**OPINION 6** 

WHY FARMERS COMMIT

SUICIDE?

WORLD 8

30 KILLED, 100 HURT IN PAK

TRAIN ACCIDENT

**MONEY 10** 

'RBI MAY CONTINUE TO HOLD RATE

AMID CONCERN OVER INFLATION

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**BISHNOI REPLACES** 

#### NEW DELHI, MONDAY AUGUST 7, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



# the pioneer

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# Oppn is indulging in negative politics: PM

'Nation saying 'Quit India' to all evils, Govt working for solutions to challenges'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW

In a scathing attack on the Opposition parties, particularly the Congress, which ruled the country for over six decades, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday denounced their "old ways" and accused them of hindering progress and engaging in negative politics.

Speaking on the occasion while 'virtually' laying the foundation for the redevelopment of 508 railway stations across the country, the Prime Minister also highlighted the Government's commitment to positive politics and development. These 508 stations are spread across 27 States and Union Territories, with the highest numbers in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra, and West Bengal. The Amrit Bharat Station

Scheme (ABSS) redevelopment, costing Rs 24,470 crore, will provide modern passenger amenities, well-designed traffic circulation, and inter-modal integration. The design of station buildings will be inspired by local culture, heritage, and architec-

Targeting the Opposition, Modi said the entire country is now saying corruption quit India, dynasty quit India, appeasement quit India, drawing inspiration from the historic Quit India Movement.

Modi emphasised that India's prestige on the global stage has increased, attributing it to the full majority Government elected



Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone for redevelopment of 508 Railway Stations across the country via video conferencing, on Sunday

by the people after almost three decades. He also commended the Government's efforts in making major decisions and continuously working for permanent solutions to the nation's chal-

lenges.
"India, which is heading towards the goal of being developed, is at the beginning of 'Amrit Kaal' (a period of divine nectar). There is new energy, new inspiration, and new resolutions, and in this spirit, a new chapter is beginning in the history of lian Railways," he said.

He also took the opportunity to criticise the newly-formed

Opposition bloc named 'INDIA' comprising about 26 parties. Referring to the Quit India Movement, Modi said, "Inspired by this, today the entire country is saying 'Quit India' for all evils." He further noted that the Quit India Movement, which began on August 9, 1942, fostered fresh energy towards attaining India's freedom, and the country is now determined to eliminate all evils from its midst.

Highlighting some of the achievements, Modi said the country built a modern Parliament building but this faction of the Opposition opposed

its construction. "We redeveloped Kartavya Path but they opposed that too. For 70 years, they didn't even build a war memorial for the Bravehearts of the country. When we built National War Memorial, they felt no shame in criticising that too. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Statue of Unity is the tallest building in the world. Every Indian is proud of it. But none of the big leaders of a few political parties ever visited the Statue. But rising above from negative, we are moving forward on the path of positive politics as a mission," PM Modi

# Cong eager to see Rahul Gandhi back in Lok Sabha from today

Cong LS MPs, INDIA bloc leaders to meet in Kharge's chamber

**DEEPAK KUMAR JHA** NEW

As the Parliament is set to take up a debate on the No-Confidence Motion against the Central Government over the next three days, the Congress is lobbying hard for the reinstatement of their leader, Rahul Gandhi, in Lok Sabha, to ensure his participation in the crucial discussions in the

The party has called a meeting of its Lok Sabha MPs on Monday to chalk out the day's strategy in case there is any dilly-dallying in the process of reinstatement of Rahul's membership. Besides a separate meeting of the INDIA bloc leaders is also a scheduled in the chamber of Congress pres-ident and Leader of Opposition in Ràjya Sabha Mallikarjun

Kharge. The focus now lies on Speaker Om Birla, who has to clear the file for the notification that would reinstate Rahul in Lok Sabha. According to the required procedure, Rahul or his representative must submit a copy of the Supreme Court order staying his conviction to the Lok Sabha secretariat. However, there seems to be some confusion, as Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary, the Leader of the Party, alleges that his submission during the weekend holidays has not been acknowledged by the Lower House staff.

Congress Parliamentarians are eagerly preparing for Rahul's "grand re-



entry" into Parliament, with hopes that he might be one of the speakers during the No-Confidence Motion debate before August 10, the final day of the three-day discussion.

Expressing their enthusiasm, the Congress party tweeted, "Rahul Gandhi ji's fearless voice will again roar in the Parliament. We will protect the idea of India and resist any attempt to undermine democ-

Using the term "Jannayak," reminiscent of "Loknayak" used for Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Congress further tweeted that a "Jannayak" is crucial in Parliament to protect democracy, emphasising concerns about labour income being concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists.

Sources from the Lok Sabha Secretariat confirm that Rahul Gandhi is entitled to return to Parliament from Monday, pending the issuance of a formal notice confirming the removal of his suspension

due to the Supreme Court's decision.

However, until the notification is issued, Rahul cannot attend the sessions.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh highlighted the discrepancy in the time taken to disqualify Rahul Gandhi as an MP and the delay in his reinstatement, raising valid concerns about the process. During this Monsoon

Session, Parliament will function for only three out of the five full working days. Rajya Sabha will take up discussions on the controversial Delhi Services Bill, already passed in Lok Sabha, on Monday. The scheduled last day of the Monsoon Session is Friday, typically adjourning sine die in he first half

Since the session commenced on July 20, both houses of Parliament have faced disruptions due to protests from the Opposition parties regarding the Manipur crisis and other related issues.

