs.

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# Yamuna water in Delhi-NCR slow poison: Ex-servicemen

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Military veterans working towards cleansing the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, after conducting a padyatra along their banks, have unveiled the “Yamuna Pollution Survey Report,” revealing alarming realities.

Under the banner of Atulya Ganga, the veterans have brought attention to the deterioration of the Yamuna River, particularly in its 22 km stretch in Delhi NCR, likening it to a slow poison.

“It is time that we take up the Yamuna clean-up and rejuvenation on a war footing. It is a national resource in the capital that must be preserved,” said Maj Gen (Retd) Vinod Bhatt, Chief Mentor of Atulya Ganga, during a press conference.

In March, these military veterans initiated a public awareness and participation initiative for the Yamuna called the ‘Yamuna Cyclothon,’ covering the route from Yamunotri to Agra. Nearly two years ago, the same team had traversed the entire stretch of the Ganga from Gangotri to Gangasagar on foot, covering both banks.

During the Yamuna Cyclothon, a team led by Maj Gen Bhatt collected water samples from 29 critical locations of the river to assess its pollution levels. These samples were then tested, geo-tagged, and



uploaded through an app on Atulya Ganga’s website. Further analysis of microplastics and additional water quality parameters was carried out by IIT Ropar, Atulya Ganga’s technical partner. The results, quantified in the form of Multiplicative Water Quality Index (M-WQI), were shocking. Out of the 29 water test samples, 17 were classified as “Poor Quality” with a WQI between <50-20, mainly in NCR Delhi and Agra.

One of the critical parameters for the river’s health is the dissolved oxygen level, which is usually required to be 4 PPM or better. In the Yamuna samples collected by the team, it was found to be less than 1 PPM, a level at which the River is considered dead.

Additionally, tests confirmed the presence of harmful bacteria in river water at almost all locations except

Yamuna Nagar, Shamli, and Prayag Raj. The research findings revealed that the 22 km stretch of Delhi NCR had a Water Quality Index (WQI: <50-20), indicating poor water quality and putting the Yamuna River’s quality on par with heavily polluted water bodies.

The veterans of Atulya Ganga propose a three-pronged strategy to tackle Yamuna rejuvenation, including the creation of a tech-based Yamuna Health Dashboard powered by state-of-the-art satellite data, remote sensing, internet of things, and artificial intelligence. “We are a nation where our rivers are not in good condition.

The Ganga River basin is under major stress due to multiple man-made factors. The youth must rise up and come together to preserve our rivers,” said Lt Gen Alok Kler, CEO of Atulya Ganga.

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Extract of the Financial Results for the quarter ended 30 June 2023							
S. No.	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
		Quarter ended	Year ended	Quarter ended	Year ended		
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022	31.03.2023	30.06.2023	30.06.2022	31.03.2023
		(Un-audited)	(Un-audited)	(Audited)	(Un-audited)	(Un-audited)	(Audited)
1	Total Income from Operations	11,082.20	11,016.88	45,968.07	11,257.60	11,168.54	46,605.64
2	Net Profit before Tax (including Regulatory Deferral Account Balances (net of tax))	4,111.12	4,268.15	17,471.12	4,218.30	4,331.26	17,701.62
3	Net Profit after Tax for the period	3,542.65	3,765.93	15,335.54	3,597.16	3,801.29	15,419.74
4	Total Comprehensive Income comprising Net Profit after Tax and Other Comprehensive Income	3,475.31	3,701.21	15,228.84	3,529.50	3,736.64	15,315.24
5	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value of share : ₹ 10/- each)	6,975.45	6,975.45	6,975.45	6,975.45	6,975.45	6,975.45
6	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Balance sheet	79,344.04	72,886.03	75,868.73	79,581.07	73,017.48	76,050.84
7	Securities Premium Account	7,834.43	7,834.43	7,834.43	7,834.43	7,834.43	7,834.43
8	Net worth	86,319.49	79,861.48	82,844.18	86,556.52	79,992.93	83,026.29
9	Total Borrowings	1,22,694.71	1,33,023.80	1,26,594.90	1,22,694.71	1,33,023.80	1,26,594.90
10	Debt Equity Ratio	1.42	1.67	1.53	1.42	1.66	1.52
11	Earnings per equity share including movement in Regulatory Deferral Account Balances (Face value of ₹ 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in ₹)	5.08	5.40	21.99	5.16	5.45	22.11
12	Earnings per equity share excluding movement in Regulatory Deferral Account Balances (Face value of ₹ 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in ₹)	5.57	5.28	21.62	5.65	5.34	21.75
13	Bonds Redemption Reserve	3,834.73	5,185.30	4,168.17	3,834.73	5,185.30	4,168.17
14	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	1.73	1.96	1.52	1.77	1.99	1.54
15	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	4.15	4.69	3.93	4.33	4.80	4.02

**Notes :** 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Consolidated and Standalone Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulations 33 and 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Consolidated and Standalone Financial Results is available on the Investors section of our website <https://www.powergrid.in> and under Corporates Section of BSE Limited & National Stock Exchange of India Limited at <https://www.bseindia.com> and <https://www.nseindia.com> respectively.

2. Previous periods figures have been regrouped/rearranged wherever considered necessary.

Place : Gurugram  
Date : 31 July, 2023

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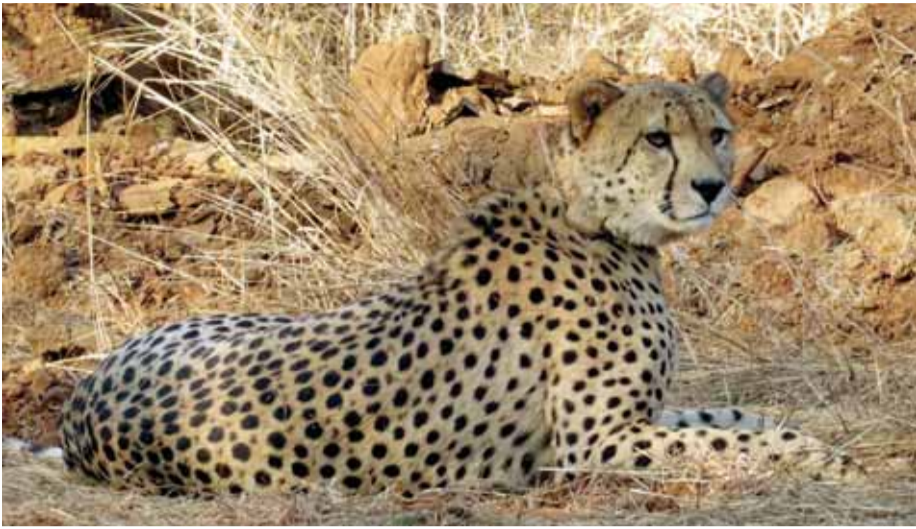
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# Cheetah deaths in Kuno not unduly alarming: SC told

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Environment and Forests and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) have told the Supreme Court the death of five adult cheetahs and three cubs at KNP is troubling but not "unduly alarming", and the surviving big cats are being captured and medically examined as a precautionary measure.

Under the Project Cheetah, a total of 20 radio-collared animals were imported from Namibia and South Africa to the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh and later four cubs were born from Namibian cheetah 'Jwala'. Out of these 24 feline, eight including three cubs have died. Some



cheetahs were reported to have developed infections due to radio collars. The joint affidavit, filed on behalf of the

Environment Ministry and NTCA, said the provisional diagnosis of mortality events points towards "natural causes"

and none of the cheetahs have died due to unnatural reasons such as poaching, snaring, poisoning, road hits, electrocution

etc. "It is respectfully submitted that the NTCA today has no reason to believe that the mortalities were caused on account of any inherent unsuitability at the Kuno site," it said.

The affidavit said the general scientific awareness is that being an integral part of the ecosystem, cheetahs in general have very low survival rate of 50 per cent in adults even in non-introduced populations. Non-introduced cheetah populations are essentially native species.

"In the case of introduced population the survival rates are even much lower taking other variables into account which may lead to about 10 per cent survival in cubs, and thus, mortalities (at KNP) though troubling and in need of redressal and curtailment are not unduly alarming," it said.

Giving the details of each and every cheetah death, including three cubs, translocated from South Africa and Namibia, the NTCA said the programme for their introduction is being implemented in accordance with the 'Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India'.

"As per the said action plan, the mortality of cheetahs before release into free ranging condition may happen due to intraspecific fights, diseases, accidents and post release of animals into free ranging condition, the mortality might result from injury caused during hunting of prey, poaching, road hits, poisoning and predatory attack by other predators etc.

"Considering the possible scenarios the Action Plan has made provision for annual

supplementation of the initial founder population annually for managing the demographic and genetic composition of the introduction population," it said. The NTCA said out of 20 translocated adult cheetahs, 15 adult cheetahs and 1 Indian born cub are surviving as on date.

The affidavit said in view of the recent deaths, various steps have been taken to ensure the well-being of the surviving cheetahs. Highlighting the steps, it said all remaining cheetahs are being captured and critical medical examination done.

Thirteen 13 adults and 1 cub have already been captured and treated. It said prophylactic treatment is being administered to all surviving cheetahs and a review of project implementation is being undertaken.

## NIA special court declares six gangsters as Proclaimed Offenders

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

A National Investigation Agency (NIA) Special Court here on Tuesday declared six gangster-turned-terrorist mafia operatives, based out of Canada and Pakistan as Proclaimed Offenders.

The six NIA accused declared POs are Canada-based Arshdeep Singh alias Arsh Dala, Ramandeep Singh alias Raman Judge, Lakhbir Singh Sandhu alias Landa; and Pakistan-based Harvinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, Lakhbir Singh Rode and Wadhawa Singh Babbar.

The NIA had on July 22, 2023 filed a charge-sheet against nine accused persons, including Dala, Landa and Rinda. The case was registered suo-moto by the NIA on August 20, 2022. It relates to terror activities of chiefs/members of proscribed pro-Khalistan terrorist organizations, such as Khalistan Liberation Force, Babbar Khalsa International, International Sikh Youth Federation etc.

The suspects along with operatives/members of terror outfits and organized criminal gangs operating in various parts of the country were engaged in smuggling of terrorist hardware, including arms, ammunition, explosives, and custom-made ready-to-use IEDs and other types of contraband, including drugs, from across-the-border, the NIA said in a statement.

"Investigations have revealed that the accused persons had entered into a criminal conspiracy to smuggle terrorist hardware, such as arms, ammunition explosive, IEDs etc. across international borders for use by their associates in carrying out terrorist acts on Indian territory. They were also involved in recruitment of terrorist cadres in India and raising funds for proscribed organizations, etc," the agency said in a statement.

## Common uniform for Army officers above Brig rank

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ NEW DELHI

The Army from Tuesday has implemented the dress regulation wherein officers of the rank and Brigadiers and above will don a common uniform to enhance more synergy in the senior leadership.

Besides jointness, the Army has come out with a common uniform irrespective of their parent cadre appointment. This decision was taken in the Army Commanders' conference earlier this year. *The Pioneer* reported this development on May 9.

The decision to have a common uniform "in order to promote and strengthen common identity and approach in service matters amongst senior leadership, beyond the boundaries of regimentation," was discussed at great length among the various stakeholders and during the Army Commanders' Conference. Underlining that 'this will also reinforce the Indian Army's character to be



a fair and equitable organisation," sources said the headgear, shoulder rank badges, gorget patches, belt and shoes of senior officers will be standardised as part of the decision. The senior officers will now not wear any lanyard. However, there will be no change to the uniform worn by Colonels and below-rank officers.

In the Indian Army, Brigadiers and above officers are those who have already commanded units, battalions and are mostly posted at headquarters or establishments where officers from all arms and services work and function together. A standard uniform will ensure a common identity

for all senior-rank officers, while reflecting the true ethos of the Indian Army, sources said. Different types of uniform and accoutrements have specific association to respective arms, regiments and services in the Indian Army.

This recognition with distinct identity within Arms or Regiment or Services is essential for junior leadership and rank and file to further strengthen camaraderie, esprit de corps and regimental ethos which is bedrock of soldiering. At the unit and battalion level, a distinct sense of identity reflects a strong bond among officers and men in same regiment.

## Let Shah talk on Manipur, says Govt; Opp firm on PM

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Amidst the running standoff on Manipur, the Government on Tuesday again appealed to Opposition to discuss Manipur and agree to a reply by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the Parliament.

"Government of India is ready for a discussion on Manipur...The Government wants that there should be a discussion on Manipur and now they (Opposition) are demanding discussion under Rule 267...", said Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi after the Parliament proceedings were disrupted and both the Houses again adjourned for the day.

The Opposition is insisting that the Prime Minister should be giving a statement in the Parliament on the Manipur violence to which the Government and the ruling BJP is not agreeing to leading to a stalemate.

Talking to newsmen



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman along with Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi addresses a press conference at Parliament House complex during the Monsoon session, in New Delhi on Monday

outside the Parliament, Joshi said during non-BJP regimes several incidents of violence took place in the North-East including in Manipur but none visited there. The discussion in the House in the past Governments was replied to by Minister of State for Home. This time round, he said not only Home Minister

Amit Shah visited Manipur but is also ready to answer on the floor of the Parliament.

"Before this too, there were so many unfortunate incidents in the northeast. At that time, the Home Minister did not even visit there. There was no discussion. If at all there was a discussion, MoS gave a reply", said Joshi. The

Parliamentary Minister further said "But this time our Home Minister is saying that he wants discussion and wants to reply...Even now I appeal to them to discuss if they want a discussion...", he said. The Minister blamed Gandhi family for the current stalemate as the Parliamentary Minister said the dynasty is not able to digest people giving massive mandate to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The problem is that after 9 years of PM Modi coming to power, they are not able to digest that people have given him the verdict.

The Gandhi family thinks that it is their birthright to sit on the PM's chair. So, they are unable to digest...", he said. For the ninth day running the Monsoon Session has remained derailed with the Government passing key Bills amidst Opposition ruckus in the Parliament without any discussion on the key legislations.

## Major Darknet-based LSD cartel busted, 3 held

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Tuesday claimed to have busted the biggest Darknet-based LSD cartel operating in the country with the seizure of over 13,000 blots and Rs 26 lakh in cash as also the arrest of three persons.

The cartel named 'Zambada' has a "high volume of business and supply chain" of this hallucinogenic category of drug, and is also operating in the UK, the US, South Africa, Canada, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Türkiye, NCB Deputy Director General (Operations and Enforcement) Gyaneshwar Singh said.

Singh said the cartel was being operated by young educated men in the age bracket of 21-25 years. It is the second LSD trafficking cartel busted by the agency in the last about three months, officials said. The anti-narcotics agency had



seized a cache of 15,000 LSD blots, the highest-ever catch in one operation, and arrested half-a-dozen suspects in June. LSD or lysergic acid diethylamide is a synthetic chemical based-drug and is categorised as a hallucinogen.

It is abused largely by youngsters and its consumption could be a health hazard. It is odourless, colourless and tasteless and it is painted on small squares of paper (blots)

that can be licked or swallowed.

In continued operations, it was learnt that the largest cartel operating in LSD on the darknet - Zambada- operates from Delhi-NCR, Singh said.

Two of the ground operators of this cartel were identified through technical and human surveillance and this led to the location of the "mastermind" of this cartel who was operating from Ballabgarh (Faridabad) in Haryana, he said.

The NCB Delhi zonal office conducted multiple raids at the premises of these three persons leading to the seizure of 13,863 LSD blots, 428 grams MDMA (ecstasy), and the freezing of Rs 26.73 lakh "drug money", agency officials said.

The 'Zambada' cartel, according to the agency, was the "only" cartel in the country with a so-called "5-star rating". The drug cartels on the darknet are rated on a scale of

1-5 stars based on the potency of the drug sold through their platform and their "customer service". The NCB said the cartel's name is derived from "Ismael-Marlo Zambada Garcia", a Mexican drug lord, and he was the last remaining fugitive on the list of Mexico's 37 most wanted drug criminals.

He carries a reward of up to USD 15,000,000, the agency said. The first time the name of this cartel was reported in the country was in September 2022 when the Hyderabad Police arrested eight persons for drug trafficking using the darknet.

According to the NCB, Garcia declared on the darknet after this interdiction in India that he was safe and will never be caught.

Garcia is stated to be in "close contact" with a darknet operator called- Dr Seuss alias DS and TS (Tribe Seuss) or Gamma Goblin- who is the largest source of LSD across the

globe. 'Zambada' intended to open an Indian "outlet" of Dr Seuss with a minimum stock of one lakh LSD blots. It has "outlets" in the UK, USA, South Africa, Canada, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Türkiye, according to Singh. The NCB said it is working to unearth the third such known LSD cartel operating in the country.

As part of the two earlier busts, it has registered a total of six cases in Delhi under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) leading to the arrest of 22 Indians till now.

Darknet refers to the deep hidden internet platform that is used for narcotics sale, exchange of pornographic content and other illegal activities by using the secret alleys of the onion router (ToR) to evade surveillance by law enforcement agencies, the NCB said in a statement.

## 31 places raided in Punjab, Hry over attack on Indian mission in London

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday raided 31 locations across Punjab and Haryana to unravel the bigger conspiracy behind the London attack. The raids led to the seizure of digital data containing information related to the accused persons involved in the attack on the High Commission and other incriminating documents and evidence.

The districts where these searches were conducted include Moga, Barnala, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Tarn Taran, Ludhiana, Gurdaspur, SBS Nagar, Amritsar, Mukhtsar, Sangrur, Patiala, Mohali in Punjab and Sirsa in Haryana. The Indian High Commission in London was attacked in March by a group of about 50

persons, who committed criminal trespass, disrespect to the Indian national flag, damage to public property and injuries to officials of the High Commission of India. The attack was organised by Gurcharan Singh, Dal Khalsa, UK; Avtar Singh Khandia of KLF, Jasvir Singh and many of their associates, both Indian and foreign nationals, who have been identified during the ongoing NIA investigations, the NIA said.

An Investigation team of the NIA had visited the UK in May to probe the attack. Subsequently, a crowdsourcing of information was also carried out to identify and collect information about UK-based entities and individuals involved in incident, based on which agency identified many of attackers, it added.

in a statement. The agency further said, "Massive raids were conducted today across the two north-Indian states, as part of NIA's efforts to unravel the bigger conspiracy behind the London attack. The raids led to the seizure of digital data containing information related to the accused persons involved in the attack on the High Commission and other incriminating documents and evidence."