Why Katheria not disqualified yet after 2-year sentence: Cong PNS NEW DELHI

After BJP Lok Sabha MP from Etawah and former Union Minister Ram Shankar Katheria's two-vear conviction on Saturday by an Agra court, the Congress has asked why the Lok Sabha Speaker and its secretariat have not disqualified the MP within 24 hours. The focus is now on when the Lok Sabha Speaker will act as swiftly as he did in the case of Rahul Gandhi. Special Magistrate Anuj of

Agra's MP/MLA Court sentenced Katheria to two years' imprisonment for assaulting the staff of Torrent Power Limited in Agra in 2011. Unless he obtains a stay on his conviction, similar to what Rahul Gandhi achieved through a protracted legal battle lasting five months in a defamation case, Katheria will be disqualified as an MP and will not be able to contest the forthcoming

Lok Sabha elections. Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijay Singh said he would "watch closely" whether Katheria's membership will be revoked as quickly as it was done in the case of Rahul. Singh also pointed out that the reinstatement of Rahul's membership in the Lok Sabha should be considered without further delay since the Supreme Court stayed his conviction in

the 'Modi surname' case. The party is set to protest against Katheria and the Centre if he is not immediately dis-

#### **CAPSULE**

### U'KHAND RAINS: 2 KIDS DEAD, 20 MISSING

killed when a wall of their house collapsed in Tehri on Sunday amid incessant rains at many places in Uttarakhand, while rescuers looked for the 20 missing people in the Gaurikund landslide incident for the third day in the inclement weather. A total of 23 people were missing after the landslide in Gaurikund in Rudraprayag. Three bodies were recovered from the debris on Friday. "The search operation was being carried out by the NDRF, SDRF, police and fire brigade teams in difficult circumstances. So far there is no clue of the missina. Rudraprayag's District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said. The operation was being carried out from Dhari Devi to Kund Barrage on the banks of the Mandakini River.

#### P VAGHELA QUITS BJP GEN SECY'S POST

Ahmedabad: Senior BJP leader Pradipsinh Vaghela, who has resigned as the party's general secretary in Gujarat, on Sunday said guit the post as he wanted to come clean after concerted attempts were made to tarnish his image for the last two years

#### ASI RESUMES SURVEY OF GYANVAPI MOSQUE Varanasi: The Archaeological

Survey of India resumed the survey of the Gyanvapi mosque here on the third day on Sunday to determine if the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure, even as the Muslim side warned they would boycott the entire exercise if "rumours" are spread that Hindu religious symbols and objects have been found

#### DID NOT MEET SHAH, SAYS JAYANT PATIL

Mumbai: Senior NCP leader Jayant Patil, a Sharad Pawai loyalist, on Sunday denied rumours that he had a "secret meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Pune. Patil, heads the Maharashtra NCP unit.

#### **Bulldozers continue to roll in Nuh**

Hotel from which stones were pelted at procession demolished; shops razed too PNS CHANDIGARH/NUH

The police on Sunday razed several illegal structures in the violence-hit Nuh district on Sunday, including the hotelcum-restaurant from where stones were allegedly pelted on a religious procession during

Several shops, outside the Shaheed Hasan Khan Mewati Government Medical College and Hospital, were also demolished.

Shopkeepers alleged that armed with heavy forces, the authorities came late at night on Saturday to conduct the anti-encroachment drive. They allegedly did not serve any notice to the vendors or shop



Authorities demolished the Sahara Family restaurant from where hooligans allegedly pelted stones on a religious procession on July 31 which led to violence, in Nuh, on Sunday. The building was demolished in administration's drive against egal constructions

Deputy owners. Nuh Commissioner Prashant Panwar said the situation is normal now. "The SP and I had a meeting with both communities. We have also appealed to them to assure that no incident will happen in the future. The demolition drive against illegal construction is underway, and it will continue. Action is not

being taken to target anyone. Our motive is to establish peace," he said.

Meanwhile, the number of people arrested has gone up to 216, while 80 people have been taken into preventive detention and 104 FIRs (first information reports) registered so far in connection with the communal violence. *Contd on Page 2* 

# **KPA** withdraws

support to Govt PNS/PTI IMPHAL

Aday after 15 houses were set Aon fire in Manipur's Imphal West district where fresh violence broke out on Saturday evening, the NDA's partner Kuki People's Alliance (KPA) announced withdrawal of support from the N Biren Singh Government in Manipur on Sunday. The violence happened on Saturday evening at Langol Games village as a mob went on a rampage, officials said. Security personnel fired several rounds of tear gas shells to disperse the mob and bring the situation under control, they added. A 45-year-old man was shot during the violence. He was admitted to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) with bullet wounds on his left thigh, and is stated to be

out of danger at present, offi-cials said. Even though the situation improved on Sunday morning, but restrictions remained in place, they said.

Fresh violence was also reported from Imphal East dis-trict's Checkon area where a large commercial establishment was torched on Saturday, officials said. Three nearby houses were also set on fire, they said, adding that firefighters doused the blaze. Also, a gunfight broke out between security forces and militants in Kangpokpi district on Saturday evening. The incident hap-pened at A Mungchamkom in New Keithelmanbi police station area, officials said. A man was nabbed and an SLR with 50 rounds was seized from him, ney said.

The incidents of violence were reported amid the 24-hour general strike called by the coordinating committee of 27 Assembly constituencies, which paralysed normal life in the İmphal Valley on Saturday. On Sunday, the KPA



Manipuris hold placards during a protest organised by Delhi Meitei Coordinating Committee over the ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur, at Jantar Mantar in New

IndiGo flyers suffer as

announced withdrawal of support from the N Biren Singh Government and in a letter to Governor Anusuiya Uikey, KPA president Tongmang Haokip informed about the party's decision to snap ties with the BJP-led Government in Manipur. The development, however, will have no impact on the stability of the

Government, as the BJP has 37 members in the 60-member

Manipur Assembly "After careful consideration of the current conflagration, the continued support for the incumbent Government of Manipur led by Chief Minister N Biren SIngh is no

longer fructuous.

Continued on Page 2

### Minors tortured in UP over theft suspicion

Boys forced to drink urine, chillies stuffed in private parts

PNS NEW DELHI

In a horrifying incident that took place in Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh, two young children was a shire to the state of dren were subjected to unspeakable brutality on the accusation of stealing chickens from a poultry farm.

The poultry farm owner and his associates allegedly subjected the boys to a merciless beating, forced them to consume urine, and applied chili powder to their private

parts. After the incident came

videos circulated on WhatsApp videos circulated on WhatsApp groups of college students in Siddharthnagar, public outrage grew, leading to the videos going viral on social media. The videos depicted the boys, aged 10 and 14, being forced to ingest green chilies along with a yellow liquid, presumed to be urine, from a bottle. Men in the background can be beard abusbackground can be heard abusing and threatening the boys to

to light through two distressing

video, the boys were shown lying face down on the ground, their hands tied behind their backs, and their trousers pulled down. A man could be seen cruelly shoving green chilies into their anus, causing the boys to scream in agony.

Continued on Page 2

In another gut-wrenching

"fit". The consulate said they

# India comes to aid of starving scholar living on street in US

Syeda Zaidi fit to fly back says Indian Consulate; has spoken to her mom

DELHI/CHICAGO

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW

Taking note of the plight of one of its citizens in Chicago, the Indian consulate there has offered medical and travel assistance to her. The 37year-old from Hyderabad was found starving on the streets of Chicago last week. Extending all possible help, the Consulate General of India in Chicago late Saturday also said she was



Lulu Minhaj Zaidi and offered her help, including medical assistance and travel back to India. They also confirmed that she is currently in a fit condition and has already spoken to her mother in India.

is fit and has spoken to her mother in India. She is yet to respond to our offer of support to return to India. We stand ready to extend to her all assistance," the consulate said in a "Happy that we could contact Ms Syeda Zaidi and offered

Continued on Page 2

ing sun before boarding the flight, only to find out that the

ACs in the plane were not working throughout the entire

#### AC conks off on flight Gidderbaha segment, he even posted a video capturing the

When Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring boarded an Indigo flight from Chandigarh to Jaipur on Saturday, little did he and the other passengers know that they were in for a nightmarish experience. Shortly after takeoff from the Chandigarh airport, Warring Chandigarh airport, Warring discovered that the air conditioners on the plane were not functioning, turning the flight into a "horrifying experience". Warring shared this dis-tressing incident on Twitter, highlighting how they were made to wait under the scorch-

using papers, vomit bags, and cards as makeshift fans, as

The hour-long flight, taking place in peak summer,

forced passengers to resort to

discomfort.

seen in the video. The flight attendant, visibly perspiring, was also seen "generously" dis-tributing tissues to the passengers.In response to the incident, Indigo offered an apology, Indigo offered an apology, attributing the inconvenience to a "technical" problem that caused the aircraft's air-conditioning to shut down. They expressed deep regret for the discomfort experienced by their customers during flight 6E7261 from Chandigarh to Jaipur. *Continued on Page* 

# TMC invokes Choksi, Adani after Modi's corruption jibe

Hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's apparent jibe at the Opposition parties underscoring the need of "Quit India" initiatives against corruption, dynastic culture and appeasement politics the Trinamool Congress hit back saying such initiatives should start from bringing back the Nirav Modis who had fled India with lakhs of crores of

tax-payers' money.
"Good that the Prime Minister has recalled the Quit India movement in which the Sangh had no role to play and good that he is speaking about 'quit India' initiatives against corruption ... One hopes he will start it with bringing back those lakhs of crores that has been taken away by the BJP's erstwhile friends like Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi," senior Bengal minister Firhad Hakim

"One also hopes that strong



actions would be taken in the Adani scam that has shaken the Indian economy ... One also hopes that strong actions will be taken against those who are trying to sell out the national assets like the LICs, Indian Railways, BSNL etc," Hakim

On the occasion of Quit India movement anniversary in the month of August, the Prime Minister earlier said that the great movement to oust the British from India in 1942 was relevant even today and its reverberations seek "corruption

India, and appeasement to quit

Another senior Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh reminded how BJP too was not free from dynastic culture. "We have heard some top functionary in the BCCI is the son of a big minister in Delhi, we have also heard about an MLA who is the son of a former UP Chief minister and a present Union Minister ... so why don't they start the cleansing process from their own house."

In a parallel development the Bengal TMC leaders on Sunday staged statewide sit-in protests against what they called "central deprivation" of

Bengal has been deprived of Rs 1.17 lakh crore towards various accounts ... the Centre is not giving our money meant for 100-days' work, housing schemes, roads and so many other projects ... this is because they want to starve the people

against the BJP in 2021 Assembly elections," Hakim

Sit-in demonstrations were staged by other senior leaders like Dr Shashi Panja, Chandrima Bhattacharya, Bratya Basu and others at various places. "They are taking away the GST and not paying back our share ... we don't want their grants ... we want only our share of the tax ... that they have blocked ... if they have problems against the Trinamool Congress they are free to fight us out politically ... but why are they punishing the poor people for this . Bhattacharya said.

Earlier TMC's second in command Abhishek Banerjee had warned the Centre saying he would wait for some more time and if the Centre would not clear Bengal's dues then he would lead lakhs of people from this State and jam streets

## Bengal Guv proposes Peace Train for violence-hit Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Days after Chief Minister
Mamata Banerjee conceded that CV Ananda Bosewas a
bigger pain in the neck --- than
his predecessor Jagdeep
Dhankhar --- for her Government, the present Bengal Governor on Wednesday came up with a new prickly idea of a "Peace Train linking Kolkata and Darjeeling. All against the backdrop of the ongoing post panchayat poll violence.

Causing the TMC leadership to fire return salvos at the Governor's House, Bose during the inauguration of the 'Amrit Station' project at Sealdah station on Sunday morning said



that he would ask the Railway Minister to start a Peace Train in Bengal.

'West Bengal needs three trains. A Kisan Express. So that the farmers can bring their produce. A culture train on wheels. Which will enrich everyone about the fertile culture of the state. The two biggest enemies of the state are violence and corruption. So I will request the railway minister to run a peace

train. Which will go from here to Darjeeling via New Jalpaiguri," Bose in his pinching remark said.

The Raj Bhavan sources subsequently said that the Governor was "not making the statements for the heck of it ... in fact he is sending a letter to the Railway Minister demanding a Peace Train."

Bose's statement came days after he opened an "anti-cor-ruption cell" in the Raj Bhavan to receive and bring on record instances of corruption throughout the State and weeks after opening a Peace Room in Governor's House to entertain the people affected by the panchayat poll violence.

This, much to the charg-

ing of the Chief Minister who said that the Governor was not acting within his brief.

Hours after the Governor's statement TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh returned fire alleging the "Governor is himself acting like a BJP's agent." Questioning his integrity Ghosh said "we want an inquiry into the funding of his latest book which has been printed out of the Raj Bhavan's funds ... he has an emblem of Ashok Stambha on his book ... can he do that ... I also want to ask how many flights he has taken to various places ... how many tickets he has purchased for himself and his people ... he is himself a corrupt person who

# Foreign terrorist neutralised in gunfight in Rajouri's forests

**MOHIT KANDHARI** JAMMU

A foreign terrorist possibly hailing from Pakistan was neutralized in a firefight in the thickly forested area of Gundha-Khawas village of Rajouri even as special forces airdropped by the Indian Air Force helicopters aided by Night enabled Quadcopters, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and Sniffer Dogs continued their massive combing and search operations during Sunday to track down the footprints of holed up terrorists in the area.