## Women, kids recover slower than men: Lancet study on global anaemia burden

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Globally anemia affected nearly 2 billion people in 2021. Degree of impact on women was higher ie almost more than doubled when compared with 17.5 per cent of men. The gender difference was also more pronounced during the reproductive years, ages 15-49. In this age group, anemia prevalence in women was 33.7 per cent versus 11.3 per cent in men, according to a global study published in The Lancet Haematology.

Further, women and children showed much slower rates of progress relative to men, said the study conducted by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), US, and its Global Burden of Disease anaemia collaborators.

Regionally, the study pointed out, western sub-Saharan Africa (47.4 per cent), South Asia (35.7 per cent), and Central sub-Saharan Africa



(35.7 per cent) revealed the highest anaemia prevalence. "We know the global picture around anaemia has improved, but there are still wide disparities when you narrow the focus on geography, gender, and age," said Nick Kassebaum, senior author of the study.

Dietary iron deficiency was revealed to be the leading cause of anaemia in 2021, accounting for 66.2 per cent of the total cases. However, the study said, many other conditions such as hemoglobinopathies (presence of abnormal blood proteins), other infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS, and malaria were also important contributors in geographic locations where these diseases are prevalent.

The researchers modelled 37 underlying causes for anaemia, which they said were important for clinicians to treat in parallel to the anaemia itself.

"We hope they use these data to design more comprehensive intervention and treatment plans, especially for the most vulnerable - women of reproductive age, children, and the elderly," said Dr. Nick Kassebaum, senior author of the study, head of IHME's Neonatal and Child Health team, and Professor in Anesthesiology at the University of Washington.

That adult men fared better than women (aged 15-49) and children younger than 5 years presented a "nuanced situation that revolves around access to nutrition, socioeconomic status, unmet need for contraception, and the ability to identify and treat underlying causes of anaemia," said Will Gardner, IHME researcher and lead author of the paper.

## NIA makes another arrest in HuT terror module case

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday arrested one more person in connection with the unlawful activities of a terrorist module with allegiance to Hizb-Ut-Tahrir (HuT), an international fundamentalist organisation, operating in Bhopal and Hyderabad.

Absconding HuT member Salman was arrested following raids from Hyderabad in Telangana, where he was hiding in the Rajendra Nagar area. This takes the number of arrests to 17.

The NIA registered the case against the HuT module on May 24, 2023, the NIA said in a statement.

The NIA seized incriminating digital devices, including hard disks, pen drives and SD card along with various

documents following searches at two locations to nab Salman. The searches were conducted based on credible inputs, the agency said.

"Salman was an active member of the Hyderabad based module of HuT, which was led by an already arrested accused Salim. Salim, along-with Salman and four other arrested accused of Hyderabad module, were operating to expand their Tanzeem with an aim to establish a Caliphate based on Shariat," it said.

The NIA said investigations have revealed that the HuT was trying to build its organization and cadres clandestinely by recruiting impressionable Muslim youth into the organisation. The outfit aimed to overthrow the constitutionally formed Government in India in order to establish Sharia law, it said.

## 3D printed cost-effective device for fast diagnosis of UTI made by IIT-Guwahati

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG) claim to have developed a 3D printed cost-effective, accurate, and reliable device worth Rs 608 for rapid diagnosis of urinary tract infection (UTI).

The estimated cost of testing in a single sample will be Rs 8, thus useful for rural areas where most UTI cases remain undetected due to lack of adequate testing facilities, said associate professor of IITG's department of chemical engineering Dr Partho Sarathi Gooch Pattader who led the team.

It can measure and identify the type of bacteria in a UTI suspected patient in minutes compared to conventional detection, which uses urine culture that requires a few days, said Dr Pattader. The conventional way to diagnose and detect the specific bacteria



is by urine culture, which takes a minimum of two days. Without knowing the specific bacteria responsible for the infection, doctors cannot administer antibiotics to treat the UTI and this delay creates a problem for a patient.

"Early-stage detection of UTI is important to provide timely treatment. The Point-Of-Care Testing (POCT) prototype developed at IIT Guwahati is a photodetector that detects and quantifies a specific UTI-causing bacteria called 'Klebsiella pneumoniae' within five minutes from a patient's urine sample", Pattader said. The detection of 'Klebsiella pneumoniae' is important not only because it

is responsible for UTI, but also for pneumonia and soft tissue infection, he said. "We have used gold nanoparticles with specifically-engineered aptamers.

An aptamer is like a 3D puzzle piece that fits only on the surface of a particular bacteria and the gold nanoparticles thus get agglomerated on the surface of the target bacteria giving out a unique signature that can be detected by a UV-Visible Spectrophotometer", he added.

The biosensor prototype detects a change in the intensity of light when the aptamer-gold nanoparticles-bacteria come together and the detection time is fast because the aptamer and bacteria instantly combine, Pattader said.

The developed prototype is also generic, i.e. The process is tunable for different types of bacteria and can contribute significantly to primary health-care, he said.

# 18 lakh children to be given deworming medicine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

National Deworming Day will be celebrated on August 10 and on this occasion, more than 18 lakh boys and girls of the age group of one to 19 years in the district will be given Albendazole, a medicine to get rid of worms. In this direction, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary held a meeting on Tuesday to review the preparations for the success of the campaign.

In the meeting, the CMO said that on August 10, a target has been set to feed deworming medicine to more than 18 lakh children in the district, which will be tried to be fulfilled at any cost. He said that in this, all the registered children of one to five years age group as well as all the school going boys and girls of six to 19 years age group will be given medicines in their schools. In this, cooperation will be taken from teachers in all government-aided, private schools, madrasas etc in feeding medicines. In the campaign, he said that the medicines will also be given to those children who do not go to school. Along with this, children of labourers



Health officers reviewing preparations for National Deworming Day in Varanasi on Tuesday.

working in brick kilns will also be given medicines at Anganwadi centres, he added.

Additional Chief Medical Officer and Nodal Officer of the programme Dr Sanjay Rai said that a mop-up round would be organised for the children who missed taking medicines on August 10. "Efforts will be made to fulfill the tar-

get 100 per cent by covering the children left out in this," he said, adding that children become malnourished due to having worms in their stomach. "There is a lack of blood in them, due to which the children become weak. Parents should feed their children medicine to remove worms to save them from this problem," he

said.

Dr AK Maurya, Dr HC Maurya, all superintendents / in-charge medical officers, health education officers, DCPMs, District Coordinator Ashish Agrawal, BCPMs, child development project officers and block education officers were also present in the meeting.

## Health dept issues advisory on eye flu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Health department has issued an advisory in view of increasing cases of viral conjunctivitis (eye flu or pink eye) these days. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary directed the medical superintendents and health officers to ensure availability of eye drop medicines related to eye flu in all the community and primary health centres (CHCs/PHCs) and district level hospitals.

"There is a possibility of spreading many diseases in the rain. Eye infection conjunctivitis (eye flu) also spreads a lot in this season. That's why along with being alert and careful about eye flu, awareness is also necessary," he said, directing the health officers that the patients coming to the OPD should be sent back only after

being completely satisfied.

He said that an alert has also been issued for this in all the hospitals. "People infected with eye flu are being told about prevention and treatment. Eye flu suddenly turns eyes red and there is also a problem of burning and stinging in the eyes. Along with youth, elders and children also come in its grip," he said, appealing to the people to take precautions and assured that full availability of medicines has been ensured at all health centres.

Nodal officer of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and ACMO Dr SS Kanojia said that during the rainy season, problems like air pollution, moisture in the atmosphere increase along with viral infections. "Due to this, problems related to the eyes (eye flu infection)

also increase," he said, adding that the problem of eye flu or conjunctivitis is seen more in the rainy season, due to which the conjunctiva or the thin and clear layer which covers the inner lining of the eyelid and the white part of the eye, gets inflamed, due to which the eye turns pale pink or red. He explained that conjunctivitis is caused by bacteria and can also be highly contagious.

According to him, it is caused by contact of contaminated hands with the eyes and advised the people to protect themselves from eye flu by not touching eyes with hands; wash hands properly; avoid sharing of one's personal things like towel, handkerchief, pillow, eye cosmetic (eye makeup) etc with anyone; keep distance from the infected person; not use things used by an infected person; avoid going to over-

crowded places; take precautions like maintaining distance from TV or mobile; change of handkerchief or towel daily and use the same clean only; wash hands from time to time with soap and using sanitizer; wash eyes with cold water every half an hour and use glasses and avoid touch of eyes repeatedly with hands.

He further said that in case of excess of such eye flu symptoms, the patients should contact the CHCs/PHCs or nearest hospitals and only use antibiotic/eye drops as per the advice of the doctors. "Instructions have also been issued to schools that children who are infected with conjunctivitis should be advised to stay at home and rest till they recover and should be prevented from coming in contact with any other child," he added.

## Cong Panchkoshi Yatra ends

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

With the offering of 'purnahuti' at Manikarnika Kund, the five-day long Panchoshi Parikrama Yatra of Congress led by its provincial president (Prayagraj Zone) and former UP Minister Ajay Rai came to an end when Brahmins released the 'Sankalp' the pilgrims had taken at the beginning of this holy journey, amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras. After then, Ajay Rai and others visited Shri Kashi Vishwanath, Mata Sankatha Devi and Kaal Bhairav temples and offered prayers.

At the end of his pilgrimage, Ajay Rai said that travels have always changed history and it is his wish that the last drop of his blood should be useful for the country and the people. He reiterated that the condition of Panchkoshi Marg was in very bad condition. With the pledge of prosperity in the country, he started his last day journey from Panch Pandava Temple at Shivpur at around 9 am after performing darshan and worship in all the five Pandava temples of ancient



Congress leader Ajay Rai offering purnahuti on completion of Panchkoshi Yatra in Varanasi on Tuesday.

importance there. He was accompanied by district Congress president Rajeshwar Singh Patel and city chief Raghvendra Choubey and many others. Ajay Rai also performed Rudrabhishek in the presence of five Brahmins.

Then passing through Normal School, Gilat Bazar, Uday Pratap College Marg,

Mahavir Mandir, Pandeypur crossing etc, the Congress yatra reached Kapildhara where the participants also performed Rudrabhishek and sought the blessings of Lord Shiva for the happiness, peace and prosperity of the people of entire India including Kashi. After offering prayers at Vinayaka temple, all the pilgrims passed through

various ghats by boat to reach Manikarnika Ghat.

On the last day, Ajay Rai's elder daughter Shraddha Rai and son Shantanu Rai also walked along with other pilgrims including national secretary VP Singh, Prajanath Sharma, Dr Pramod Pandey, Kamlesh Ojha and Satnam Singh.

oment works under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS). He directed the concerned officers to complete all the works with quality on time. Along with this, he inspected the station panel, station building, platforms, passenger sheds, foot over bridge, food and vending stalls, waiting hall, circulating area, entry and exit, cleanliness and maintenance etc. He also inspected the relay room, IPS room, points crossing, key transfer, maintenance register, cancellation counter and register etc related to security and instructed the concerned personnel to strictly fol-

low the security rules. During his window trailing inspection, Srivastava checked the safety of the rail track, rail ballast, track screening, overhead traction, alignment, suspension order and track fittings of the said rail section. After window inspection, he inspected the Kusumhi railway station and made a thorough inspection of the rake handling point and new goods line under construction for goods trains apart from new passenger platforms and directed the officials of the executing agency to complete the work within the time limit. During his inspection, he was

accompanied by Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infra) Rahul Srivastava, Chief Project Manager (Gati Shakti) Kaushalesh Singh, Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan, Senior Divisional Engineer-I Rishi Srivastava, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Sheikh Rahman, Senior Divisional Operations Manager Ajay Pratap Singh, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) Pankaj Keshwani, Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-II Yashveer Singh and many others

## Advocates remain on strike, demand Mishra's release

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Expressing their solidarity with Vijay Mishra, the arrested advocate of mafia don Atiq Ahmad, and supporting the demands of the CAT Bar Association, advocates of High Court and the district court remained on strike on Tuesday and staged a demonstration demanding his release.

The district court lawyers,

who took a lead by boycotting judicial work on Monday itself and observing a blockade, staged a dharna at the gate of the collectorate on Tuesday while the High Court Bar also gave a strike call on the issue and termed the FIR and charges against Vijay Mishra as concocted and framed. They also extended support to the CAT Bar agitation continuing against the curtailment of juris-

diction. At a meeting advocates demanded immediate release of Vijay Mishra.

However, the police have gathered information that Vijay Mishra, who had been arrested from a Lucknow hotel late on Saturday night, was there with Zainab, wife of the slain Khalid Azeem alias Ashraf, younger brother Atiq Ahmad. They were in hotel in connection with a land deal of Rs 12

crore for property of Atiq Ahmad.

Reports suggest that Vijay Mishra was scheduled to get Rs 7 crore in advance in this deal. He was supposed to hand over the money to Zainab and Shaista Parveen, absconding wife of Atiq. Mishra had done this allegedly in the past also and was in contact of the absconding Guddu Bambaaz, Shaista Parveen, and Zainab.

## Basic Education dept to prepare question bank for students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

For the first time, the UP Basic Education department will be preparing a comprehensive question bank for mathematics and science subjects for over 55 lakh students of classes IX and X studying in more than 27,000 schools affiliated to the UP Secondary Education Board across the state.

This comprehensive question bank will not only help students prepare for high school exam it will even help them prepare for engineering and medical competitive exams

in future. Prayagraj director general (school education) and UP project director of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan Vijay Kiran Anand has entrusted the responsibility of making the comprehensive question bank to the State Institute of Science Education (SISE).

According to SISE director Anil Bhushan Chaturvedi, "We have been given the responsibility to come up with question banks of classes IX and X for mathematics and science subjects. The question bank will be helpful in improving the conceptual understanding of subjects along with helping the students prepare for the board

exams."

Soon workshops will be organised in which the concepts will be taught by the subject experts. They will also prepare the question bank based on the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) syllabus, he added. It is expected that by next year, the question bank will become available in the market soon as workshop for making the question banks will begin shortly. Teachers will be trained on the basis of these modules so that the learning environment can be improved for the benefit of students.

The preparation of authorised question bank based on NCERT course curriculum will benefit students greatly as at present they depend on question banks of private publishers available in the market. The UP Board also provides a model question papers of subjects whenever any major change in syllabus of subjects takes place, but this is not an annual feature. Likewise, no question bank as such is published by board annually. Even the official website of UP Board- <https://upmsp.edu.in> provides a very selective question bank of just 2021-22 session of 18 subjects for class IX.

## Mega plantation drive held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A mega tree plantation drive titled Sri Sathya Sai Prem Taru was held in Sarai Mansoor 'Dhokari' village of Saidabad block of the district. The event was attended by four judges of the Allahabad High Court who planted the saplings in the Sai Prem Taru (tree of love) which will have over 200 mango trees of Dasheri variety.

The judges of Allahabad High Court included Justice Manoj Gupta, Justice Vivek Singh, Justice Vivek Verma and Justice Ashutosh Srivastava. District Forest Officer (DFO), Prayagraj Mahavir Kaujalgi was also present along with staff members. Sri Sathya Sai organisa-

tions, all over the world, have pledged to plant one crore trees till November 23, 2025 when 100th birthday of Bhagwan Baba will be celebrated across the world. In Dhokari village the organisation resolved to plant 1,000 trees. The event marked the commencement of this exercise. The event was organised by member of Sri Sathya Sai Samiti, Prayagraj and Additional Chief Standing Counsel of state government in the High Court, Akhileshwar Singh. "Dasheri mangoes will be distributed among orphanages, schools adopted by samiti under 'healthy breakfast scheme', said Singh. All the saplings are being geotagged by the samiti members to keep a vigil on the health of the sapling

in this worldwide drive.

**GIRL KILLED:** A seven-year-old girl student was killed and seven other children sustained injuries when the school van carrying them was hit by a speeding loader near Laxmanpur block road under Leelapur police station in Pratapgarh on Tuesday morning. The incident, according to the police, took place at 7:30 am when the van was ferrying children of a local private school in Leelapur. The deceased, identified as Mansi Saroj of Patulki village, died on the spot.

All the seven kids who were injured, Yash Prajapati (7), Ayush Prajapati (8), Naina Saroj (8), Kartik Saroj (8), Sanjana (9), Vaibhav Singh (8) and Arpita Singh (8), all resi-

dents of Patulki, were taken to the Lalganj Community Health Centre (CHC). The doctors referred Yash Prajapati along with the injured driver Shariq (50) to the district hospital in Pratapgarh.

Senior police and administrative officials rushed to the spot for rescue, while scores of villagers too assembled at the incident site and hospital and demanded action against the errant driver of the loader. Locals blocked the Laxmanpur road and protested against the incident. The driver of the loader was later arrested.

Leelapur SHO Subhash Yadav said police have been probing if driver of the school van had valid documents and driving licence as the van was associated with the school.

## Village to be developed as tourist destination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Devari village situated on the banks of Tons river in Meja tehsil here which is known for its bamboo and pottery products, will be developed as a village tourist destination before the Mahakumbh. Along with picnic and boating spots, one can relax in the serene surroundings of the village and purchase the products to enhance the beauty of their homes.

The department of Tourism and Rural Development is preparing a proposal to develop Devari village so that its bamboo and pottery products like baskets, stands, table chairs, bouquets and other decorative items are

known not only in the district but in every corner of the country. This will help the local artisans get more employment. Facilities like roads, electricity will be provided by the department of Rural Development. They will also be linked with entrepreneurs to provide employment to villagers.

"A proposal regarding this is being prepared and will be sent to the government," said deputy director, Tourism department, Biresh Kumar. "The Tourism department will get artisans from Rajasthan to construct an entrance gate on the border of the village. Picnic spot will be developed and plans are afoot to construct pucca ghats for boating. Also,

bamboo cottages will be built on the banks of the river where tourists can spend relaxing moments in a better environment," said official.

**CONCERN VOICED:** As countdown begins for Independence Day 2023 and preparations will soon begin for the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign (from August 13 to 15), there are a number of houses and buildings in the city on which the Tricolour installed last year can be still seen, torn, spoiled or discoloured. Last year on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call, almost every household in the city had proudly put up the national flag on their premises. The call was given under the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mohotsav' and everyone

had participated in it in huge numbers. The PM had appealed people to strengthen the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' movement by hoisting or displaying the national flag in their homes between August 13-15 on July 22 last year. In a Twitter thread, he had said that this movement will deepen our connection with the Tricolour and noted that it was on July 22, 75 years back that the national flag was adopted. Following the PM's appeal, everyone was quick to buy Tricolour and unfurl it or put it up but many forgot to take care of the flag.

Last year the local market was flooded with the flag in different sizes and for different prices and the vendors did brisk sale.

## Progress of applications reviewed

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

DM incharge and CDO Srilaxmi VS while presiding over the meeting of District Udyog Bandhu and investors at the Collectorate on Monday directed the officials concerned to ensure disposal of applications related to schemes of the Industries department without inordinate delay. Reviewing the progress of applications related to different schemes she asked the officials to ensure their disposal whether related to bank loans or other benefits from the government, department, bank or district administration. She was apprised by the Industries department that out of 1,289 applications under Nivesh Mitra, sanction for

1,105 had been issued, 66 were rejected and the rest were under process. The CDO said reason should be mentioned for all rejected applications. The meeting was attended by entrepreneurs and officials concerned.

**INSPECTED:** UP Minister of Technical Education and Consumer Affairs Ashish Patel claimed the state government led by Yogi Adityanath is committed to the overall development and under that policy the third year medical classes are running in the new building of Medical College and preparations are on to start the engineering classes from the coming session in the Engineering College. He made such an announcement

while inspecting the ongoing construction of the college at Polytechnic School ground on Monday.

While inspecting the college building he took the officials of the working agency to task for inferior quality of construction and directed to issue chargesheet against the JE concerned.

He warned the officials to remove the shortcomings prior to the next inspection otherwise remain prepared to face the music. During the inspection he was accompanied by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS, Ram Kumar Vishwakarma, Ram Lotan Bind and others.

**ARRESTED:** The Dramondganj police arrested

an accused of gangrape, loot and making objectionable videos/photographs viral. A woman had levelled the above allegations in a named complaint at the police station on June 14 this year. After registering the case under relevant sections of the IPC and IT Act the police started the investigation. The team led by SO Veerendra Singh nabbed one accused on Monday and sent him to jail.

**DISCOURSE:** Renowned raconteur Dr Ram Lal Tripathi while addressing a discourse 'Sri Shiv Puran Katha Gyan Yagya' at Ganeshganj on Monday appealed to the gathering that we should learn a lesson from Lord Shiva who consumed poison in the interest of the people.

# Gold’s own country

Is Kerala, God’s Own Country, now becoming Devil’s own paradise?

A former top sleuth, BV Kumar, taken aback by the spurt in gold smuggling in Kerala, recently caustically remarked that the State has become ‘Gold’s Own Country’. Well, the southern State has indeed become a den of murder, mayhem, narcotics and sex trade. Friday’s murder of a five-year-old girl at Aluva, a town in Ernakulam district, is the latest incident to show that nobody is safe in the State. The incident occurred a day after MV Govindan, the CPI-M State secretary, lambasted the cops and bureaucracy for corruption and complacency. The girl was murdered in a gruesome fashion by Asfak Alam, a 29-year-old guest worker from Bihar when she resisted his rape attempt. The body was found ‘dumped covered in waste in a shrubby abandoned spot’ in Aluva market. The police also found that Alam was a habitual offender and a drug addict. The fact is that there is no system in place in Kerala to check the antecedent of these Guest Workers whose number has crossed more than to lakhs in Perumbavoor, a town adjoining Aluva.



The last few decades have seen an unprecedented increase in the influx of migrant workers from eastern India to Kerala. Though most of them claim to be from West Bengal, the truth is that most of them are illegal refugees from Bangladesh. The pro-workers CPI-M Government in Kerala designated them as Guest Workers as a mark of gratitude to them for their kind gesture to the State. But for these migrant workers, routine business in the State would have come to a grinding halt as the local population is not willing to do “menial jobs” like washing the utensils and cooking in the eateries. The Guest Workers brought with

them a slew of habits like drug abuse, illicit tobacco usage and anti-social activities like “supari” murders and prostitution rackets. These ‘guests’ reach Kerala with their female counterparts and set up brothels adjacent to police stations! This is not an exaggerated allegation but a true fact. Law and order in the State have taken a beating as the Guest Workers establish colonies in suburban areas. If the number of murders taking place in the State is any indication, Kerala is in for major trouble. Though the police are tasked with the responsibility of monitoring these workers’ activity, the cops look the other way when any issues crop up; they remind one of a bunch of adventurers who work without any purpose. The post of State Police Chief is reserved for the most inefficient and corrupt among the lot who dance to the music of the party in power. Kerala is bereft of police chiefs who could inspire confidence among the population and awe in the minds of the Force. These things happen at a time when the former principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has been arrested and jailed in connection with charges of money laundering and gold smuggling. If the allegations made by the Opposition Congress and a section of the media are read together, the facts presented by them turn out to be relevant. God’s Own Country has now become Devil’s Own Paradise!

## PICTALK



Activists of various political parties flag off Salute Tiranga Shikara Race at Dal Lake, in Srinagar

PTI

# Bridging innovation and a job-ready work force

Academia–industry partnerships are facilitating the rise of academic maker spaces

In 2022, India made significant strides in innovation, breaking into the top 40 of the Global Innovation Index. However, one area that remains a challenge is university–industry research collaboration, which plays a pivotal role in fostering innovation linkages. Fortunately, the tides are turning, and academia–industry partnerships are gaining recognition as catalysts for improving STEM education in India by fostering cutting-edge research, technological progress, and a job-ready workforce for Industry 4.0.

A recent notable transformation within Indian higher education institutions (HEIs) is the establishment of academic maker spaces, which presents an opportunity for meaningful collaboration between industry and academia. Academic maker spaces are collaborative learning environments equipped with modern manufacturing equipment, which foster hands-on experiential learning and student-driven projects. They enable students to exercise creativity, apply unique concepts and proce-



dures in their projects, and learn on their own. Ultimately, they nurture the growth of innovation ecosystems and help students gain 21st-century skills. Here’s why supporting these efforts is crucial for the industry:

1. Industry Benefits: Academic maker spaces attract faculty and students interested in product development and applied research. They serve as resource pools for the industry, offering access to innovative minds and potential recruits.
2. Academic Institutions: By establishing maker spaces aligned with industry needs, colleges enhance their reputation and attract high-quality faculty and students. Collaborations with industries lead to funding, improved facilities, and heightened research and development initiatives.

3. Faculty Incentives: Faculty members benefit from professional development opportunities and funding. Collaborating with maker spaces offers unique perspectives on state-of-the-art industry projects, supporting academic groups and future publications.

4. Student Advantages: STEM students actively seek practical knowledge and industrial experience, which increases their employability.

**OPPORTUNITIES**  
Industry Internships: Short-term and long-term internships at maker spaces enable students to work on real-world problems and receive mentorship from both faculty and industry experts.  
Multi-Year Projects: Industry-sponsored projects involving successive student batches and maker spaces as innovation hubs ensure a continuous supply of skilled student makers.  
Industry-funded innovation challenges, hackathons, and fellowships boost engineering innovation and support students and faculty to design and develop novel solutions to real-world, domain-specific problems.



DAMAYANTI BHATTACHARYA

Successful academia–industry collaborations require mutual benefits and respect for each other’s experiences. Corporations can view these partnerships as low-cost research and development initiatives or investments in workforce development. Public–private partnerships with government support can further enhance the benefit-to-cost ratio, propelling innovation-driven growth and technology adoption.  
Academic maker spaces offer a promising pathway for academia–industry partnerships in India. By embracing this new avenue of collaboration, industries gain access to innovation, talent, and new markets, while academic institutions receive funding, reputation enhancement, and improved education quality.  
Faculty and students also reap rewards, as academia–industry partnerships foster professional development and a competent and job-ready workforce. Embracing these partnerships can lead to a win-win situation for all stakeholders.  
*(The writer is CEO, of Maker Bhavan Foundation)*

# Coping with capricious weather

Human freedom alone can promote wealth and prosperity; it is an unbeatable engine of technological and economic growth

Capricious rainfall patterns across the country have resulted in unprecedented floods in some regions, while others have received far less than normal. The recent floods in northern India have caused significant damage to standing crops, including paddy fields while insufficient and delayed rains have hindered paddy transplantation in other major rice-growing states like West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh. The situation in the north and northwest is particularly dire, with widespread devastation being reported.

The departure from the regular pattern of monsoon is of major concern so far as meeting the non-negotiable demand for increased food supply to India’s population projected to reach approximately 1.5 billion by 2050 is concerned. Droughts are becoming more severe, and floods are more frequent and widespread with the riverbeds rising due to increased siltation year after year. Increasing agricultural productivity will require, apart from significant advancements in the agricultural sector, a substantial improvement in water resource management right from its capture and storage to distribution and utilization. Uncertain availability coupled with uneven distribution of water expected to meet its year-round demand for human consumption, irrigation, energy generation and industrial use is sure to increase the demand-supply gap. With time, the nature-based solutions where natural forces supported human efforts have been replaced by engineering-based solutions which often worked against nature. Covering strategically the misdeeds that caused them, calamities are called natural disasters, and our most vulnerable populations viz. the poor and indigenous people, often taken by surprise, are doomed to suffer the most.

In the face of this calamity, the National River Linking Project (NRLP), launched a decade ago by the Vajpayee government, appears to be assuming a newfound significance. The plan envisaged a vast network of canals



and dams connecting India’s rivers, aiming to address the mismatch in water availability and demand across the country. Amid all the fanfare and grandiosity, the project however deserves a serious relook also from the point of view of the related significant concerns and challenges.

The NRLP, comprised of thirty links, aims to connect flows across different basins within the Himalayan and Peninsular through a network of nearly 3000 storage dams. This grand water grid attempts to divert water from and to rivers to match their natural endowments and withdrawals. With potential benefits like generating 34 gigawatts of hydroelectric power, providing irrigation to 35 million hectares of land, supplying drinking water to millions of people, and creating income opportunities in rural areas.

However, the road to actualizing this plan faces environmental, social, economic, and legal challenges raised by successive governments, states, and civil society groups. Concerns about loss of forest cover, impact on local ecosystems, and displacement of local communities do cast a shadow over the project. In 2012, the Supreme Court of India ordered the government to implement the river inter-linking project within a specific time frame, and a high-powered committee was appointed



AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL, THE TREND TO RECOGNIZE RIGHTS IN FAVOUR OF ECOSYSTEMS AND THEIR ELEMENTS LIKE THE EARTH, RIVERS, ANIMALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES IS STRONGLY EMERGING IN ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AND JURISPRUDENCE

by the court to oversee the project’s progress. The Himalayan component and the Peninsular component are the two phases of the project, the first phase focuses on the Ganga and Brahmaputra Rivers and aims to mitigate the impact of floods in the Ganga-Brahmaputra river system which affects areas such as Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh and provide relief to drought-stricken regions of Rajasthan, Haryana, and Gujarat. One of the project’s first moves, the Ken-Betwa link, which involves transferring water from the Ken River in Madhya Pradesh to the Betwa River in Uttar Pradesh aims to provide irrigation to 13 districts across both states, the majority falling in the water-starved Bundelkhand region. It has, however, stirred controversy due to its ecological impact. A recent study revealed that the project might submerge 10.07% of Madhya Pradesh’s Panna Tiger Reserve, resulting in a significant loss of habitat of tigers and their prey species, along with two million trees.

NRLP’s massive economic and ecological costs, coupled with the potential displacement of communities also pose serious challenges. Within India also, the political implications of water sharing between states, such as the longstanding Cauvery dispute between Tamil Nadu and

Karnataka, underline the complexity of implementing such a project in a diverse and large democratic country like India. Rivers can sustain themselves if their stream is allowed to remain ‘nirmal’, and ‘aviral’. The current condition of rivers due to poor quality of catchment area management coupled with making them a sink for all kinds of wastes and pollutants needs to be tackled simultaneously and with extreme priority failing which merely having the river inter-linking project is not going to be a long-lasting solution to the problems being suffered by human beings.

The proactive role of people in helping our rivers survive is going to be crucial. With predictions indicating a water deficit of up to 50% by 2030, it is vital that all voices be heard, and all concerns addressed as we strive to seize the opportunities and overcome the challenges presented by this grand project for the benefit of one and all including our future generations. At the global level, the trend to recognize rights in favour of ecosystems and their elements like the earth, rivers, animals and natural resources is strongly emerging in environmental legislation and jurisprudence.

*(The writers are former IFS officers and principal chief conservators of forests of UP and Maharashtra)*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INDIA’S SEMICONDUCTOR ASPIRATIONS

Sir — A new technology becomes functional when the scientific community and the administration empowered with political will become two wings in sync. India is blessed with such leadership since its independence. The latest semiconductor technology seems to continue the same trend. The political will seems to be on a positive note to back up this.

Germination of the semiconductor industry will require a multifaceted approach from government stakeholders. The political class of India should understand that the technologically primitive era is past. The 21st-century economy will be underpinned by semiconductors and to nourish such technology, an ecosystem should be created for the accommodation of all the concerned ingredients.

We have to improve the ease of doing business procedures. Allowing big techs to start a business in the scheduled time will increase confidence among other players. Bringing skilled labour by easing the Visa policy will also be helpful. After all, we need a comprehensive Semiconductor Act to roll out red carpets for foreign investment too.

The government should not hesitate to take equity stakes. Like Taiwan, the Government of India should co-found a dedicated semiconductor manufacturing company that can be turned into a national asset shortly. The government can establish and delegates more powers to top research institute instead of bureaucracy to avoid red-tapism. We shall be hopeful that our top political class of the country will liberate the semiconductor industry from an archaic bureaucratic control system and let it fly to discover new horizons.

Arka Goswami | Durgapur

### AL QAEDA IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Sir — The UN Security Council report warns that Al Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent is shaping its regional affiliate AQIS to expand its operations to Jammu and Kashmir, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The report also highlights the potential collaboration between some elements of AQIS

## PAWAR HONOURS MODI



The NCP Chief Sharad Pawar honouring Modi with the Lokamanya Tilak award has caused much consternation among the constituents of I.N.D.I.A. Modi has been conferred with 13 civilian awards by different countries. He is not after awards or honour. Honour and award go in search of him. Modi has worldwide recognition. Not long ago, no less a person than US President Joe Biden got the signature of Modi for his biography. Shiv Sena (UBT) has expressed unhappiness at Pawar honouring Modi. Sena (UBT) has forgotten that it was in the company of the BJP for a long time. Sena (UBT) and NCP are fractured. Estrangement with natural ally BJP and honey-

moon with unnatural ally Congress do not bode well for Thackeray’s sena. Uncomfortability with Congress caused a split in the party.

Congress being a sworn enemy of the BJP in general and Modi in particular has not taken Pawar’s participation in the event very seriously. It has shown magnanimity to leave the matter to the discretion of Pawar but Sena which shared power for a long time with BJP has been blowing hot and cold at Pawar felicitating Modi. Sanjay Raut, spokesman of Sena (UBT) has reminded the criticism by Modi against NCP. Sena also needs to remember that it had criticized NCP and Congress when it was in the company of the BJP. If criticism itself is the reason to keep away from each other, the 26 hotch-potch political parties would not have come under one platform. There are no permanent friends and permanent foes in politics. By conferring a prestigious award on Modi, Sharad Pawar has been honouring himself. In honouring Modi, Pawar is raising above politics.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

and ISIL-K, the most serious terrorist threat in Afghanistan and the wider region.

According to the report, Al Qaeda maintains a close relationship with the Taliban and operates covertly in Afghanistan under their protection. The issue of terror financing is also addressed, with terrorist groups showing proficiency in generating significant revenues and using innovative financial technologies like Bitcoin and crowdfunding.

The report serves as a serious reminder of the ongoing threat posed by Al Qaeda and its affiliates in the Indian subcontinent. Governments in the region must take steps to counter this threat by enhancing security cooperation and disrupting terrorist financing networks.

Amarjeet Kuma | Hazaribag

### MANN KI BAAT OR MANIPUR KI BAAT

Sir — At 11 am on Sunday, prime minister Narendra Modi addressed the 103rd edition of Mann Ki Baat. In

which he discussed all things except ‘Manipur ki Baat,’s more vital to discuss than any other, which has been witnessing ethnic clashes since May 3. Modi has been criticised for keeping silent on the issue. Oppositions are continuously demanding to come to Parliament to discuss this. but no matter what, He lives in his world. where things are going as per his wish...he has no idea about what’s happening in reality in India...such bad luck for Indians to have him as PM. All the inhumane things are coming to an end under his rule. Steps like? Giving criminals a free hand, allowing cops to torment women and give them to mobs, permitting arson, and allowing anarchy to take over the state? it seems that Peace in Manipur will come only when BJP is wiped out.

MT Farooqi | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

ONLY GOD IS OUR TRUSTWORTHY FRIEND

Trust Almighty as he is the one we can bank upon in our difficult times



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. That is why friendship is probably considered as the most valuable of all relationships because a friend is the one who knows us and loves us just the way we are. As compared to other relationships like parents, relatives etc.. that are not chosen but given to us, and that also has its own inherent value, however, friendship is a relation that's totally our own choice. That is why we always experience that a friend is someone who speaks to our heart, someone to whom we feel a magnetic affinity. Hence, when there is a mutual response between two persons who are becoming friends then a relationship is born that can last a lifetime (and even beyond a lifetime!).

Off-lately the word friendship has become very common in the modern day society where we call everyone and anyone who comes into our contact our friend. But one must understand that mere acquaintances or those with whom we work because of our posting at a certain place cannot be called our friends, because friendship is the coming together of equals, where even if there is a difference in abilities, roles or position, yet there is a vision of equality which does not create any feeling of superiority or inferiority, thereby permitting acceptance of one another unconditionally, which creates closeness. There is such a respectful closeness that one does not intrude on the personality of the other, nor does one harbour distaste for any weakness seen.