The operation was launched Saturday afternoon after some locals tipped off village defense committee members after spotting the movement of a group of sus-pected personnel dressed in combat fatigue.

Addressing a joint press conference in the Rajouri District Police Line on Sunday, Additional Director General of Police Mukesh Singh accompanied by GOC Romeo Force Mohit Trivedi told reporters, in the ongoing operation a suspected Pakistani terrorist dressed in combat uniform was killed and a huge cache of arms and ammunition, including an AK assault rifle and two piswere recovered from

ADGP claimed that the

from Pakistan and that it was evident from the material, including medicines and shoes, recovered from him.

"One more terrorist is present in the village and an encounter is on," he said, adding the seizure from the encounter scene, including raincoats and food items, indicated that they were trained to survive in jungle conditions.

He referred to the killing of six terrorists in recent encounters, including four in the Surankote area of Poonch on July 18, and said attempts to disturb the peaceful atmosphere by pushing terrorists on unabated from across the

attempts and wipe out terrorism from the region," Singh said.

Sharing their current assessment of the prevailing security situation in the region the senior officers claimed, "About three groups of terrorists, each comprising two to three ultras, are operating in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri and Poonch districts.

"Two or three groups of terrorists are believed to be present in the (Pir Panial) region. Each group comprises two to three terrorists but divulging their exact number the Army's Romeo Force Major General Mohit Trivedi, "We are making double told reporters in Rajouri.

Major General Mohit Trivedi said the induction of homemade new firearms and night-vision devices have improved the capability of the forces and "we promise to ensure a peaceful atmosphere".

In Kashmir division, security forces on Sunday foiled an infiltration bid when they killed a terrorist near the Line of Control in Jammu Kashmir's Kupwara district.

The bid was foiled in the Amrohi area of Tangdhar.

"Army and Kupwara police in a joint operation foiled an infiltration bid by neutralizing a terrorist on Tangdhar sector", Jammu and Kashmir police said in a

#### IndiGo flyers suffer as AC conks off on...

Warring, in his tweet, expressed his dismay at the horrifying experience, emphasizing that the ACs were not functioning from takeoff to landing, leaving all the passengers to suffer throughout the journey. He also pointed out that no officials addressed the issue, causing restlessness among women and chil-

The Punjab leader criticized the airline for prioritizing financial gains over passenger health and comfort, labeling the situation a major technical issue that was ignored for monetary rea-

He urged the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to take strict action against Indigo Airlines and the responsible authorities to prevent passengers from going through such traumatic experiences

#### **Minors** tortured in UP over theft...

Additionally, a man allegedly injected a yellow-colored liquid, believed to be petrol, into the boys.

incident, and as of now, six of them have been arrested. Police are actively conducting raids to

apprehend the remaining two individuals mentioned in the FIR.Siddharthnagar Additional Superintendent of Police, Siddhartha, confirmed the The shocking videos authenticity of the viral video prompted widespread con- and assured that appropriate demnation, and the Uttar legal actions have been initiat-Pradesh police promptly took ed. The incident is said to action. Eight individuals were have occurred on August 4 at Chauraha of the Pathra Bazaar police station area in Siddharthnagar.

of motorcycle-borne masked

men on Sunday allegedly van-

dalised some shops and injured

a few people at two places in

Panipat. The attackers targeted

shops belonging to the mem-

bers of a particular communi-

ty at two places in Panipat, the

Later, the police rounded

Zaidi from Hyderabad

police said.

An apex Meitei organisation COCOMI, which has

been spearheading demands for an early session of the Assembly to "unanimously" reject demands for separate administrative units for Kukis, however, claimed that it would ensure safety of tribal MLAs if "they really want to come."

law and order situation, it will not be possible on my part to attend the upcoming session," said LM Khaute, BJP MLA for Churachandpur, one of the worst-hit districts by the ongoing race riots, in a telephonic interview to PTI.

Tongmang Haokip, president of the Kuki People's Alliance (KPA), also told PTI, "The MLAs will not be safe travelling to Imphal ... one BJP MLA Vungzagin Valte who represents Thanlon was badly assaulted there, he is

hension could be addressed only "if there is a guarantee from the state Government and the Centre and adequate steps are taken for the safety

Police has suspended five police personnel including the station incharge of the area where the incident of two women being stripped and paraded by a mob had taken place on May 4, officials said on Sunday.

is pointing fingers at others." **Manipur** 

From Page 1

"Accordingly, the support of the KPA to the Government of Manipur is hereby withdrawn and can be considered null and void,"

again: 1

in the Assembly - Kimneo Haokip Hangshing from Saikul and Chinlunthang from Singhat. The NPP has seven MLAs and the NPF has five. The Congress, too, has five legislators.

Kuki MLAs irrespective of their party affiliations are unlikely to attend the Manipur Assembly session slated to be called from August 21 in view of the continued ethnic violence, according to leaders from the community.

lence and the lack of a resolution to demands made by the Kukis for a separate administration "will not make it possible for all the Kuki-Zomi-Hmar MLAs to attend the session.

MLAs, including seven from the BJP, two from the Kuki People's Alliance and one independent, in the Manipur House which has a strength of 60 members.

still under medical care.'

He added that this appre-

Meanwhile, Manipur

The officials said immediately after the video of the incident surfaced on July 19, Manipur police decided to suspend the station in-charge

ignites

of Nongpok Sekmai police station in Thoubal district

and four other police per-

promptly and has not been

reversed despite daily protests

by some sections of people

The action was taken

Haokip said in the letter.

The KPA has two MLAs

Meanwhile, most of the

For good measure, Khaute added that the vio-There are 10 Kuki-Zomi

from the majority community for their reinstatement, they said. The State police has also

ordered a time-bound inquiry under an Inspector General of Police to probe events leading to the looting of an armoury on August 3 in Bishnupur, they said.