A Real friend is the one who stands by us through thick and thin. With them you do not have to prove yourself, for you are loved and accepted for what you are. Good times or bad, a friend is ever present, ready to share, to serve, to listen or just to be there. There is this mutual feeling of love which not only accommodates any shortcomings but actively transforms it with a word of encouragement, a smiling patience & an act of kindness. Friendship means availability. A friend is available at all times




and never gives excuses like "I do not have time", "wait", "later", "don't bother me now" etc.. However, looking at the hustle-bustle in our day to day life, is it really easy & practical to have a friend who would love us unconditionally & be available to us all the time? Does anyone today have that amount of patience to invest their time & nurture the plant of friendship, especially when give & take is the rule of people living in the tech age. I don't think so !! So what is the way out ?

It is said that trust is an alliance between two hearts which can never be broken or betrayed easily because it dispels any fear of being misused or being abandoned. According to me the only one who can be trusted blindly is the one who is above all the humans and who is available to us all the time & he is none other than "Supreme Almighty" himself. YES!! He is the most trustworthy of all the friends, there is really no comparison of him to anyone in this universe. But, unfortunately very few of us have the great fortune to experience this magical relationship with HIM. We call HIM our mother, father, beloved, teacher while we pray, but of all these relationships the one that we share with him as a "Friend" permeates all our other relationships with Him. With Almighty as our friend we can be open and know that in that openness there is a loyalty and an understanding of everything that is within our heart. Though HE is our father, mother and teacher, at the same time we must not forget that HE is also our closest Friend indeed who is not like our fair-weather friends who leave us in the lurch when we fall on bad days. Hence by having HIM as our best friend, we can experience lightness and easiness in all our relationships forever. So let us rekindle the flame of friendship with the almighty & spread the light of love & happiness all over.

*(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist)*

# India set to be third-largest economy by 2028



SHIVAJI SARKAR

India is on its way to being among the world's three top economies but high inflation, low per capita income and unemployment must be tackled on priority




From 'dus numberi to 'teen number is no mean achievement. A guarantee at a time when the government faces a token no-trust motion, turmoil in Manipur and preparation for many state elections speaks volumes. Though even some RBI observations find that the task if achieved would be through a severe inflationary process. Its surmise that infra spend would curb inflation has gone awry.

The rupee gaining currency in almost 20 countries, including Saudi Arabia for an equal exchange rate, and partially with France accepting the Rupay card. Again a good move to de-dollarise the world continuing even at the BRICS summit in South Africa. A pious aim with gradually larger thematic reach though still dollar sways. With a slight change in dollar rate or interest rate firming, the capital flows back to the US market. Even foreign portfolio investors dump Indian share markets to the US for quick gains.

There is much beyond for a country that is obsessed with big numbers, high speed and every bit of becoming magnanimous and grand. It dazzles but those with less income or who cannot ride a metro train for high fares still wonder what it exactly means. It does not easily percolate down to them. The trickle-down theory also called A-argali, B-Bavaria, C-chaprasai and D-driver has not marked the changes deep down, despite guarantees by many prime ministers. Of course, Modi is different and they look at his guarantee. But infra has come with the destruction of structures, forests, lands, and ecology for roads and other activities adding to the inflated value.

An SBI Ecowrap report says that the country's GDP is projected to grow at a rate of 7.1 per cent in the current fiscal



ANOTHER ASPECT THAT CONCERNS THE ECONOMISTS AND RBI ARE INFLATION NUMBERS. IT REMAINS BEYOND ITS TOLERATION LIMIT

*(The writer is a policy analyst. Views expressed are personal)*

and 2029 to take a major leap. It hopes India to have 8 per cent growth in the April-June quarter of 2024 through the current fiscal, with the growth to remain around 6.5 per cent. This aligns with the National Statistical Office's second advance estimates. The RBI has also indicated that the GDP to grow around 7 per cent. The International Monetary Fund also says that India may surpass Germany and Japan, too high an expectation. Despite the slowdown, the inherent strength of those economies is greater than that of India.

In 2014, India at \$ 2 trillion ranked 10th in the world. A year later it jumped to seventh, by 2017 it was sixth and by 2021 touched fifth and now IMF projections show that it can achieve the third rank by 2027 behind the US and China. India has to grow at a continuous 8 per cent between 2024 and 2027. In recent times it has not achieved that rate. Many economists ascribe the present growth rate to low, minus 23.9 per cent, numbers during covid19 lockdown. Economies grow but usually, it does not leap with pious wishes. India's export numbers also remain low and so does its share of the world market.

Another aspect that concerns the economists and RBI are inflation numbers. It remains beyond its toleration limit. Till last year the high wholesale rates rattled it. This heats the economy and numbers swell with prices. The large figures though are important, the actual power of the rupee does not grow. The

inevitable rise in GDP though an important indicator, is rattled by the lowest per capita GDP among the 10 largest economies. In dollar terms, the average income of the countryman was \$ 1560 in 2014. A normal American earned \$ 55,084, 35 times more. Germans had 31 per cent more income, Britons 30 times; and the Japanese, Italians and French 20 times more than Indians. Even a Chinese earns five times more.

By 2027, an Indian is to have \$ 3,466 income while a US national is to earn \$90,231; German \$ 59,053; Briton \$ 58,009; French \$ 49,896; Japanese \$ 41,569; Italian \$ 40,899. Even a Russian would earn \$ 15,752; a Chinese \$ 18,317; and a poor Brazilian \$ 11,658. Thus India despite a national standing may not be congenial for the workers.

This has impacted the Indian rupee as well. Despite being stable at a low of above Rs 80 for some years- Rs 82.19 on July 28, it suffers in its international standing for two primary reasons. It has a low domestic purchasing capacity and that marks its intrinsic value. The international exchange remains high despite an intense diplomatic effort at increasing its acceptability. Unless the rupee's domestic power rises, its acceptability in the international market dithers. Nobody wants to have a currency that is not easy to exchange. Russia has never rejected the rupee but its companies insist on payment in dollars or in even in yuan.

It becomes more ticklish as the US has raised its interest rates

between 5.25 and 5.5 per cent, the highest since 2001. It immediately changes the international scenario and causes capital flow back to the US. Bravado is not an asset in international economics. This has to be taken care of.


India's GDP numbers are larger than France's and the UK's. But its per capita GDP struggles with the unstable economies of Zimbabwe at \$ 1415, Yemen at \$ 1580 and Pakistan at \$ 1415 as in 2014. Some years later in 2027, India with \$ 3466 expected per person income would be behind Bangladesh-\$ 3748; West Bank at \$ 3728 and Vanuatu at \$ 3593 and slightly above Angola -\$ 3458 and Nigeria-\$ 3288. Even a Bangladeshi would earn \$ 282 more than an Indian in 2027.

Indian ranking at per person income was at 157 of 195 countries in 2014 and is likely to be 138 among 189 nations. Even to achieve the gross GDP ranking it depends on whether Germany and Japan slip or not from their fourth and fifth positions. Japan had slipped from the \$ 5 trillion level in 2022. Overall, it still is a stronger overall economy than India.

Hopes are with India for a rapid rise. But holistic gains would still need to be achieved with better social, governance, corporate and job opportunities. The rank of third means a lot if all other parameters support and boost the living conditions. Overall indicators may mean that GDP growth in itself is not the end unless the country grows on all of its parameters.

# Phishing attacks plague Jammu and Kashmir

Cybercrime is a growing concern, with thousands of cases being reported daily and numerous people falling victim to various forms of cyber fraud



BHARTI DOGRA

*(The writer is Charkha's volunteer trainer from Jammu & Kashmir)*  
**Charkha features**

emerged as a prevalent and highly effective technique for extorting money. Phishing typically involves the attacker impersonating a reputable individual or entity, often through email, social media, or other forms of communication, to deceive the victim into sharing sensitive information or transferring funds.

Harjeet (name changed), a resident of Jammu, recently fell into the trap of a phishing scam and lost an amount of Rs 194,000 from his bank account without even receiving an OTP. "One afternoon, I received a message stating that my SIM card would be deactivated the next day. Being a businessman, I rely heavily on my phone for work, so I took that



message seriously. The message provided a contact phone number at the bottom. I called that number and was instructed to download an app, with the link sent to me via WhatsApp. As soon as I downloaded that link, my account was emptied," Harjeet shared. Similarly, Gulab Nabi Batt, a resident of Baramulla, has also suffered a substantial loss due to falling victim to cyber fraud.

A few months ago, a shocking incident came to light through a report by a well-known local news channel in Jammu. According to the channel's reporter, an individual residing in the Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir became a victim of a cybercrime fraud perpetrated by a hacker who

impersonated a woman claiming to be involved in a social cause.

The fraudulent scheme was initiated with an email received from a woman named Barbara, who expressed her desire to build a hospital in Jammu and Kashmir and extend assistance to impoverished individuals. Barbara asserted that

she possessed approximately three lakh dollars for this charitable cause. Over time, a friendship developed between the person from Kathua and the impersonator. After several days, the woman informed the individual that she had arrived at Jammu airport with the three lakh dollars. However, she claimed that customs officials insisted on the payment of eight and a half lakh rupees as a tax on the dollars before they could be released. Trusting the woman's representations, the person from Kathua transferred the specified amount to her account. After the transfer of the fund, the hacker blocked the victim's number.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Srinagar, Sandeep

Chaudhary has taken proactive measures to raise awareness about this important issue by releasing informative videos. According to him, while cybercriminals deceive innocent villagers by posing as bank officers, young people are easily becoming victims through the spread of sex videos. "If anyone experiences such an incident, they should immediately report it by calling the cyber helpline number 1930. Such fraud should not be hidden because the person who experiences it is a victim and not a criminal. To effectively combat this cyber fraud, individuals need to be self-aware and actively make others aware. Vigilance is required on all social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook," he emphasized.

Cybercrime is a growing concern, with thousands of cases being reported daily and numerous people falling victim to various forms of cyber fraud. The key to preventing this crime lies in raising awareness. Many individuals who are not comfortable with computers and modern technology are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims. They may lack knowledge about the ways technology and computers can be used to protect themselves from falling prey to such crimes. To effectively combat cybercrime, it is crucial to regularly inform and educate ourselves and others who may not be familiar with these scams.

# Niger crisis deepens as France plans evacuation

AP ■ NIAMEY (NIGER)

France prepared to evacuate French and European nationals from Niger on Tuesday, telling them to carry no more than a small bag, after a military coup there won backing from three other West African nations ruled by mutinous soldiers.

The French Foreign Ministry in Paris cited recent violence that targeted the French Embassy in Niamey, the capital, as one of the reasons for the decision. The closure of Niger's airspace also "leaves our compatriots unable to leave the country by their own means," the ministry said.

The evacuation comes amid a deepening crisis sparked by the coup last week against Niger's democratically elected president, Mohamed Bazoum.

The evacuation was starting Tuesday for French and European citizens who wish to leave, the French ministry said in a statement. It gave no other details. It estimates that several hundred French citizens are in Niger at the moment. In



hotels in the capital, French and other European citizens, including some who have worked in the country for years, packed their bags awaiting news of where and when the evacuation would happen.

"My job is not finished, I hope the situation will finish and one day soon we can come back," a former French military official who is now training the Nigerien army as a civilian told The Associated Press. "This happened very quickly and no one saw this coming. I was really surprised," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity for

security reasons. The West African regional body known as ECOWAS announced travel and economic sanctions against Niger on Sunday and said it would use force if the coup leaders don't reinstate Bazoum within one week. Bazoum's government was one of the West's last democratic partners against West African extremists.

In a joint statement, the military governments of Mali and Burkina Faso said that "any military intervention against Niger will be considered as a declaration of war against

Burkina Faso and Mali."

Col. Abdoulaye Maiga, Mali's state minister for territorial administration and decentralization, read the statement on Malian state TV Monday evening. The two countries also denounced the ECOWAS economic sanctions as "illegal, illegitimate and inhumane" and refused to apply them.

ECOWAS suspended all commercial and financial transactions between its member states and Niger, as well as freezing Nigerien assets held in regional central banks. Niger relies heavily on foreign aid, and sanctions could further impoverish its more than 25 million people.

Mali and Burkina Faso have each undergone two coups since 2020, as soldiers overthrew governments claiming they could do a better job fighting increasing jihadi violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. ECOWAS has sanctioned both countries and suspended them from the bloc, but never threatened to use force.

Also on Sunday, Guinea,

another country under military rule since 2021, issued a statement in support of Niger's junta and urged ECOWAS to "come to its senses."

"The sanctions measures advocated by ECOWAS, including military intervention, are an option that would not be a solution to the current problem, but would lead to a human disaster whose consequences could extend beyond Niger's borders," said Ibrahim Sory Bangoura, general of the brigade, in a statement from the ruling party. He added that Guinea would not apply the sanctions.

Niger's coup will embolden jihadi violence, increase recruitment across the country and threaten regional stability, a former jihadi member said last week. Moussa Boubacar, a former member of the Islamic State group, said the military overthrow is exactly what the jihadis want because it will distract and weaken the army. "Jihadis are very supportive of this coup that happened in Niger, because it will allow them to become very strong," he said. Boubacar, who spoke to

the AP in Niamey, is part of a nationwide program to bring back jihadis, reintegrate them into society and use their help in counterterrorism efforts.

It was spearheaded by Bazoum when he was minister of interior and is intended as an alternative to a military solution to stem violence across the country. The AP cannot verify that Boubacar actively fought for the Islamic State.

In anticipation of the ECOWAS decision Sunday, thousands of pro-junta supporters took to the streets in Niamey, denouncing France, waving Russian flags along with signs reading "Down with France" and supporting Russian President Vladimir Putin and telling the international community to stay away.

There has been no clear explanation of the references to Russia, but some demonstrators regard the country as symbolising their anti-Western feelings.

Protesters also burned down a door and smashed windows at the French Embassy before the Nigerien army dispersed them.

# Suu Kyi's prison sentences reduced

AP ■ BANGKOK

Myanmar's military-led government has reduced the prison sentences of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a clemency connected to a religious holiday in the Buddhist-majority country, state media said on Tuesday. Former President Win Myint also had his sentence reduced as part of the clemency granted to more than 7,000 prisoners.

But Suu Kyi, 78, still must serve a total of 27 years out of the 33 she was originally imprisoned for.

The head of Myanmar's military council, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, granted the clemency order to reduce the sentences in five cases against Suu Kyi in which she was convicted for violating coronavirus restrictions, illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies and sedition, according to a report on state MRTV.

She was initially sentenced for 19 offenses that her supporters and rights group say were attempts to discredit her and legitimise the 2021 army takeover while preventing her return to politics.

The separate statement said that former president Win Myint was also pardoned for two offenses he was convicted for, which were violating coronavirus restrictions and sedition, cutting four years from his 12-year combined jail term. Win Myint was initially sentenced for a total of eight offenses.

The military's True News Information Team sent video footage to journalists in which the spokesperson for the ruling military council Maj Gen Zaw Min Tun can be seen answering reporters' questions and saying he has not received any information about the reports that Suu Kyi has already been transferred from prison to a residence in the capital Naypyitaw.

"I haven't heard anything about it," Zaw Min Tun told journalists on Tuesday.

News of her transfer to house arrest was reported last week but not officially confirmed.

The clemency was announced a day after Myanmar's military extended the state of emergency it imposed when it seized power



from Suu Kyi's elected government 2 1/2 years ago, forcing a further delay in elections it promised when it took over.

Several of Suu Kyi's cases are awaiting final appeals.

Min Aung Hlaing pardoned a total of 7,749 prisoners and commuted the death sentences of others to commemorate the day the Buddha gave his first sermon, the MRTV report said.

The army leader also granted amnesty to 125 foreign prisoners and 22 members of ethnic armed groups, it added. The announcement said he dropped cases against 72 people connected to ethnic armed groups.

It wasn't immediately clear if any of the released prisoners included the thousands of political detainees locked up for opposing military rule.

The justice ministry of the shadow National Unity Government, which views itself as the country's legitimate administrative body, called on the country's military rulers to immediately release all detained political prisoners including Suu Kyi, saying they were unjustly arrested and sentenced.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners — a rights monitoring organisation — 24,123 people have been arrested in Myanmar since the army takeover. At least 3,857 civilians have been killed by security forces in the same period, the group says.

MRTV quoted acting president Myint Swe as saying "it was necessary" to extend the state of emergency for another six months because there is still a lot of work to be done to return the country to "normalcy" and time is needed to prepare for an election.

# UAE, UN body sign Host Country Pact

**Dubai (PTI):** The UAE, which holds the COP28 presidency, and the UNFCCC have signed the Host Country Agreement, strengthening their joint commitment to inclusivity and transparency at the summit to foster solidarity and transformative progress across the climate agenda. The Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will host the 28th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 28), with a view to building on previous successes and paving the way for future ambition to effectively tackle the global challenge of climate change. The Host Country Agreement, signed by COP28 President-Designate Dr Sultan Al Jaber and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary Simon Stiell during a meeting in Abu Dhabi, puts in place the necessary legal basis for this year's UN Climate Summit, said the joint statement.

# Russia accuses Ukraine of drone attack

AP ■ TALLINN (ESTONIA)

Russian authorities early on Tuesday accused Kyiv of yet another attack on Moscow and its surroundings with drones, one of which hit a building in the capital that was damaged by a drone just days ago in a similar attack early on Sunday. Russian officials have claimed that the intensified attacks on the capital region reflect failures in Ukraine's counteroffensive, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said over the weekend that "the war is gradually coming back to Russian territory," but stopped short of taking responsibility of the attacks.

The repeated drone strikes underscore Moscow's vulnerability as Russia's war in Ukraine drags into its 18th month.

The Russian Defence Ministry said in the early hours of Tuesday that it shot down two Ukrainian drones outside Moscow and jammed another, sending it crashing into a skyscraper in the Moscow City business district and damaging the building's facade. Moscow



Firefighters and a police officer stand next to a damaged building in the "Moscow City" business district after a reported drone attack in Moscow, Russia on Tuesday

Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said the drone crashed into the same building that was damaged in a similar attack early on Sunday. IQ-Quarter, located 7.2 kilometres (4.5 miles) from the Kremlin, contains the offices of several government agencies, including, reportedly, the headquarters of Russia's Ministry for Economic Development. Sobyanin said the Tuesday attack didn't result in any casualties. It wasn't clear why the same build-

ing was hit twice in a row. In both incidents, the Russian military said the drones that hit the skyscraper were jammed before crashing.

Zelenskyy's advisor Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted that Moscow "is rapidly getting used to a full-fledged war, which, in turn, will soon finally move to the territory of the authors of the war" to collect all their debts, without confirming or denying Kyiv's involvement in the attack.

# \$3.9 bn UN humanitarian appeal for Ukraine only 30% funded, says Official

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The USD 3.9 billion humanitarian appeal for war-torn Ukraine is less than 30 per cent funded as the country starts preparing for a second winter with more residential buildings damaged and destroyed and thousands of people homeless following the collapse of the Kakhovka dam, the country's UN humanitarian coordinator said on Monday. Denise Brown told a virtual news conference from Kyiv that 17 million Ukrainians need aid and the U.N. is targeting between 11 million and 12 million — but funding is becoming a serious issue. A report last week from the U.N. humanitarian office said lack of funding "is ham-

pering operations, adding to the challenges imposed by insecurity and other obstacles."

By the end of June, it said, the U.N. and its humanitarian partners reached 7.3 million people but in some parts of Ukraine's south, east and north, more than 25% of targeted people couldn't be reached "due to a combination of funding shortages and other operational challenges."

Brown stressed that winter starts early in Ukraine and a top priority is ensuring shelter for people who have lost their homes this year.

Another priority is the growing need for psycho-social support for people who have struggled through 17 months of war, she said.

# US officials in talks with Taliban to address Af crisis

**Washington (PTI):** A group of senior American diplomats met representatives from the Taliban and technocratic professionals during which they discussed critical issues concerning Afghanistan's well-being and humanitarian crisis, the State Department said.

The interaction took place in Doha on July 30 and July 31. The US delegation was led by Special Representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West along with Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights, Rina Amiri, and Chief of the US Mission to Afghanistan, Karen Decker.

According to a media release, the meeting focused on critical issues concerning Afghanistan's well-being and humanitarian crisis, with the US delegation strongly emphasising the need to build mutual trust and confidence to support the Afghan people. Deep concern was expressed about the ongoing humanitarian situation, and

a commitment to supporting aid organisations and United Nations bodies in delivering humanitarian assistance based on ethical principles was reaffirmed, it said.

Notably, US officials raised urgent concerns regarding the deteriorating human rights situation, particularly the rights of women, girls, and vulnerable communities. The Taliban was urged to reverse policies related to detentions, media restrictions, and religious practices, with a strong emphasis on upholding human rights. The United States firmly stood by the Afghan people's demands for their rights to be respected and their voices to be heard in shaping the future of their nation, the State Department said on Monday. Furthermore, the meeting included essential talks with representatives from the Afghan Central Bank and the Afghan Ministry of Finance, focusing on the Afghan economy.

# US imposes sanctions on ISIS supporters in Maldives

**Washington (PTI):** The US has imposed sanctions on 20 individuals and 29 companies for providing financial support to operations of ISIS and al-Qaeda terrorist groups in the Maldives. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday that the aim of these designations is to deter and disrupt financial and other forms of support for terrorist activities within the Maldives.

Among those named in the sanctions are 18 ISIS and ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) facilitators and two al-Qaeda operatives, along with 29 associated companies. The targeted individuals and entities have been linked to Mohamad Ameen, a key ISIS-K recruiter who was previously designated by the US in 2019. Some of the designated individuals have been involved in attacks against journalists.

# Judge rejects Trump attempt to derail Georgia polls investigation

AP ■ ATLANTA

A judge on Monday rejected an attempt by former President Donald Trump to keep a Georgia district attorney from prosecuting him and from using certain evidence gathered in her investigation into potential illegal meddling in the 2020 election in the state.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney didn't mince words in his nine-page ruling, which said Trump lacked the legal grounds to bring the challenge before any indictment has been filed in the case. Any harm alleged by Trump and by Cathy Latham, a Republican fake elector from Georgia who had joined his motion, is "either insufficient or else speculative and unrealized," the judge wrote.

The alleged harms "are insufficient because, while being the subject (or even target) of a



highly publicized criminal investigation is likely an unwelcome and unpleasant experience, no court ever has held that that status alone provides a basis for the courts to interfere with or halt the investigation," McBurney wrote.

In a caustic footnote, seemingly nodding to Trump's status as the dominant frontrunner for the 2024 Republican nomination for president despite having been indicted twice already, the

judge added: "And for some, being the subject of a criminal investigation can, à la Rumpelstiltskin, be turned into golden political capital, making it seem more providential than problematic."

Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis, an elected Democrat, has strongly suggested that she is likely to seek charges in the case in the coming weeks. While she has not directly said she plans to seek charges against the Republican former president, she has repeatedly said no one is above the law.

Monday's ruling came in response to a motion filed in March by Trump's Georgia-based legal team that said a special grand jury seated to help Willis investigate "involved a constant lack of clarity as to the law, inconsistent applications of basic constitutional protections for individuals being brought before it, and a prosecutor's

office that was found to have an actual conflict, yet continued to pursue the investigation."

The special grand jury did not have the power to indict, but it did issue subpoenas and heard from some 75 witnesses while meeting from May to December last year and issued a final report with recommendations for Willis. Trump attorney Drew Findling did not immediately respond Monday to text and voicemail messages seeking comment. Latham was one of 16 Georgia Republicans who met at the state Capitol in December 2020 and signed a certificate declaring falsely that Trump had won the presidential election and declaring themselves the state's "duly elected and qualified" electors.

Willis last year informed them that they were targets of her investigation, though some have since reached immunity deals with her team.

# US condemns Myanmar gov't extension of emergency

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has denounced the move of Myanmar's ruling junta to extend a state of emergency for another six months, over two years after seizing power in a coup, and said the military regime has unleashed widespread brutality across the country. Myanmar's military-led government has officially postponed an election promised by August this year after extending a state of emergency it imposed in the aftermath of its 2021 coup.

In a statement on state television on Monday, the military cited ongoing violence as the reason for the election delay and extension of emergency for another six months starting on Tuesday.

"The United States is deeply concerned by the Burma military regime's extension of the state of emergency, which comes as the regime plunges the country deeper into violence and instability," US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday. Over the past two and a half years, since the overthrow of a democratically elected government, the regime has unleashed widespread brutality, conducting hundreds of airstrikes, burning tens of thousands of homes, and displacing over 1.6 million people, he said.

"The regime's relentless disregard for the democratic aspirations of the people of Myanmar has prolonged the crisis," the US official said. To hold the regime accountable, the United States remains committed to collaborating with partners and allies, utilising political and economic tools, he said. "Our steadfast call is for an end to violence and atrocities, the release of unjustly detained individuals, ensuring unhindered humanitarian access, seeking justice for survivors, and democratic future for Burma," Miller said.

# Indian-origin author Chetna's debut novel on Booker Prize longlist

PTI ■ LONDON



London-based Indian-origin author Chetna Maroo's debut novel 'Western Lane' is among 13 books to make the cut for the 2023 Booker Prize longlist revealed on Tuesday.

Kenya-born Maroo's novel, set within the context of the British Gujarati milieu, has been praised by the Booker judges for its use of the sport of squash as a metaphor for complex human emotions. It revolves around the story of an 11-year-old girl named Gopi and her bonds with her family.

"Skillfully deploying the sport of squash as both context and metaphor, 'Western Lane' is a deeply evocative debut about a family grappling with grief, conveyed through crystalline

language which reverberates like the sound of a ball hit clean and hard... with a close echo," said the Booker Prize judging panel, chaired by twice Booker-shortlisted Canadian novelist Esi Edugyan.

'Western Lane' is one of four debut novels that make up this year's so-called "Booker Dozen" of 13 longlisted books, alongside 'If I Survive You' by Jonathan

Escoffery, 'Pearl' by Siân Hughes and 'All the Little Bird-Hearts' by Viktoria Lloyd-Barlow. Sebastian Barry's 'Old God's Time', Paul Harding's 'The Other Eden', Ayobami Adebayo's 'A Spell of Good Things', Paul Lynch's 'Prophet Song', Martin Macinnes' 'In Ascension', Tan Twan Eng's 'The House of Doors', Paul Murray's 'The Bee Sting', Sarah Bernstein's 'Study for Obedience', and Elaine Feeney's 'How to Build a Boat' make up the rest of the longlist.

The 13 books, with authors spanning Malaysia, Nigeria, Ireland, Canada, the US and the UK, explore universal and topical themes — from deeply moving personal dramas to tragicomic family sagas, from the effects of climate change to the oppression of minorities, and

from scientific breakthroughs to competitive sport.

"The list is defined by its freshness — by the irreverence of new voices, by the iconoclasm of established ones," said Edugyan.

All 13 novels cast new light on what it means to exist in our time, and they do so in original and thrilling ways. Their range is vast, both in subject and form: they shocked us, made us laugh, filled us with anguish, but above all, they stayed with us. This is a list to excite, challenge, delight, a list to bring wonder. The novels are small revolutions, each seeking to energise and awaken the language. Together — whether historical or contemporary — they offer startling portraits of the current," she said.

# Spore witnesses growing interest from Indian nurses

**Singapore (PTI):** Singapore is seeing a growing interest from nurses in India to work in the city-state as it grapples to combat the issue of manpower crisis in the nursing industry, according to a media report on Tuesday. The development came as Singapore looks to add about 4,000 new nurses to the workforce by year-end, with two-thirds of them from overseas, the Channel News Asia reported. At least one recruitment agency, Dynamic Health Staff, has seen four times more foreign candidates, mostly from India, who are keen to work here in July compared to January, the report said. Better pay packages, perks are among the reasons why Singapore is witnessing more Indian nurses interested in moving there.

# Taiwan amends laws on sexual harassment amid recent #MeToo wave

**Taipei (Taiwan) (AP):** Taiwan amended three laws governing sexual harassment in a special session of the legislature, after a wave of #MeToo accusations hit the island in June.

The changes approved on Monday include higher penalties and longer periods for victims to come forward and report an incident to authorities. The changes are an attempt to address the issues raised by the recent accusations of sexual violence in Taiwan.

Taiwan has three laws governing sexual harassment: one for the workplace, one for schools and one that covers spheres outside those two

domains. Under the workplace law, employers can now be fined up to 1 million New Taiwan Dollars (USD 31,680) if they fail to address sexual harassment complaints. Employers are also required to report cases to the local division of their labour department.

The education law, amended last Friday, explicitly makes it illegal for educators to have a romantic relationship with students under the age of 18. Further, principals and teachers who fail to report to the Ministry of Education a sexual harassment allegation within 24 hours can be fined.

# China will always stand with Pak: Xi

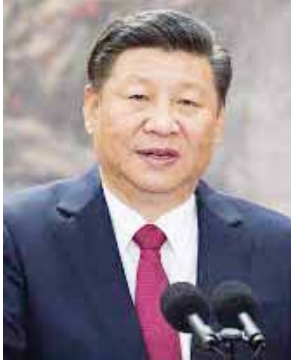
PTI ■ BEIJING

President Xi Jinping has sought to project an upbeat picture of the impact of the CPEC projects in Pakistan, saying the China-funded venture is a “vivid testament” to their “ironclad friendship” and vowed to stand firmly with its all-weather ally.

China will continue to work with Pakistan to take their strategic ties to new heights, Xi said as the two countries celebrated the 10th anniversary of the launch of the ambitious CPEC infrastructure projects in Islamabad, a day after a major suicide bombing took place in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

In his congratulatory message to the ‘Decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor’ (CPEC) celebrations event held in Islamabad on Monday, Xi said the USD 60 billion CPEC infrastructure programme is an “important pioneering project” of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

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.

The event was attended by Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, who is on a three-day visit to Pakistan.

“China will work with Pakistan to aim for high-standard, sustainable and livelihood-enhancing outcomes and further build the CPEC into an exemplary project of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation,” Xi said.

“Since its launch in 2013, China and Pakistan have been advancing CPEC under the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and

shared benefits, and have achieved a number of early harvests,” he was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency. Xi, also the General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China, said the CPEC has added new impetus to the economic and social development of Pakistan and laid a good foundation for regional connectivity and integration.

He said the project is a “vivid testament to the all-weather friendship between China and Pakistan”, and provides an important underpinning for building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Stressing that China and Pakistan will continue to improve overall planning and expand and deepen cooperation, Xi said no matter how the international landscape may change, China will always stand firmly with Pakistan, the report said.

“China and Pakistan will continue to work hand in hand and forge ahead in solidarity to carry forward the ironclad friendship, coordinate develop-

ment and security,” Xi, also the general secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China, said.

He said the two countries will continue to “pursue the cooperation of higher standards, broader scope and greater depth, and take the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to new heights, so as to make an even greater contribution to peace and prosperity in the two countries and the broader region”.

The key agreement for the CPEC projects was agreed in 2013 but it was formally launched when President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in 2015. The BRI was launched by Chinese President Xi in 2013. It aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.

The BRI is seen as an attempt by China to further its influence abroad with infrastructure projects funded by Chinese investments all over the world. The initiative also led to allegations of smaller countries reeling under mounting Chinese debt after Sri Lanka

gave its Hambantota port in a debt swap to China in 2017 on a 99-year lease.

The expansion of CPEC, which President Xi has described as an “exemplary project” of the multi-billion-dollar BRI, is at risk because of an uptick in terrorist attacks in Pakistan, according to analysts. Pakistan officials say Chinese companies have built about USD 25 billion worth of mostly power generation and logistical infrastructure and the overall value of projects scheduled for completion by 2030 is estimated at USD 62 billion.

Ahead of the celebration of the 10th anniversary, Pakistan witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks, with the latest being a suicide bombing at a political rally on Sunday that killed 54 people, raising concerns in Beijing.

The CPEC’s 10th-anniversary celebrations on Monday were kept simple to mourn those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Bajaur district on Sunday and cultural events planned for the event were cancelled.

# May 9 violence well-planned by govt to crush party: Khan

PTI ■ LAHORE



9 violence, the police backed by the military launched a crackdown on the PTI and arrested 10,000 party workers, including women. Over 100 have been handed over to the military for their trial under the Army Act.

The PTI contests that its members were not involved in the attacks, but the government and military reject the claims and say they have “irrefutable evidence” of their involvement.

“In an increasingly desperate bid to suppress PTI, this regime is stooping to new abysmal lows each day, and there appears to be no respite in sight as the law of the jungle prevails in the country,” Khan said.

Khan is also facing numerous cases related to attacks on military installations. Currently, he is facing over 150 cases related to terrorism, murder and blasphemy. He is reportedly under virtual house arrest at his private residence.

The former premier cited the judgment of a court in which the judge termed involving him in a criminal case “a ridiculous way to implicate a person clearly reflecting malafide and ulterior motive”.

Khan said the government and its handlers (military establishment) are blatantly using “collective punishment” on PTI workers men “to enforce a reign of terror”.

Interestingly, in an interview to Geo TV on Sunday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the PTI chief was the mastermind of the May 9 violence and it was aimed at toppling the military leadership.

Khan was ousted from power in April last year after losing a no-confidence vote in his leadership, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China and Afghanistan.

# UN chief flays suicide blast in Pak

New York (PTI): UN chief Antonio Guterres has strongly condemned the suicide bombing at a political convention of a hardline Islamist party in northwest Pakistan and called on authorities to bring those responsible for the attack to justice.

At least 54 people were killed and over 100 injured in the attack on Sunday when more than 400 members of the conservative Jamiat Ulema Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) party, known for its links to hardline political Islam, had gathered for a meeting under a large tent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Khar town, which borders Afghanistan.

The banned terrorist group Islamic State (ISIS) has claimed responsibility for the suicide attack. UN Secretary-General Guterres has extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and wished a prompt recovery to the wounded, UN Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters in New York on Monday.

# ‘Pakistan sees 18 suicide attacks in first half of 2023’

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan, which is grappling with a surge in suicide attacks, reported 18 such incidents in the first seven months of 2023 that killed more than 200 people and left over 450 others injured, according to a think tank report. The report was published by the Pak-is-tan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), a day after an Islamic State suicide bomber triggered a powerful blast that killed at least 54 people at a political convention of a hardline Islamist party in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Pakistan experienced 15 suicide attacks in the entirety of 2022, significantly less than the number of suicide attacks witnessed in the first seven months of this year, Dawn News cited Monday’s report by the Islamabad-based think tank. The report said the most severely affected region was the restive tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, accounting for half of the total suicide attacks in 2023. The nine attacks in the



area claimed around 60 lives, while over 150 others sustained injuries, the report said. However, Sunday’s attack during a Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl) JUI-F gathering was the deadliest in the tribal belt this year so far.

The attack on the JUI-F rally was claimed by the banned militant group Islamic State. “Mainland” Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faced its own share of devastation, with four suicide attacks causing the deaths of more than 110 people and leaving 245 injured, the report said.

Balochistan, which also experienced a troubling wave of violence, encountered at least four suicide attacks within the first seven months of 2023, killing 14 people and injuring 27 others.

# Palestinian opens fire in West Bank settlement; five killed

AP ■ MAALE ADUMIM

A Palestinian gunman opened fire in an Israeli settlement east of Jerusalem on Tuesday, wounding at least five people before being shot and killed, Israeli police said.

The shooting outside a shopping mall in the sprawling Jewish settlement of Maale Adumim, in the occupied West Bank, was the latest in the most violent stretch of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the territory in nearly two decades. The Palestinian assailant, dressed as a security guard in a neon vest, was shot and killed by an off-duty Israeli police officer in Maale Adumim who had heard the gunshots and rushed to the scene. The Islamic militant group Hamas praised the attack as “heroic” but stopped short of claiming responsibility.

Health officials did not immediately identify the Palestinian, whose body was laying in a black plastic body bag on a sidewalk. Israeli media named him as Mohannad al-Mazraa from Azariya, a West Bank town just east of Jerusalem. The attacker wound-



Israeli Security are seen deployed at the site of shooting attack in West Bank Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim on Tuesday.

ed at least six people, Israel’s rescue service said. The men, in moderate to serious condition, ranged in age from 14 to 40 years old, it added. Fighting between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank intensified early last year when Israel launched nightly raids into Palestinian areas in the West Bank in response to a spate of Palestinian attacks against Israelis. The violence has spiked this year, with more than 150 Palestinians killed by Israeli fire since the start of 2023 in the West Bank and east

Jerusalem, according to a tally by The Associated Press. Israel says most of those killed were militants, but stone-throwing youths protesting the raids and others not involved in the confrontations have also been killed. At least 26 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks against Israelis during that time. Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war, along with the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. Palestinians seek those territories for their hoped-for independent state.