Talking to PTI, the officials in the know of developments said that every effort was being made by the Manipur Police to end the cycle of violence in the state which began on May 3 between the majority Meitei

and tribal Kuki community. They said that the police had been working relentlessly to ensure that the breakdown in law and order was

addressed on an urgent basis. "Now for example, with the help of other agencies including the Army and Assam Rifles, we have mansupplies in surplus quantity. Around 300 people have been arrested so far in vari-

There have been many zero FIRs registered during the ethnic clashes and every claim has to be cross-

checked, they said. The officials said that a time-bound inquiry has been instituted in connection with the recent looting of arms and around 19,000 bullets from the headquarters of the

2nd India Reserve Battalion (IRB) located at Naranseina in Bishnupur district. An officer of the rank of Inspector General is heading the inquiry which will be completed within six weeks,

A crowd had gathered there on August 3 to march towards Churachandpur where the tribals were planning to carry out a mass burial of their people killed in ethnic clashes that broke out in the state on May 3, they

the officials said.

Highlighting the "proactive" approach of Manipur Police, the officials said that as many as 30 people were arrested after an attack on an Inspector General rank officer outside the airport last

Nine people including five Meira Paibis (Women torch bearers) were arrested in connection with the brutal killing of a Naga Maring lady on July 15.

"In Manipur, a day without an incident is called an 'absence of violence' and is not perceived as a thing that has become normal. It is a long way to go

before things can be normal," an official said.

## **Bulldozers continue to roll in.**

Meanwhile, the curfew in the Nuh district was lifted for the movement of the public from 9 am to 12 noon on Sunday.

Soon after the curfew was lifted, people stepped out of their homes to purchase vegetables at Nuh Sabzi Mandi. PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all, C.P. JOSEPH 5/0 LATE SH.
C.A. PAULOSE R/O Flat No.C-1/01,Sahyadri
CGHS Ltd., Plot No.5, Sector-12, Dwarka Ph-I,
New Delhi-110075 Allottee/owner of Flat No.
C-1/01,Sahyadri CGHS Ltd., Plot No.5, Sector-12
2, Dwarka Ph-I, New Delhi-110075, has applied
for conversion of the aforesaid flat from lease
hold to free hold in DDA. The original document
i.e. Share Certificate issued by society of the
above said flat has been lost, and an El.R./NCR
/IRNo. 736583/2023 at D.S./08/2023 to this
effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch,
Delhi. 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/Phone
No.8588821975 within 15 days from the date
of publication of this notice. The person claimin
g any right, interest, objection with respect to
this property, can personally inform or write to this property, can personally inform or write to President/Secretary,SAHYADRI CGHS LTD.o RAMPUR FERTILIZERS LTD.

CIN: L15136UP1988PLC010084 Email id- info@rampurfert.com Regd. Off.: Judges Bareilly Road, Rampur-244901 U.P. NOTICE OF BOARD MEETING

In pursuance of Regulation 47 of SEBI (LODR) 2015, Notice is hereby given that the meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Monday, 14th Day of August 2023, at 4:00 P.M. at: Judges Bareilly Road, Rampur-244901 U.P., inter alia, to consider, approve and adopt unaudited standalone and consolidated Financial Results for the quarter ended on 30th June, 2023 pursuant to Regulation 33 of (LODR) 2015.The said information is also available on the Company's website at www.rampurfert.com and the same has been also sent to CSE to upload on its website i.e. www.cse-india.com and MSE on its website i.e. www.msei.in.

By order of Board Sd/-

Date: 05.08.2023

Rajeev Kumar (Company Secretary)

The curfew was imposed in the district on August 1.

meanwhile, has extended the suspension of mobile internet and SMS services in Nuh till

hate posts that were circulated online before and after the July 31 communal violence in Nuh, Gurgaon police have got social media platforms to take

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Profectus Capital Pvt. Ltd., having its office at 7-E
Deendayal Research Institute 5th Floor, Swam
Ramitin Nagar, Rani Jhansi Road, Jhandevalar
Extension, Central Delhi, New Delhi — 110055
(Lender / Mortgagee) sanctioned credit facility to
Maharana Pratap Education Society, Krishna Devi
Yash Kumar, Harish Raghav (Borrower/ CoBorrower/ Mortgagor) on condition that the
Mortgagor shall mortgage the property more
particularly described in the schedule hereunde
written (said Property). The Mortgagor Mr. Yash
Kumar has confirmed and declared to my client tha
the said property is solely owned and possessed by
the mortgagor by virtue of Release Deed Date
28.01.2016 duty registered with the office of sub-

the said property is solely owned and possessed the mortgagor by virtue of Release Deed Date 128.01.2016 duly registered with the office of sut Registrar, Sohna under serial no. 3224. The Mortgagor further confirmed, declared and assure to my client that the said property is not involved any mortgage, lease, loan, surety, loss, succession reservation, acquisition, requisition or otherwis howsoever and free from all encumbrance an have clean and marketable title and exclusive rigid mortgage and deal with the said propert Therefore any person(s) having any right, titl interest or claim in respect of said property or an part thereof by way of sale, gift, lease, inharitance exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, frust, benefici interest, possession, easement, tenancy, situationary, licence, hypothecation, maintenance inharitance, power of altomay, order, decree, awar attachment or otherwise howsoever are hereit required to make the same known in writin together with supporting documents at undersigned address within 14 days from the date hereof, fallin which my client will proceed to disburse the load without any reference to such claim and the same, any, shall be considered deeded to have bee

The Haryana Government,

August 8.

down 200 such uploads, blocked four accounts and sent

Moreover, acting against

requests to suspend 16 more.

Haryana Home Minister

in Nuh were ignored.

From Page 1

was depressed.