# 11 dead, 27 missing in flooding around Beijing: State media

AP ■ BEIJING

Chinese state media report 11 people have died and 27 are missing amid flooding in the mountains surrounding the capital Beijing. Days of heavy rains have prompted authorities to close train stations and evacuate people in vulnerable communities to school gyms, state broadcaster CCTV reported Tuesday. Homes have been flooded, roads torn apart and cars piled into stacks.

The level of rainfall is highly unusual for Beijing, which generally enjoys a moderate, dry climate. Flooding in other parts of northern China that rarely see such large amounts of rain have led to scores of deaths.

Seasonal flooding hits large parts of China every summer, particularly in the semitropical south. However, some northern regions this year have reported the worst floods in 50 years.

In early July, at least 15 people were killed by floods in the southwestern region of



Chongqing, and some 5,590 people in the far northwestern province of Liaoning had to be evacuated. In the central province of Hubei, rainstorms have trapped residents in their vehicles and homes.

China’s deadliest and most destructive floods in recent history were in 1998, when 4,150 people died, most of them along the Yangtze River.

In 2021, more than 300 people died in flooding in the central province of Henan. Record rainfall inundated the provincial capital of Zhengzhou on July 20 that year, turning streets into rushing rivers and flooding at least part of a subway line.

# Musk threatens to sue researchers over hateful tweets study

AP ■ WASHINGTON

X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, has threatened to sue a group of independent researchers whose research documented an increase in hate speech on the site since it was purchased last year by Elon Musk. An attorney representing the social media site wrote to the Center for Countering Digital Hate on July 20 threatening legal action over the nonprofit’s research into hate speech and content moderation. The letter alleged that CCDH’s research publications seem intended “to harm

Twitter’s business by driving advertisers away from the platform with incendiary claims.”

Musk is a self-professed free speech absolutist who has welcomed back white supremacists and election deniers to the platform, which he renamed X earlier this month. But the billionaire has at times proven sensitive about critical speech directed at him or his companies.

The center is a nonprofit with offices in the U.S. and United Kingdom. It regularly publishes reports on hate speech, extremism or harmful behavior on social media platforms like X,

TikTok or Facebook. The organization has published several reports critical of Musk’s leadership, detailing an increase in anti-LGBTQ hate speech as well as climate misinformation since his purchase. The letter from X’s attorney cited one specific report from June that found the platform failed to remove neo-Nazi and anti-LGBTQ content from verified users that violated the platform’s rules.

In the letter, attorney Alex Spiro questioned the expertise of the researchers and accused the center of trying to harm X’s reputation. The letter also suggested, without evidence, that the

center received funds from some of X’s competitors, even though the center has also published critical reports about TikTok, Facebook and other large platforms. “CCDH intends to harm Twitter’s business by driving advertisers away from the platform with incendiary claims,” Spiro wrote, using the platform’s former name. Imran Ahmed, the center’s founder and CEO, told the AP on Monday that his group has never received a similar response from any tech company, despite a history of studying the relationship between social media, hate speech and extremism.

# Typhoon Khanun lashes Japanese islands

Tokyo (AP): A powerful typhoon approached Japan’s southwestern island of Okinawa on Tuesday, lashing the region with strong winds and high waves and forcing transportation to halt and stores to close.

Slow-moving Typhoon Khanun, which means jackfruit in Thai, was heading northwest at speeds of 15 kph (9 mph) on Tuesday night, packing surface winds of up to 180 kph (111 mph). It was at sea southeast of Okinawa’s main island, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

The city office in the Okinawa prefectural capital of Naha was closed due to violent

winds, while supermarket chains were either shut or operating under shorter hours.

Video on NHK public television showed fallen trees on the streets in Naha. No injuries were reported. Hundreds of flights into and out of the Naha airport, including more than a dozen international flights connecting to Seoul, Hong Kong, Taipei and Shanghai, were cancelled, according to the airport.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mrs. Manorama Sharma W/o Krishanpal Sharma the owner of a Freehold residential plot, measuring 56 sq. yards i.e. 46.82 sq. meter, out of Khirana No. 519, situated at Village Yakuipur, Mayi, Tehsil Medini, District Ghazabad, U.P., vide registered sale deed dated 25.02.2011 Book No. 01, Vol No 4309, Document No 2599 sale deed dated 25.02.2011 executed by Mr. Guver Singh So Bhuteram in favor of Mrs. Mona Sharma u/Pri: W/o Vipin Kumar Sharma, sale deed lost that Mrs. Manorma Sharma informed to Modinagar Police on dated 26.07.2023 All Persons are hereby informed that Mrs. Manorma Sharma & Mr. Krishanpal Sharma are mortgaging the said property with KIFS Housing Finance Limited. General public/informed that if anybody has any charge/interestable in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 15 days of the present.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that Late Smt. Punam Saxena who is the allottee of Flat No. 108/1001, measuring 1983 sq. feet, situated in the building called Green Parc Crescent Parc Phase-II, Sector 92, Gurugram, Haryana-122605 died on 01.06.2021. My client Mr. Kumar Vaibhav, Son of Late Shri Gopal Narayan Saxena and Late Smt. Punam Saxena, resident of 46 Ashoka Park Extn., East Punjabi Bagh, Punjabi Bagh, West Delhi, Delhi-110026 intend to apply for the transfer of the said flat in his favour being the legal heir and request for allotment of said flat in his name.

If any person is having any objection against the transfer of above said flat, he/she can submit objection to the Sare Gurugram P.T. Ltd. having its registered office at E-7/12, LGF, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017 along with supporting documents within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice. Any claim received after the aforesaid period shall be deemed to have waived and the transfer will be completed without taking any reference to such claim.

Ujjwal Bhardwaj Advocate Enrolment No. D/500119220 Mobile No. 8010698329

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all that I, Ashok Kumar S/D/W/O late Sh. Smt. Ram R/o DDA, Janta Flat No 775-A Double Storey, Block and Pocket-02, Madipur, PaschimPuri, Delhi. The Original Documents Title Possession Letter Vide File No/J25/582/1974/HB of the above said property has been lost. An FIR/NCR to this effect has lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR NO. 575344/2023. SO NO 450/2014 Delhi Police. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/ph.0205505510. The person claiming any right, interest objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to: The Assistant Director, D-Block Housing Janta Vikas Sadan, DDA INA, New Delhi.

All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage(equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise however, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vashi, Gz., U.P., Mob. 9810698351

# UK declares ISIS atrocities against Iraq’s Yazidi minority as genocide

AP ■ LONDON



A girl from the minority Yazidi sect, fleeing the violence in the Iraqi town of Sinjar, rests at the Iraqi-Syrian border crossing in Fishkhabour, Dohuk province.

Britain’s government on Tuesday formally declared that atrocities committed by the Islamic State group against the Yazidi people in Iraq were acts of genocide. The UK Foreign Office said the government’s official acknowledgement came after a recent landmark ruling by the German Federal Court of Justice, which found a former member of IS, also known by its Arabic acronym Daesh, guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. Britain previously gave official acknowledgement of four other instances in which genocide occurred, including the Holocaust, in Cambodia during the 1970s under the Khmer Rouge, the 1994 mass ethnic killings in Rwanda; and the 1995 massacre of men and boys in and near the Bosnian town of Srebrenica. “The Yazidi popula-

astated,” he said. Tuesday’s decision was announced ahead of events in Baghdad marking nine years since the Islamic State group began atrocities targeting the Yazidi minority, considered heretics by the militant group.

The Islamic State declared a self-styled caliphate in a large swath of territory in Syria and Iraq that it seized in 2014. The extremist group attacked the heartland of the Yazidi community at the foot of Sinjar Mountain that year, killing hundreds of Yazidis and abducting thousands, more than half of them women and girls. A regional court in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2021 sentenced Taha Al-J, whose full name wasn’t released because of privacy rules, to life imprisonment over the death of a 5-year-old Yazidi girl he had purchased as a slave and then chained up in the hot sun to die.

# Greece plans tougher arson penalties after wildfires

Athens (Greece): Greek authorities are planning tougher penalties for arson — with fines to be increased to 10 times the current level — following a spate of major wildfires that have already caused more damage than the 2022 annual total. Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias said details of the measures would be announced next month, but added that fines for causing fires deliberately or because of negligent behaviour would match penalties introduced two years ago for the abuse of animals. Those carry a fine of up to 50,000 euros and a maximum jail sentence of 10 years. “I am obliged to say that the next fire season will find us in a different position, it’s not just the penalties — the fines will increase tenfold Kikilias said on Monday.

कार्यालय बरिष्ठ एनक्वैर, विस्तृत लॉन्ड-डिजिटल  
**UPSIDA**  
उपग्रह राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण  
टीहोस सिटी, गाजियाबाद | E-Mail- ed2@upsida.co.in  
अपेक्षकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना  
एनएडएआर सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के औद्योगिक क्षेत्र में विद्युत संबंधी विकास कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों / सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों / निगमों / प्राधिकरणों / परिवहनों / नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत फर्मों / ठेकेदारों से अपेक्षकालीन ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।  
क्रम कार्य का नाम कार्य की राशि (लक्ष में)  
1. Upgradation of street lights network along with AMC for 03 years under AIM at I.A. CDF, Aligarh 67.43  
निविदा तिथि: 02.08.2023 को 11:00 बजे से तिथि: 09.08.2023 को 18:00 बजे तक अपेक्षक की जा सकती है, जिसे तिथि: 10.08.2023 को 11:00 बजे या इसके पश्चात खोला जायेगा। निविदाधारकों द्वारा राख्य पत्रों की मूल प्रतियां निविदा खोलने के बाद 03 कार्य दिवस में पंजीकृत कार्यालय/प्रशासनिक रूप से कार्यलय में जमा की जा सकती हैं।  
नोट: 1. निविदाधारक अपनी निविदाओं में समान कर वर औद्योगिक/डीएच सहित दूर अंकि करें।  
अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्यों हेतु, निविदाधारकों को निविदा अपेक्षक करते समय "विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग" उपग्रह शासन, लखनऊ में क. श्री. अनुमोदित लाइसेंस अपेक्षक करना अनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सार्वजनिक विस्तृत जानकारी website: www.upsida.co.in पर स्थिति तिक संपूर्णतः की website: https://etender.up.nic.in पर देखी जा सकती है।  
बरिष्ठ प्रबंधक, उपग्रह/औद्योगिक, गाजियाबाद

**Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar**  
Engineering Department  
Tender Notice  
Tender Reference No. GNDU/ENG/2023/06/01-02  
The Engineering Department of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar invites online bids for 2 Civil Works 1. Const. of International Boys Hostel & Mess. 2. Const. of Girls Hostel.  
Closing Date & Time: 11-08-2023 upto 04:00 PM For Sr. No. 1 22-08-2023 upto 04:00 PM For Sr. No. 2  
For details log onto: www.eproc.punjab.gov.in  
Note: Any corrigendum/ Addendum to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.  
Assistant Engineer (Civil)  
Engineering Department  
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar  
NA/12/17932/2023/26392 Dated CHD :- 8/1/2023

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given that my client Sachendra Pal Singh is in process to purchase (avaing loan from SFL) the Second Floor of Property Bearing No. C-59 measuring 90 Sq. Mtrs., Situated in Residential colony Swarn Jayantiapuram Ghaziabad Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad from Nandam Tyagi & Rajni. And whereas they have lost the following original document pertaining to the said property read with FIR dated 13.11.2022  
1. Original Allotment Letter issued by GDA in favour of Abhijit Chaudhary.  
2. Original Possession Letter dated 28.07.2006 issued by GDA in favour of Abhijit Chaudhary.  
3. Original Sale Deed dated 25.03.2004 executed by GDA in favour of Abhijit Chaudhary. (Doc. no. 2895)  
4. Original Sale Deed dated 28.06.2008 executed by Abhijit Chaudhary in favour of Sidhir Kumar. (Doc. no. 5003)  
5. Original Sale Deed dated 23.03.2010 executed by Sudhir Kumar in favour of Manvendra & Jagdish Kumar. (Doc. no. 2133)  
6. Original Sale Deed dated 01.02.2011 executed by Manvendra & Jagdish Kumar in favour of Neelam & Rajni. (Doc. no. 897)  
7. Original Mutation letter dated 24.05.2011 issued by GDA in favour of Neelam & Rajni.  
All persons having any objection against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise however, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.  
Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vashi, Gz., U.P., Mob. 9810698351

# ‘E-commerce industry to create 7L gig jobs’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The e-commerce industry is likely to create 7,00,000 gig jobs in the second half of this year as businesses are recruiting temporary workers to ensure best customer experience during the festive period, according to a TeamLease report.

The country's e-commerce companies are gearing up to meet consumer demands during the annual shopping frenzy in the run-up to the festive season, and this surge is projected to generate almost 7,00,000 gig jobs in the second half of 2023, the staffing company said in its report on Tuesday.

This year's festive hiring is anticipated to witness a 25 per cent increase in gig jobs compared to the same period last year, reflecting the sector's optimistic outlook and aspirations to boost positive sentiments.

The demand for gig workers during the festive season has been consistently rising, not only in tier-1 cities like Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Chennai but also in tier-2 and tier-3 cities like Vadodara, Pune and Coimbatore.

The proportion of demand for roles such as warehouse operations, last-mile delivery personnel and call centre operators is higher in tier-2 and tier-3 centres than in tier-1 cities.



This is primarily due to the recovery in rural demand expected on the back of easing inflationary pressures.

Balasubramanian A, vice-president and business head of TeamLease Services, said, "Over the last five years, we have seen an impressive 20 per cent year-on-year increase in the demand for gig workers, and this upward trend is expected to persist for the next 2-3 years, especially in the thriving e-commerce category."

With the festive season hiring opening up in July, the e-commerce sector alone has 200,000 open positions, which will eventually increase and reach about 7,00,000 by December, Balasubramanian said.

According to industry

reports, it is anticipated that the country's gig workforce will reach 2.35 crore by 2029-30.

"As we move forward, we look forward to a future where the gig economy plays a pivotal role, and we are committed to supporting this dynamic workforce for the e-commerce sector in their journey towards success," Balasubramanian said.

Furthermore, data shows that the surge in gig/temporary workforce hiring is not limited to the e-commerce sector. Several other industries are also ramping up their recruitment efforts to meet the festive season's demands.

Retail and logistics are among the prominent industries that are expanding their workforce to meet the increased consumer activity.

# Markets settle lower in volatile trade

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex pared early gains to end lower on Tuesday, pressured by selling in index majors Reliance Industries, Powergrid and ICICI Bank amid a mixed trend in global equity markets. Besides, continuous foreign fund outflows also dented investor sentiment, traders said.

However, strong buying in HDFC Bank, Infosys, NTPC and TCS restricted the decline. In a highly volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 68.36 points or 0.10 per cent to settle at 66,459.31. During the day, it hit a high of 66,658.12 and a low of 66,388.26.

The NSE Nifty fell 20.25 points or 0.10 per cent to end at 19,733.55. "There was caution amongst the investors as markets exhibited a range-bound trend and ended marginally lower ahead of the RBI's monetary policy next week.

"Markets would continue to look for global cues, as the recent rally was too

fast-paced, with valuations getting expensive. Markets will continue to select bouts of profit-taking even as the overall undertone remains bullish," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

Powergrid tumbled over 5 per cent on the Sensex chart, followed by Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India, Reliance Industries, Maruti, Asian Paints, Larsen & Toubro and Bajaj Finance. Powergrid has posted over a 5 per cent decline in consolidated net profit for the quarter ended June 2023. In contrast, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Mahindra & Mahindra, Axis Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and JSW Steel were the biggest gainers. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge dipped 0.23 per cent, while smallcap index climbed 0.50 per cent.

After opening with a positive note, the market showed intraday zig-zag moves within a narrow range for the better part of the session, said Nagaraj Shetti,



Technical Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. Among the indices, Realty fell by 1.78 per cent, services declined by 0.48

per cent, power (0.32 per cent), FMCG (0.21 per cent) and oil & gas (0.17 per cent). IT jumped 1.02 per cent, teck climbed 0.79 per cent, metal (0.75 per cent) and commodities (0.59 per cent).

"Asian stocks ended mixed on Tuesday as investors began to find more cause for cheer over global economic prospects than reasons to worry, even as data showed risks remain. "European markets were lower on Tuesday as investors digested a busy week of earnings and weak Eurozone manufacturing activity in July..." Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo ended with gains, while Hong Kong and Shanghai settled lower. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended in the green on Monday.

Manufacturing sector activities in India moderated for the second straight month in July as rates of expansion in output and new orders eased slightly, a monthly survey said on Tuesday.

# 88% of ₹2,000 notes valued at ₹3.14L crore returned to banks, says RBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As much as 88 per cent of the Rs 2,000 currency notes have either been deposited or exchanged at banks, and only Rs 42,000 crore worth of such notes are with public as on July 31, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Tuesday.

The last date to exchange/deposit Rs 2,000 denomination notes is September 30.

In value terms, Rs 2,000 notes in circulation has come

down to Rs 42,000 crore as on July from Rs 3.56 lakh crore on the day of announcement of withdrawal on May 19.

In a statement, the RBI said out of the total banknotes in Rs 2,000 denomination received back from circulation, about 87 per cent is in the form of deposits and the remaining around 13 per cent has been exchanged into other denomination banknotes.

The central bank, in a surprise move, on May 19



announced withdrawal of Rs 2,000 notes from circulation but gave public time till

September 30 to either deposit such notes in accounts or exchange them at banks.

Unlike the November 2016 demonetisation when old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes were invalidated overnight, the Rs 2,000 notes will continue to be a legal tender till September 30.

The total value of the Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation, which amounted to Rs 3.62 lakh crore on March 31, 2023 had declined to Rs 3.56 lakh crore as at the close of business

on May 19, 2023.

According to the data received from the banks, the total value of Rs 2,000 banknotes received back from circulation is Rs 3.14 lakh crore up to July 31, 2023, the RBI said.

"Consequently, Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation as at the close of business on July 31 stood at Rs 0.42 lakh crore. Thus, 88 per cent of the Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, have since been returned," it said.



# Top 50 wilful defaulters owe ₹87,295 crore to banks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry on Tuesday said top 50 wilful defaulters including Gitanjali Gems Limited, Era Infra Engineering Limited, REI Agro Limited, and ABG Shipyard Limited owe Rs 87,295 crore to banks and financial institutions.