Anil Vij has asked his Department's Additional Chief Secretary to investigate a criminal investigation department inspector's video in which he purportedly claimed that his early warnings about violence

After the demolition drive

A week earlier, Zaidi, who

went to the US to pursue a

master's degree, was found

starving on the streets of

Chicago. Further probe

revealed that all her belongings

had been stolen and that she

to the fore by Amjed Ullah

Khan, a spokesperson of the

Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT)

- a party based in Telangana.

the streets, her mother Syeda

Wahaj Fatima wrote to External

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

and urged him to "immediate-

ly interfere" and bring her

daughter back "as soon as pos-

daughter Syeda Lulu Minhaj

Zaidi went to pursue her

Master's in Information Science

"This is to state that my

After she was spotted on

Her condition was brought

in Nuh, Congress MLA Aftab Ahmed dubbed the drive "illegal", adding that "nothing will

be achieved by this action". "The accused should be punished severely if found guilty, but demolishing houses, shops of the poor is not right,"

he said. Moreover, a four-member CPI-delegation was stopped on their way to visit the vio-

lence-hit areas of Nuh on

Detroit, USA in Aug 2021... She

was in touch with us. For the

last two months, she was not in

touch with me and recently,

through two Hyderabadi

youths we came to know that

my daughter is in deep depres-

sion and all her belongings had

been stolen due to which she is

on the verge of starvation and

is being seen on the roads of

India comes to aid of starving scholar...

Sunday. "The police are not allowing the CPI delegation of top leaders (to visit violence-hit Nuh). Hooligans, goons, and miscreants can go freely, but democratic people who came here for peacemaking are stopped. We have decided to go back because we don't want any confrontation," said CPI leader

up 15 people and they are being questioned, an official in Binoy Viswam. Ámidst the tense situation prevailing in the State, a group Panipat said.

# from TRINE University, return to India. "After my

Chicago," the letter read. "It is requested to kindly ask the Embassy of India, Washington DC, USA, and the Indian Consulate in Chicago, USA to immediately interfere and bring back my daughter as soon as possible to India. Necessary action taken in this regard may be informed," she added.

MBT spokesman Khan

said they had appealed to

Jaishankar to facilitate her

tweet, I received a reply from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Consulate in Chicago that she is not in a condition to travel immediately.""We are trying to send her parents to Chicago to take care of her. The parents do not have passports. We have appealed to IT Minister KTR (Telangana) to help them get passports and visas from the US Consulate in Hyderabad. Many individuals and organisations have come forward for their trip to the US," he said.

"We also got a quick ponse from the response Government. We thank S Jaishankar, and Indian Consulate in Chicago, and also all the organisations that have come forward to help them," Khan added.

went to pursue MS from TRINE University, Detroit was found in a very bad condition in Chicago, IL. Her mother has appealed to Dr S Jaishankar to bring back her daughter. Would appreciate immediate help," the MBT spokesperson had earlier tweeted. Zaidi (37) kept in touch with her family. But around two

months back, she stopped contacting them. Her worried family got to know of Zaidi's condition after a video surfaced showing her in a weakened and muddled state, languishing on the streets of Chicago with a few belongings. In the clip, a concerned man can be heard assuring the woman and promising to arrange food for her. He also advises her to return to India to seek support and care.

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#### **NORTH-EAST DELHI RIOTS**

# L-G grants sanction for prosecution of 6 accused

ieutenant Governor V K Saxena has granted sanc-⊿tion for the prosecution of six individuals accused in a case related to the North-East Delhi communal riots of 2020. in which a man lost his life due to gunshot injuries.

The investigation revealed that a deep-rooted conspiracy was hatched under the guise of opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Bill, which eventually led to the riots in the North-East District of Delhi.

The case pertains to the death of 25-year-old Shahid, also known as Allah Mehar, a resident of Gali No 17, New Mustafabad, who succumbed to gunshot injuries on February 24,

The Lieutenant Governor granted prosecution sanction in FIR No 84/2020, filed on March 1, 2020, at the Dayal Pur police station in Delhi. The accused

individuals named in the case are Mohd Firoz, Chand Mohd, Rais Khan, Md Junaid, Irshad, and Akil Ahmed. They are being charged under sections 153 A and 505 of the Indian Penal Code Section 153A of the IPC

penalizes "promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony." The offense carries a maximum punishment of three years imprisonment, a fine, or both.

Section 505 (1) under which prosecution has been sought deals with cases of "Statements conducing to public mischief." The section punishes those who make, publish, or circulate any statement, rumor, or report with the intent to cause fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public, inducing them to commit an offense against the State or public tranquility. The



punishment for this offense may extend up to three years of imprisonment or a fine, or both.

During the investigation, the six arrested individuals confessed to their involvement in the riots. They forcibly entered the premises of Saptarishi Ispat and Alloys Pvt Ltd, looting the firm's office along with other

The victim sustained the gunshot injury on the rooftop of the company located at the service road near 25 Foota Chand Bagh, Main Wazirabad Road Delhi, close to Chand Bagh Mazar, during the incident of the

communal riot on February 24,

The investigation of the case was transferred to the Crime Branch, which examined witnesses and analyzed collected evidence, including a viral video on social media from a TV Channel.

Investigations into riots

cases that occurred during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Bill revealed that the conspirators had been circulating pamphlets and canvassing in Muslim-dominated areas, spreading false information about the Centre intending to take away the citizenship of Muslims and confining them in detention camps.

The Lieutenant Governor granted the sanction for prosecution under Section 196 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973. The FIR No 84/2020 was initially lodged under Section 144, other relevant sections if available

## Court acquits two accused

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

court here has acquitted Atwo people in a case of arson, assault and dacoity during the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, saying the charges were "not proved at all."

The court was hearing a case against Sonu, Ranjeet Singh, Virender and Rohit, who were accused of being a part of a riotous mob that torched an autorickshaw, besides robbing the auto driver, in Karawal Nagar here during the riots on February 24, 2020.

While Sonu died during the trial, proceedings against Singh were dropped in January 2021.

"I find that charges levelled in the case are not proved at all. Hence, accused Virender and Rohit are acquitted of all charges levelled against them," Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala said in an order passed on August 3. He said the incident as

reported by the complainant and auto driver Monish was "established to be caused by an unlawful assembly, which was out on the road and indulged into riot, assault and arson.

Regarding the identification of the two accused persons as part of the riotous mob, the court noted that as Monish did not know anyone from the mob, nor did he remember their faces, he could not identify any culprit before the court.

Therefore, even if it is concluded that the mob, during the prevailing riot on February 24, 2020, was responsible for the alleged incident, it cannot be said that the accused persons herein were liable for the incident," the court said.

The Karawal Nagar police station had registered an FIR against the accused persons under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including rioting, arson and



#### Internship programme launched for environment, wildlife enthusiasts

STAFF REPORTER **NEW DELHI** 

The Delhi government Sunday launched an internship programme to engage youth in environmental and forestry pur-

The internship portal was inaugurated during the fourth Van Mahotsav ceremony held at the Polo Ground of Delhi University.

Launching the online portal, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said this newly unveiled programme aims to introduce college students to the inner workings of the Department of Forest and Wildlife.

The minister emphasised the platform's dual role, envisaging its utility in both nurturing young minds and harnessing their potential to explore innovative technologies for forest and wildlife management, a statement said.

'This initiative will channel the energy of youth towards enhancing our understanding and preservation of these vital ecosystems," the statement quot-

ed Rai as saying.

College students interested in the internship can apply on the website https://internship.Eforest.D elhi.Gov.In, the statement

## Man who desecrated Ambedkar statue to be prosecuted

STAFF REPORTER

ieutenant Governor V K Leutenain Governor tioned the prosecution of a person accused in the incident of desecration of a statue of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar at the MCD Park in South East Delhi last August.

Delhi Police sought sanction for the prosecution of accused Rohit Harsana for the commission of offence under section 153A of the Indian Penal Code for the incident of



30.08.2022 registered at the

During the investigation,

statement admitted his guilt. Harsana admitted that he committed the act with the intention to hurt the sentiments of the SC/ST people.

Three eyewitnesses were examined by the police. They said that they had seen the accused roaming around the idol of Dr. Ambedkar situated in the MCD Park.

The witnesses recorded their statements that the accused was looking around again and again and after a while picked up a stone lying there and hit on the head of the statue due to which

half of the head fell down and the accused ran away from the back side of the park.

They had told the police that the accused runs a dairy in Madanpur Khadar and lives in

The accused who was arrested is presently on bail. The FIR was registered under sections 295, 153A and 427 of

The LG has granted the sanction for prosecution under Section 196 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC),

## Two shooters of Kala Jathedi gang nabbed after encounter with police

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

wo suspected sharpshootl ers of the Kala Jathedi gang were arrested on Sunday after a brief exchange of fire in southwest Delhi's Dhulsiras area, police said.

The accused have been identified as Vicky (26) and 24year-old Narender, both residents of Sonipat in Haryana. Two sophisticated pistols and five live rounds were seized from them, they said.

Following information that two shooters of the gang would come to Dwarka, allegedly to eliminate someone, the police reached Dhulsiras Chowk and started checks after barricading the carriageway, Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) Ravindra Singh Yadav

The police team intercept-Chawla Drain Road towards Dhulsiras Chowk. When the two riders were signalled to Jathedi's associate Naresh



During this, they fell off the motorcycle and started firing at the police. The police returned fire and nabbed the pair, Yadav

On January 30, Ashudeep and Anshuman -- two shooters of the Kala Jathedi gang visited Ramphal Chowk in Dwarka and threatened a real pay Rs 2 crore. They also evening and fired at him. They made him speak to Kala

Sethi over the phone, the

The police later arrested Ashudeep and Anshuman, they

On July 31, the real estate dealer again received a call to pay Rs 2 crore from the Kala Jathedi and Naresh Sethi gang. Three assailants, including Vicky and Narender, came to also left a handwritten extor-

#### Class 3 student killed by speeding truck in Faridabad

STAFF REPORTER FARIDABAD (HARYANA)

seven-year-old boy was Acrushed to death by a speeding truck in the Green Field Colony of Faridabad on Sunday, An FIR was registered at

search launched for the truck driver, who fled with his vehi-

Man arrested

from Jh'khand

A<sup>21-year-old</sup> man was arrested from Jharkhand

for allegedly duping people on

the pretext of facilitating pay-

ments on an e-wallet by down-

loading an application on their

phones, police said on Sunday.

identified as Prawin Poddar, a

received a call regarding an offer on her e-wallet. The

complainant said she followed the instructions given over

the call and downloaded an

application, a senior police officer said. The caller allegedly asked her to put in the first five digits of her mobile num-

ber in the app, which she did and then her UPI PIN, after

which she received messages

from her bank of Rs 99,104

being debited from her

During the investigation, it was revealed that the bank

account belonged to Odisha

and the miscreant was making

the call from Deoghar. The

calling number was traced

and Poddar was arrested fol-

lowing a raid, Deputy Commissioner of Police

(Shahdara) Rohit Meena said.

accused was analysed and an

application called Rustdesk

A phone seized from the

account twice, police said.

resident of Deoghar.

The accused has been

A case was registered after a woman alleged that she

for duping

people

STAFF REPORTER

The victim, identified as Aadi, was riding his bicycle outside the family's home in Green Field Colony when he was crushed by the truck, the police said.

Aadi was a student of Class 3 at Amrita Vidyalayam School in Saket, New Delhi. His father observer of economics and mathematics at Manav Rachna University, they added.

**STAFF** REPORTER NEW DELHI n Uzbek woman has been

Aapprehended at the Delhi

international airport for

allegedly carrying medicines worth Rs 75 lakh in an alleged

unauthorised manner, the CISF

She was intercepted during a security check on August 4

after she arrived at the termi-

nal-3 of the Indira Gandhi

International (IGI) Airport to

take an Air Astana flight to

produce any supporting docu-

As the woman could not

Almaty (Kazakhstan).

said on Sunday.

Kumar said his son was cycling on the road near the house when the truck came at high speed from the side of the water tank and hit him. He died on the spot, the police said.

Locals gave the truck a chase but the driver managed to flee. The vehicle's registration police are trying to nab the driver based on the information,

IGI Airport: Uzbek woman held

with ₹75 lakh worth medicines

### 6-year-old girl raped by neighbour in Seelampur

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

six-year-old girl was Asix-year-old g...

Allegedly raped by her neighbour in northeast Delhi's Seelampur area, police said on

The 40-year-old accused is absconding, police said. The incident took place on

Saturday and a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and 6/10 (sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act was registered at Seelampur

According to police, the accused owns a flour mill.

# **Income certificate for EWS category** in city to only be issued online

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

he Delhi government has The Delni government rolled out a facility for people from the EWS category to get their income and asset certificates online, according to a notification.

Income and asset certificates are key documents for people from the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) to get admission in schools, universities and for other purposes.