Of this, top 10 wilful defaulters owe Rs 40,825 crore to schedule commercial banks (SCBs), Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said in a written reply in Rajya Sabha. SCBs have written off an aggregate amount of Rs 10,57,326 crore during the last five financial years (RBI provisional data for FY 2022-23), he said.

"The Reserve bank of India (RBI) has apprised that the amount owed by top 50 wilful defaulters in SCBs was Rs 87,295 crore as on March 31, 2023," he said.

Fugitive Mehul Choksi's Gitanjali Gems is the biggest wilful defaulter owing Rs 8,738 crore to banks. It is followed by Era Infra Engineering Limited owing Rs 5,750 crore, REI Agro Limited Rs 5,148 crore, ABG Shipyard Limited Rs 4,774 crore, and Concast Steel and Power Limited Rs 3,911 crore.

Other wilful defaults are Rotomac Global Private Limited Rs 2,894 crore, Winsome Diamonds and Jewellery Limited Rs 2,846 crore, Frost International Limited Rs 2,518 crore, Shri Lakshmi Cotsyn Limited Rs 2,180 crore and Zoom Developers Private Limited Rs 2,066 crore.

Karad said the provision enabling banks to enter into compromise settlement in respect of borrowers categorised

as fraud or wilful defaulter is not a new regulatory instruction and has been the settled regulatory stance for more than fifteen years.

"RBI had advised IBA, vide letter dated May 10, 2007, that, banks may enter into compromise settlement with wilful defaulters/ fraudulent borrowers without prejudice to the criminal proceeding underway against such borrowers and all such cases of compromise settlements should be vetted by Management Committee/Board of banks," he said.

Further, he said, compromise settlement with borrowers classified as wilful defaulters or fraud is also covered in RBI's Master Circular on Wilful Defaulters dated July 1, 2015 and Master Directions on Frauds dated July 1, 2016.

The compromise settlement, however, is not a matter of right for borrower but is a discretion to be exercised by lenders based on their commercial judgements, he said.

As per RBI's circular dated June 8, 2023, he said, regulated entities may undertake compromise settlements or technical write-offs in respect of accounts classified as fraud or wilful defaulter without prejudice to the criminal proceeding underway against such borrowers, and all such proposals need to be approved by the board.

As per inputs received from RBI, he said, the framework prescribes minimum cooling-off period of 12 months as a general prescription for normal cases of compromise settlements, without prejudice to the penal measures applicable in respect of borrowers classified as wilful defaulter.

# Generative AI can displace creative labour; position on copyrights unclear: ASCI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Usage of generative AI tools in advertising can lead to displacement of creative labour, the Advertising Standards Council of India warned on Tuesday. The self regulatory organisation for the industry recommended a few steps to mitigate the impact, including enhancing capabilities of human labour and investing in human upskilling especially on editorial oversight and compliance.

In a white paper produced in association with law firm Khaitan & Co, ASCI said that the accessibility of generative AI services raises concerns about



the potential displacement of creative labour. It said that using AI tools for creating copies of advertisements, marketing materials, and promotional content can be more cost-effective compared to employing copywriters. A slew of companies, including OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google Bard and Adobe Firefly, are offering competitive pricing or even free access during beta testing, it added.

The white paper comes within weeks of a strike by writers in the US over the loss of revenues for them because of the use of AI in creative work.

Meanwhile, the white paper also flagged copyright ownership as a challenge because AI is not recognised as a legal entity in the country currently.

Works or materials solely generated by an AI tool without human involvement may not be eligible for copyright protection under the Indian law, it said, adding that advertisers may not have legal ownership of AI-generated works and may have limited recourse in case of infringement by third parties.

# Hiring for white collar jobs in India falls 19% in July: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hiring for white collar jobs declined 19 per cent in July compared to the year-ago period as many sectors, including FMCG, retail, insurance and education, witnessed cautious recruitment sentiments, according to a report. According to the Naukri JobSpeak Index released on Tuesday, job postings for white collar hiring in July stood at 2,573, down 8 per cent compared to the previous month, and down 19 per cent compared to July 2022.

Naukri JobSpeak is a monthly index representing the state of the country's job market and hiring activity based on new job listings and job-related searches by recruiters on the resume database of Naukri.Com. The IT industry hiring continued to remain an area of concern, with a 46 per cent decline in new jobs created compared to July last year, it said. Besides IT, FMCG, retail, BPO, insurance, and education sectors showed cautious hiring sentiments with a 16-23 per cent decline in new job creation compared to July last year.

# Inclusion of Govt bonds in JP Morgan global index can attract \$200 bn fund inflows: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The inclusion of government bonds in the JP Morgan global bond index can potentially help in attracting USD 150-200 billion of foreign fund inflows in the medium term, says a Wall Street brokerage.

According to a Bank of America Securities report, at around 1 per cent, India has the lowest foreign ownership of the government bonds among its emerging market peers.

The much-delayed inclusion in the JP Morgan government bond index can lead to better fund inflows and which in turn can release lot of money from the banks' mandatory SLR (Statutory Liquidity Ratio) holdings, it added.

According to the report, despite being a major emerging market, India remains the most under-owned market by foreign investors.

Following the example of other emerging markets, it said opening up of local bond markets further to foreign investors can potentially see USD 150-200 billion inflows over the medium term if it draws more active

flows over time and other indices follow suit.

The brokerage said it expects the inclusion to happen sooner than later.

JP Morgan will be reviewing the index next month, raising expectations of India's inclusion in the global indices, the report said and noted that lack of comments from the government indicates little need or political will to make additional concessions this year.

Foreign investors have been increasing their interest in India for many months now and the need for further diversification of index constituents may lead to the index providers going ahead with inclusion, despite frequently cited operational difficulties for smaller investors.

The optimism of the brokerage firm comes from the increase in the securities under the Fully Accessible Route (FAR) to more than USD 380 billion, which is enough to get a final weight of 10 per cent.

Thus, the direct passive flows may total USD 24 billion based on indexed AUM (Assets Under Management) at around USD 240 billion.

# Shriram General Insurance Q1 net profit up by 37%

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Shriram General Insurance Company posted a 37 per cent growth in net profit at Rs 98 crore during the first quarter of FY 24. The insurer on Tuesday said it wrote 13,03,340 policies driven by higher digital selling of traditional and new combo products. About 82 per cent of all its policies now come from online purchases and the company introduced three new products during the quarter, the insurer jointly owned by Shriram Group and Africa's Sanlam Group, said in a statement. Its gross written premium (GWP) stood at Rs 560 crore, a rise of 39 per cent growth over the same period last year. The company's solvency at the end of June 2023 was 4.83 from 4.48 a year ago. It has settled 39,076 claims in Q1 FY24 compared to 33,811 in the year-ago period.

"Our physical approach is the main driver during the quarter. While we remain focussed on existing business streams, we believe newer areas like EV insurance and developing a stream of combo insurance plans will help the market and drive growth for us," Anil Aggarwal, MD and CEO said in the statement. Additionally, the company is looking at expanding into the non-motor segment for SMEs, he added.

# Emami expects 'good growth' in personal care, healthcare businesses

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Emami Ltd vice-chairman and MD Harsha V Agarwal expressed confidence on Tuesday that the company will have "good growth" from its personal care and healthcare businesses in the years ahead, as India's FMCG sector expects to grow at 27.9 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2021 and 2027.

Emami which saw its net profit dipping in the year gone by expects its margins to bounce back on the back of inflation moderating.

"The international business seems to have stabilised and is projected for healthy double-digit growth. We invest for the long-term and we will continue investing across e-commerce, modern trade, international business, people and distribution, etc," Agarwal said in his speech to shareholders at the annual general meeting.

"The outlook at Emami continues to be positive. With inflation moderating, we do not foresee any cost pressures ahead; margins are likely to bounce back during the current year. With the rural outlook continuing to be sound, we are confident of good growth from the personal care and healthcare businesses," he said.

The company stated that one of the key growth drivers in the FMCG sector is the large and



growing population in India, which stands at 1.4 billion people.

Recognising this immense potential market, Emami has undertaken significant projects to target both urban and rural consumers.

Through 'Project Khoj', Emami said it has expanded its direct rural reach, adding over 11,000 villages by March 2023 and a cumulative addition of 20,000 villages since April 2021.

This strategic move is expected to enable Emami to tap into the growing rural market and cater to the needs of consumers with lower incomes and limited access to modern retail channels.

Emami is also leveraging technology to enhance its sales and distribution efforts. With 'Project Sirius', the company has implemented a predictive selling tool, which has widened the product assortments and strengthened its position in the urban market.

"Despite volatile international markets (Russia, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh), the Company's global business grew 20 per cent," Agarwal said.

# GM recalls nearly 900 vehicles with Takata air bag inflators, blames manufacturing problem

AP ■ DETROIT

General Motors is recalling nearly 900 vehicles in the US and Canada with Takata air bag inflators that could explode and hurl shrapnel in a crash.

The recall covers certain Chevrolet Camaro, Sonic and Volt vehicles as well as the Buick Verano, all from the 2013 model year.

The company says in documents posted Tuesday by the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that the driver's front air bag inflator can explode in a crash due to a manufacturing defect.

The inflators are among a group made by Takata that is under investigation by the agency but has not previously been recalled.

Takata used volatile ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion to inflate air bags in a crash. But the chemical can deteriorate over time and explode with too much force, blowing apart a metal canister and spewing shrapnel.

At least 26 people have been killed in the US by the inflators since May of 2009,



and more than 30 have died worldwide including people in Malaysia and Australia. In addition, about 400 people have been injured.

Potential for the dangerous malfunction led to the largest series of auto recalls in US history, with at least 67 million Takata inflators involved. The US government says that millions have not been repaired. About 100 million inflators have been recalled worldwide. The exploding air bags sent Takata Corp of Japan into bankruptcy.

The air bags in the General Motors recall have a moisture-absorbing chemical called a desiccant and were not part of previous recalls. GM says in documents posted by the government that the problem is limited to a specific lot of inflators made by Takata, and that other vehicles are not affected.

**BUSINESS BRIEF**

**10 KW SOLAR UNIT AT DADRI COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE**  
**NOIDA:** A 10 KW solar power unit has been set up at the Community Health Centre in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh. Shrichand Sharma, MLC, inaugurated the plant, established by Volvo Car India in collaboration with ASSOCHAM, in the presence of Nagar Palika chairperson Geeta Pandit. The surplus green energy generated is fed back into the grid, thereby further contributing to sustainability, said Jyoti Malhotra, MD, Volvo Cars India. Deepak Sood, Secretary General of ASSOCHAM, added, "Our partnership in the implementation of a solar power plant is a source of great pride."

**MAHINDRA PASSENGER VEHICLE SALES UP 29% IN JULY**  
**New Delhi:** Mahindra & Mahindra on Tuesday said its passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market increased 29 per cent to 36,205 units in July. The auto major had dispatched 28,053 passenger vehicles in the domestic market in July. The auto major had dispatched 28,053 passenger vehicles in the domestic market in July 2022.



# Marta in tears as Brazil hopes hang in balance

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Football legend Marta was moved to tears Tuesday as the Brazilian reflected on her career and legacy on the eve of what could be her final Women's World Cup appearance. Brazil face Jamaica in Melbourne in their final group match on Wednesday knowing they must win to guarantee they stay in the tournament in Australia and New Zealand.

The 37-year-old Marta — nicknamed "Pele in a skirt" by the late football great — has already said this will be her last World Cup.

She is the all-time leading goal-scorer in World Cups, men's or women's, and if she adds to her tally of 17 she will be the first footballer in history to score at six World Cups.

"You know what's good? When I started there were no idols in women's football," she told reporters on the eve of the match with Jamaica, tears filling her eyes.

"How could there be if you didn't show women's foot-

ball? How could I understand that I would reach the national team and become a reference point?"

"Now I go out on the street and people stop me, parents say to me, 'My daughter adores you, she wants to be just like you.'"

Marta has spent a lifetime overcoming obstacles, from a childhood of poverty to sexism and, more recently, the worst injury of her career.

"It is logical that I am happy to see all this because 20 years ago, in 2003, nobody knew Marta," she added, looking back at how far women's football has come. It is unclear if the attacker, who has never won the World Cup despite all her achievements, will start against Jamaica.

But she could be called off the bench by coach Pia Sundhage if Brazil are chasing the win they so desperately need to stay in the competition.

## 'LETHAL WEAPON'

Jamaica are second behind Group F leaders France going into the last round of games,

and won their first Women's World Cup game in history when they defeated Panama 1-0 last time out.

They were missing the prolific striker Khadija Shaw in the Panama win after she was sent off for a second yellow card in their opening 0-0 draw with France. The 26-year-old Shaw, who scored 31 goals in 30 games for Manchester City last season, will be back to face Brazil and could have a major say in proceedings.

"She's a lethal weapon, she scores goals and is the leading goal-scorer in Jamaica," coach Lorne Donaldson said.

"She's a very good leader and an outstanding footballer." Donaldson, whose side is ranked 43 in the world to Brazil's eight, said his team were the underdogs despite being in a better position to make it out of the group. But he called his players "resilient", adding: "We know Brazil are going to come after us with everything they've got, but we have to be ready."

"We want to stay a little longer."

# US SURVIVE WC SCARE

AFP ■ AUCKLAND

Holders the United States squeezed into the last 16 of the Women's World Cup with a shaky 0-0 draw against debutants Portugal on Tuesday to finish second in Group E behind a rampant Netherlands.

England will hope to have far less trouble when the European champions look to get the draw they need against China to reach the knockouts as Group D winners.

The United States came to Australia and New Zealand as favourites — ahead of England — to win an unprecedented third World Cup in a row.

But they have been nothing like the team that has dominated international women's football for so long and will need to be a lot better if they are to go much farther at the tournament.

Portugal came within inches of the win they needed to progress — and dump out the Americans — when substitute Ana Capeta hit the post in injury time in front of almost 41,000 in Auckland.

But the US held on and are likely to face a Sweden team in the last 16 who thrashed Italy 5-0 last time out.

US coach Vlatko Andonovski attempted to put a positive spin on what was an alarmingly poor performance by the team ranked number one in the FIFA rankings.



# Kerr pep talk inspired Australia into World Cup last 16

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Call to arms by injured superstar Sam Kerr provided the inspiration for Australia's 4-0 drubbing of Canada, with coach Tony Gustavsson saying his team was determined to do her proud.

The Chelsea striker and Matildas captain has yet to kick a ball at the Women's World Cup as she struggles with a calf injury sustained before their opening game.

But her animated presence on the bench helped the team in their statement do-or-die win over the Olympic champions which powered them into the last 16 — a resounding answer to the critics after being upset 3-2 by Nigeria.

Kerr had declared herself available if needed, but

Australia's all-time leading goal-scorer ultimately wasn't risked as her teammates rose to the occasion and gave her extra time to recover.

A relieved Gustavsson, who was facing the exit door if they had lost, said that Kerr's pre-match pep talk had been vital.

"Part of the reason why I think they were so united and performed the way they did was what Sam said to the team: 'Make sure you win without me so I can get another week to train and recover and get healthy'," he said.

"And the team responded and said: 'Yes we will. You sit on the bench tonight, and we'll win for you'."

"You could see that conviction and commitment from the players so that Sam gets another week of training."



Kerr made her Australia debut aged just 15. Now at her fourth World Cup, she has become one of the best players in women's football, with her profile soaring to new heights since moving to Chelsea in 2020.

She said on the eve of the game that despite the disappointment of not being on the field, she planned to do every-

thing she could to motivate her teammates.

"I'm not the first person to get injured and I won't be the last. It's just something I've had to deal with, and I think I've dealt with it pretty well," she told FIFA.com.

"You have to be there for the team. This is a team sport, not an individual sport. It's actually been nice in a way to be on

the other side and cheer on my teammates," she added. "I thought it was quite an eye-opener, and I've loved watching the girls. I'm really proud to be a part of this team."

The victory gave Kerr another full week to prove her fitness for next Monday's round of 16 clash in Sydney -- most likely against Denmark or China — and Gustavsson a selection headache, with Mary Fowler expected to make way.

Gustavsson said he had a good feeling that the result would go their way.

"Sometimes you can just feel when things are going to go right," he said.

"The fact it is must-win all the way through (the rest of the World Cup) helps this team, because the pressure will be on every single game."

# No handshake, no problem as Svitolina downs Azarenka

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

Ukraine's Elina Svitolina grabbed a second straight victory over Victoria Azarenka of Belarus at the WTA Tour DC Open in Washington on Monday, weeks after the duo's Wimbledon clash was marred by a handshake controversy.

Azarenka was booed off court at Wimbledon earlier this month after her defeat to Svitolina, with fans apparently perceiving she had snubbed her Ukrainian opponent by not advancing to the net for a handshake.

In fact, Svitolina did not offer a handshake — something she has declined to do with players from Russia and Belarus ever since the invasion of her homeland. Belarus is a key military ally of Moscow.

On Monday, tournament organizers in Washington aimed to pre-empt any possible repeat of the controversy by informing fans before the match there would be no handshakes.

"At the conclusion of the match there will be no handshake between the players," a message on an arena screen said beforehand.

"We appreciate your respect for both athletes during and following the match, and for your understanding during these difficult circumstances."

With that issue settled, it was left to the two rivals to serve up a hard-fought if error-strewn battle that saw no fewer than 17



breaks of serve before Svitolina finally prevailed 7-6 (7/2), 6-4. Svitolina clinched victory by breaking Azarenka's serve in the 10th game of the second set.

A wild Azarenka backhand presented Svitolina with a match

point which she duly converted on the first attempt after bludgeoning a forehand winner into the corner.

Azarenka saluted Svitolina's victory with a fleeting thumbs up before heading off the court.



# Wu collapses while leading Washington opener

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

China's Wu Yibing collapsed and was helped off the court on Monday after retiring from his opening match against Japan's Yosuke Watanuki at the ATP and WTA DC Open.

It was the second notable health incident in a match within a month for Wu, who needed a medical timeout after falling ill at the end of the first set in his opening-match Wimbledon loss to American Frances Tiafoe.

On the Washington hardcourts, Wu was leading 4-1 in the first set when he made a wobbly step, went to take a seat and collapsed forward over the back of a folding chair.

Wu was helped to his feet and eased down onto the court

with an umbrella quickly brought over to provide shade. He was later assisted in walking off the court.

A statement from the tournament said Wu retired due to illness.

The 23-year-old from Hangzhou also played last week in Atlanta, beating France's Corentin Moutet in his first match before losing to eventual champion Taylor Fritz, the world number nine from the United States, in the second round.

World number 90 Wu won his first ATP title in February at Dallas, becoming the first Chinese player to capture an ATP crown and China's highest-ranked player ever, reaching 54th in the world in May.

# Fabinho leaves Liverpool for Al-Ittihad



AFP ■ RIYADH

Brazil midfielder Fabinho has signed a three-year deal with Saudi Arabian side Al-Ittihad after completing his move from Liverpool on Monday.

The 29-year-old was left out of Liverpool's pre-season squads for trips to Germany and Singapore after Al-Ittihad made a £40 million (\$51 million) bid for him.

He will join Karim Benzema and N'Golo Kante at Al-Ittihad, one of four Saudi clubs controlled by the Gulf state's sovereign wealth fund.

Fabinho joined Liverpool

from Monaco in 2018 and made 219 appearances for the Reds, winning the Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup, League Cup and Club World Cup.

"Today I leave my home. It's been five years wearing this jersey and always with the greatest honor and happiness possible," Fabinho wrote on Twitter, which is being rebranded as X.

"Since day one at Liverpool, I've been embraced by everyone," he added. "In these five years, I grew as a player, as a man, I made dreams come true... With that jersey, I won every title a player can dream of."

His departure comes after

Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson ended his 12-year stay at Anfield last week, moving to Saudi Arabia to play for Al-Ettifaq, who are coached by Steven Gerrard. Fabinho's compatriot Roberto Firmino left Merseyside to sign for Al-Ahli earlier this month.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has also seen midfielders Naby Keita, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and James Milner depart on free transfers since the end of last season.

But the club have reinforced that area of the field with the signings of Alexis Mac Allister and Dominik Szoboszlai.

# Dani Alves to face trial for rape

AFP ■ MADRID

Brazilian defender Dani Alves will be tried on sexual assault charges in Spain, the high court of Catalonia told AFP on Monday.

The former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain star was detained in January after being accused of raping a young woman in the bathroom of a nightclub in late December.

The court said a date for the trial had not yet been set.

The 40-year-old Brazilian has been held in custody without bail because the court investigating him felt there was a risk he would try to flee.

When the story first broke — and before he was arrested — Alves in a television interview initially denied knowing the woman.

But when questioned by



investigators after his arrest, he changed his story, insisting that they had had consensual relations.

Alves, who could face up to 12 years in jail if found guilty, defended his innocence in an interview published in June,

saying he has a "clear conscience."

"I have a really clear conscience regarding what happened that night in the bathroom of the VIP area of the Sutton nightclub," he told daily newspaper La Vanguardia in his

first interview since his arrest.

"What happened and what didn't happen. And what didn't happen is that I forced this woman to do anything that we did," he added.

In the June article, he told La Vanguardia that he had lied at first because he was afraid his wife would leave him if he admitted he had been with another woman.

At the time of the incident, Alves was on holiday in Barcelona after playing for Brazil at the World Cup in Qatar.

After his arrest, Alves, who is being held in the Brians penitentiary complex outside Barcelona, was sacked by his Mexican club Pumas UNAM.

In a highly successful career, Alves won 42 football titles, including three Champions Leagues with Barcelona and two Copa Americas with Brazil.

# Coe defends Budapest as worlds venue

AFP ■ PARIS

World Athletics president Sebastian Coe has defended the choice of Hungary's capital Budapest to host this month's world championships and also said the sport's latest doping case was actually a reason to celebrate.

Hungary's far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orban is strongly opposed to what he calls the European Union's "LGBT+ offensive" and last month the US ambassador to Hungary blasted him for opportunistically stirring up hatred against gay people.

Coe, speaking to selected reporters on a conference call ahead of the August 19-27 championships, said: "The world is a complex place, it's becoming more complex by the year and that isn't going to change."



"So one thing that does need to adapt here is sport and sport is ultimately probably the most adaptable organism that is out there and in an uncertain world sport is the only anchor point."

The International Olympic Committee has argued in the past that taking the Games to countries such as China would help accelerate a greater respect of human rights.

Athletics itself held its world championships in 2019 in Doha, the capital of Qatar, whose own approach to human rights came under intense scrutiny when it hosted the 2022 men's football World Cup.

Coe, the head of the largest Olympic sport, said his ideas and those of the IOC "don't always run in parallel" — but he added: "On this one, I agree."

# WE'RE ONLY FOCUSED ON WINNING: JADEJA



PTI ■ TAROUBA

Star India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja responded to former captain Kapil Dev's dig on the team becoming 'arrogant', saying "people make such comments when India lose matches".

Recently, Kapil said that arrogance has crept in the current Indian team and the players feel they know everything. Talking to reporters on the eve of the series-deciding third ODI against the West Indies here, Jadeja said the

players were only focussed on winning for India and have no personal agenda. "Everyone has their own opinion. Ex-players have full right to share their opinion, but I don't think there is any arrogance in this team," Jadeja said.

"Everyone is enjoying their cricket and everyone is hardworking. No one has taken anything for granted. They are giving their 100 per cent. Such comments generally come when Indian team loses a match. "This is a good bunch of

boys, this is a good group. We are representing India and that is our main aim, there is no personal agenda," he added.

**'PLAYING XI FOR ASIA CUP ALREADY DECIDED'**

Jadeja said the playing XI for the Asia Cup beginning on August 30 has already been decided despite the experiments in the ODI series against the West Indies.

India rested regular skipper Rohit Sharma and star batter Virat Kohli in the second ODI of the three-match series, which the visitors lost by six wickets. India had won the first match by five wickets.

"This is the series before the Asia Cup and World Cup, where we can experiment, we can try out new combinations. It will give us an idea about the team's balance, strengths and weaknesses," Jadeja told reporters on eve of the series decider.

India's 50-over assignments after the tour of the Caribbeans include the Asia Cup which starts later this month followed by a three-

match series against Australia and the all important ODI World Cup in October.

"Captain and team management know what combination they are going to play. There is no confusion at all. We have already decided what is going to be the combination in the Asia Cup, they have already decided that before. But it's more about trying out a particular player or batter at a batting position."

India are expected to continue giving valuable game time to youngsters in the series-deciding third match on Tuesday.

Talking about the loss in the second ODI, Jadeja said, "We were not disappointed with the loss. We didn't lose the match because of experiments, sometimes conditions also matter."

"We are trying different combinations. We can try different batters at different position. This is the series where we can afford to chop and change. Young players also need that international experience, they also need a game time," he said.



## DDCA to add two new pitches, 4 radio commentary boxes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) will add two more practice pitches to the main square of the Feroz Shah Kotla besides replacing 15,000 old bucket seats for the ODI World Cup, joint secretary Rajan Manchanda said on Tuesday.

A two-member recce team comprising former BCCI general manager and current Delhi Capitals CEO Dhiraj Malhotra inspected the facilities at the Arun Jaitley Stadium where five World Cup games will be played.

"They would be giving us a final report in a week's time and intimate us about everything they want to be done before the start of the World Cup. From our end, we are adding two more strips to the existing ones on the main turf for convenience of training," Manchanda told PTI on the day.

It was learnt that ICC team was happy with whatever it saw but also gave its own inputs on the facilities. "Practice pitches is something that DDCA is adding on its own but has agreed to every other stuff it has been told to upgrade.

# Stokes hopes thrilling Ashes series inspires new generation

AFP ■ LONDON

Ben Stokes says he hopes England's thrilling comeback from 2-0 down against Australia to draw the Ashes series will inspire a new generation of cricket fans.

Australia, chasing a mammoth 384 to win at The Oval on Monday, collapsed from 264-3 to 334 all out, meaning England won by 49 runs to square the five-match series.

"I think 2-2 generally is a fair reflection of two very, very good teams going at it over a five-match series," said delighted England captain Stokes.

"Obviously, Australia being world Test champions leading into this series, the cricket that I think has been on show has been of the highest quality."

The 32-year-old all-rounder said he was proud of the way his team -- who recovered from defeats in the first two Tests at Edgbaston and Lord's -- had played throughout the series, sticking to their attacking template.

"Coming here and playing in the way in which we did, I couldn't be any more proud of the team and what they did," he said.

"We've continued everything in the style of play in which we've done over the past 14-15 months and it's basically been everything I think I could have asked for minus getting the urn back."

Stokes, who hit a stunning 155 in a losing cause at Lord's, said he hoped youngsters



## Stokes hits back at Australia drinks snub claim

AFP ■ LONDON

England captain Ben Stokes has insisted his team did not snub Australia after reports they refused to have post-series drinks with their Ashes rivals.

England beat Australia by 49 runs to win the fifth Test of the series at The Oval on Monday.

Stokes's side, who came from 2-0 down to draw the series 2-2, traditionally join the opposing team in the dressing rooms to socialise at the end of a Test campaign.

But reports in the Australian media suggested the tourists were left disappointed as they waited to be invited into the England dressing room before departing



around an hour later. England Test coach Brendon McCullum had already cast doubt on the socialising when he said "I can't imagine we'll be having a beer with them any time soon" following Jonny Bairstow's controversial stumping by Australia's Alex Carey in the second Test at Lord's.

England's alleged snub was branded "pretty pathetic" by an

unnamed source in a Fox Sports Australia report.

But England claimed their post-series wrap-up went longer than usual due to an extended presentation session that marked the retirements of Stuart Broad and Moen Ali.

And Stokes took to social media in the middle of the night to make it clear there was no snub intended because England players eventually met up with their Australian counterparts at a nightclub.

Responding to journalist Bharat Sundaresan, who had been reporting on the missed drinks, Stokes tweeted: "To clarify... Our wrap took longer than expected because of multiple last time events. We decided to meet up in the night club rather than the dressing room."

would be inspired by what they had witnessed.

"I definitely think that over the past seven weeks in particular that we've managed to drag a new audience towards Test cricket," he said.

"And I think the series is generally what Test cricket needed -- two high-quality teams going at it toe to toe for six, seven weeks and the cricket that's been played is something that you really couldn't take your eyes off."

"I really hope that we've inspired a new generation."

"I look back to 2005 (when England beat Australia 2-1) and what that series did for me as a young person and I really hope there's someone at my age in 2005 who's looked at this series and said 'that's what I want to be doing when I'm 21, 22.'"

Stokes paid another tribute to retiring paceman Stuart Broad, who leaves Test cricket with 604 wickets after taking the final two scalps on Monday.

"Seeing him run off and all the slips go up and celebrate was one of those moments that was just like 'this was always going to happen'," he said.

And the skipper also praised all-rounder Chris Woakes, who took 4-50 on the final day and was named player of the series, even though he was not selected for the first two matches.

"I don't know if there's ever been a player who has only featured in three games of an Ashes series who has walked away with man of the series."

## Parag, Murasingh fire East Zone to 157-run win over West

PTI ■ PUDUCHERRY

A second century in the Deodhar Trophy for Riyan Parag (102) and a superb five-wicket haul for Manisankar Murasingh fired East Zone to a massive 157-run victory over the West Zone here on Tuesday.

After Parag's blitzkrieg - 102 not out off just 68 balls, studded with five sixes and six fours - powered the East Zone to a huge 319/7 in their 50 overs, Murasingh ran riot in the West Zone ranks to help his side to a huge win.

Chasing 320, the West Zone side was shot out for a mere 162 in 34 overs with the 30-year-old Tripura all-rounder Murasingh returning a stunning spell of 7-1-28-5.

Utkarsh Singh also played an all-round role by scoring a half-century and taking three wickets.

For the losing side, Saurashtra opener Harvik Desai waged a lone battle, scoring 92 (92 balls, 13x4s, 2x6s), but his effort went in vain as Murasingh broke the back of their chase.

The right-arm medium fast bowler Murasingh struck his first, crucial blow in the fifth over when he pinned Rahul Tripathi (1) in front of the wickets.

Earlier, Akash Deep had removed Samarth Vyas (12) in the third over. Murasingh piled up further misery on Sarfaraz Khan - who has been struggling for form and runs - when he cleaned up the Mumbai batter for a mere nine-ball three in the seventh over.



West Zone slipped further when No. 5 batter Kathan Patel was caught by Parag off Murasingh in the ninth over. The outcome of the contest was almost sealed in favour of the East Zone when Murasingh struck once again, taking a return catch off Shivam Dube's bat to send him back for a five-ball duck, in the 12th over.

Shams Mulani (12) and Atit Sheth (18) tried to delay the inevitable in the company of Desai, but their resistance did not last long.

Utkarsh then chipped in with a measly spell of 5-1-16-3, maintaining his team's dominance in the contest.

West Zone captain Priyank Panchal suffered an injury during the game and could only bat at No 11.

In the first half of the game, Parag stole the show with his second century in last three matches while Utkarsh and Kumar Kushagra struck vital fifties.

The left-handed Utkarsh scored 50 (52 balls, 7x4s) - his second fifty in the competition - but Abhimanyu Easwaran perished for 38 at the top.

Virat Singh made a fine 42 at No. 3 but Rishav Das (3) and captain Saurabh Tiwary (13) were dismissed cheaply as East Zone were placed precariously at 157 for five at one stage.

But for the second time in the Deodhar Trophy, the pair of Parag and Kushagra (53 from 47 balls, 4x6s) came to East Zone's rescue.

The two batters put on 150 runs for the sixth wicket to revive East Zone once again on Tuesday, having done so earlier in the competition when they amassed 235 runs for the sixth wicket against the North Zone.

The win took East Zone to the second spot in the points table, and they are now tied with table-toppers South Zone with 16 points each.

## Hope and Thomas return as WI name squad for T20Is against India

PTI ■ PORT OF SPAIN

Wicketkeeper-batter Shai Hope and fast bowler Oshane Thomas were recalled as the West Indies named a 15-member 'provisional' squad for the five-match T20 International series against India, beginning on Thursday at Tarouba.

All 15 members of the provisional squad, to be led by Rovman Powell, will travel to all matches. There will then be a 13-member squad for each match from which the final XI will be selected, the Cricket West Indies (CWI) said.

The 29-year-old Hope, the West Indies captain in the three-match ODI series, last played a T20I in February last year in Kolkata during the tour of India.

The 26-year-old Thomas, on the other hand, is coming back after playing his last T20I in Karachi in December 2021.

Kyle Mayers has been named vice-captain in the squad announced by the CWI senior men's selection panel.

Lead selector Desmond Haynes said the squad was selected with next year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup at home in mind.

"We are looking at various plans as we try to find the right combinations. As we prepare; we are looking to build a unit which we believe can do the job when we host the global event in just under a year," Haynes said in a CWI statement.



"We have some match-winners in our lineup and we will look to have the right kind of preparation. We also have other players who could come into consideration going forward, with the Caribbean Premier League starting next month, others will come into the reckoning."

The Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad, will host the opening match on Thursday. The teams then move to the Guyana National Stadium for the second and third fixtures on August 6 and 8.

**WEST INDIES SQUAD**

Rovman Powell (captain), Kyle Mayers (vice-captain), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Obed McCoy, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, Oshane Thomas.

## Cummins falls short of Ashes ambition

AFP ■ LONDON

When rain kept Australia holed up in The Oval changing rooms for more than two hours, Australia captain Pat Cummins might have thought his side were on their way to a long-awaited Ashes series win in England.

Australia were well-placed at 264-3 after play resumed in pursuit of a mammoth victory target of 384 on Monday's final day of the fifth Test.

Even had they come away with a draw, that would still have been enough for a 2-1 series success and a first Ashes campaign triumph in England since 2001.

But instead Australia lost seven wickets for 70 runs in a dramatic collapse as England won by 49 runs to end the series all square at 2-2 -- the same overall result as the 2019 Ashes.

This was an unusual trip, starting for Australia with a 209-run rout of India in last month's World Test Championship final on the same London ground.

But with the WTC in its

infancy, Cummins was aware the tour would be judged on the outcome of the Ashes.

'Legacy-defining' "Whether we like it or not, Ashes series tend to define eras and teams," he said after the final. "If we win, that is legacy-defining stuff."

Yet in an Ashes in which Cummins's tactics were called into question, it was Australia's batting failures that ultimately cost them a series win.

And Nathan Lyon's absence for the final three Tests following the veteran off-spinner's tour-ending calf injury at Lord's also deprived Cummins of much-needed control in the field.

As a fast bowler, a rarity among captains, a schedule of six Tests in just under eight weeks would have been physically and mentally gruelling enough for Cummins without the additional responsibilities of leadership.

Nevertheless, the 30-year-old remained an ever-present and took 18 wickets at 37.72 during the Ashes.



So much of the series was framed as a contest between England's aggressive 'Bazball' approach and Australia's more traditional Test style, exemplified by painstaking opener Usman Khawaja becoming the leading batsman in the series, with 496 runs.

England seamer Ollie Robinson proclaimed Australia were unwilling "to go toe-to-toe with us".

But cricket, unlike ice skating, does not confer additional points for artistic impression.

In a dramatic first Test at Edgbaston, it was Cummins's

composure as a lower-order batsman that took Australia to a thrilling two-wicket win.

The flashpoint of the series followed at Lord's, where the skipper was criticised for ignoring the "Spirit of Cricket" when quick-thinking Australia wicketkeeper Alex Carey stumped Jonny Bairstow, who wrongly thought the ball was dead.

What got lost in the ensuing furore was that England had been set a stiff 371 runs to win.

Despite home captain Ben Stokes's stunning 155, Australia still won by 43 runs after Cummins had lured several

batsmen to their doom with a hooking trap.

England had the better of a rain-marred draw at Old Trafford, with Cummins often veering between all-out attack or defence, with little in between during a run-spre.

Former Australia batsman Mark Waugh, whose twin brother Steve was the last Aussie skipper to enjoy an Ashes series win in England, 22 years ago, suggested the "burnt-out" Cummins's time as captain was nearing its end.

"I think he's OK when it's easy and he doesn't have to think too much, but it's a real question mark," said Waugh.

And Ian Chappell, one of Australia's most venerated captains, told Channel Nine: "If you put nine on the boundary that's really not designed to get people out -- not good batsmen out anyhow." Some of his tactics in this series I would question. "But Chappell, for all his concerns, said: "I think Pat Cummins was the right choice at the time and I haven't seen a reason to promote another captain."