According to an official notification issued on August 1,

the certificates will now be issued only through the online mode, cutting out the need to visit the subdivisional magistrate's office.

According to the official notification, "All concerned subdivisional magistrates (ie issuing authority) are hereby informed that the service 'Income and Assets Certificate for Economically Weaker Section' has been launched on the e-district portal with immediate effect and the aforesaid certificate will be issued through



online mode only henceforth

The notification also underlined that applications received prior to the launch of the online service will be disposed off

"Further, it is clarified that the manual applications received for the aforesaid certificate prior to the launch of the said online service and still pending on the date of go-live shall be disposed of manually by the cer-tificate issuing authority, as per the prescribed timeline," it added.

Those with current gross annual incomes of Rs 8 lakh or lower are eligible for reservation in jobs and academic institutions under the EWS category.

beaten the brother of one of the

# Cop, IT dept staffer among 5 held for conducting fake raid at bizman's house

The Central Industrial

Security Force is deployed at

the IGI Airport to provide it a

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

ive people, including a Delhi Police head constable and an Income Tax (IT) department staffer were arrested for allegedly conducting a fake raid at a businessman's house in west Delhi's Janakpuri area, police said on Sunday.

Head constable Kuldeep Singh posted at the Crime Branch unit of the city police, Deepak Kashyap posted as PS to ADG II Vigilance Income tax department JLN stadium along with Himanshu, Ravinder and Shambhu Sharma, a senior

police officer said. While two people, including was found in it, the DCP said. a woman, are absconding and

efforts are being made to nab them, the officer said. According to another police

ments for carrying the huge

cache of medicines, she was

handed over to the Customs

authorities for further investi-

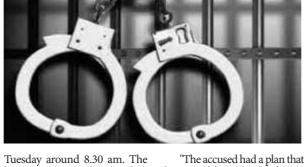
gation, a senior officer of the

officer, the IT staffer received information that a businessman in Janakpuri had around Rs 400 to Rs 500 crore in his house.

Just before the raid, one of the six accused asked others to include a woman as well in their plan so that the raids would look authentic, the officer

He suggested that there are women in the house and when they enter the premises, no one would suspect anything and inform the police after seeing a woman with them, the officer

The incident took place on



businessman -- Kuljeet Singh -they would enter the house when the head of the family lives with his wife, sons and their (Singh) was inside. They will families in the house. The scammers entered Singh's house portray that a genuine raid is when he left his home for work, going on and they would ask him for around Rs 10 to 15 crore in

when they reached the house, they found that the businessman, who has a business related to the lift operation in UP's Noida, had already left" the officer said.

"Thereafter, they had to conduct a fake search operation in the house. They claimed that they were carrying a search warrant and took the mobile phone of all the family members and conducted the fake search in which they could not find anything and left the place in their car," the officer said.

Police further stated that one of the family members informed Singh and their neighbours about the incident and later, they approached the local police.

#### death in Khizrabad with Hritik as to why he had

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

servant quarter of a house in NFC, and his friends Sonu (18) and Prashant (19), both residents of Tamiur Nagar, were going towards C V Raman Marg from Khizrabad on a motorcycle when an unidentified man stopped them, a senior police officer said. The man started arguing

man was killed and his two accused Shahrukh. Meanwhile, Afriends were injured in a Shahrukh (21) and two others fight with another group in Shoaib (18) and Masoom (19) southeast Delhi's New Friends came there and attacked Hritik Colony (NFC) area on Sunday, police said. The incident took and his friends with a knife and stick, the officer said. place near Kohli Park, Khizrabad Hritik sustained multiple wounds on his chest, neck and around 4 pm, they said. Hritik (21), who lived in the abdomen and was admitted to

Man stabbed to

Lion Hospital. He was later shifted to AIIMS Trauma Centre where he was declared dead. Sonu and Prashant sustained minor injuries and have been discharged from the hospital, he said. A forensic team visited the incident spot and seized a stick with blood stains on it.

# India regularly engaged Ukraine, Russia; favours diplomacy to end war: Doval

**SERVICE/AGENCIES** NEW DELHI/JEDDAH

National Security Advisor(NSA)Ajit Doval has said India has regularly engaged both Russia and Ukraine at the highest levels since the conflict started last year and favoured dialogue and diplomacy to end the war.

Making this assertion at the meeting of NSAs of nearly 30 countries in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia over this weekend, he also said "The key question that needs to be addressed in this meeting is whether a solution that is acceptable to all relevant stakeholders can be found. India will remain an active and willing partner to find a lasting and comprehensive solution. Nothing will give India more happiness and satisfaction than



such an outcome.

The two-day conference, hosted by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman in Jeddah was attended by top security officials of around 40 countries. Russia was not invited to the conference.

Enunciating the country's position clear at the high-level meet, Doval said "India supports the global order based on

principles enshrined in UN Charter and international law. Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity by all states must be upheld without excep-

He added that all peace efforts involving all stakeholders must be pursued to find a just and enduring solution and this is why India participated in the meeting in Jeddah.

especially the global South is bearing the brunt of the situation. India is providing both humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and economic assistance to its neighbours in the global South. India's approach has been and always will be to promote dialogue and diplo-

macy.
This is the only way forward for peace," said Doval.

Talking about the meeting, he said it faces a two-fold challenge - resolution of the situation and softening the consequences of the conflict. "Efforts must be directed on both fronts simultaneously and much more groundwork is needed to ensure this," Doval said.

He also hinted at peace proposals being offered to both Russia and Ukraine but none is acceptable to the countries.

"Currently, several peace proposals have been put forward. Each has some positive points but none is acceptable to both sides," he said. The 40-odd participants

for the Jeddah summit included Chile, Egypt, the European Union, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States, China and Zambia besides others, reports indicated. The absence of Russia is strange since Saudi Arabia has always maintained good relations with China and

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Japan. Modi told Zelensky that India will do whatever possible to find a solution to the con-

#### Panel examining ban on polygamy submits report to Assam CM

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said the committee formed by the Assam Government to examine legislative competence to ban polygamy in the state has submitted its report and asserted that it is as a step to further 'women empowerment".

The state Chief Minister has for sometime been maintaining that his Government would "end" polygamy in Assam before 2024.

Taking to Twitter, Sarma said "Today, the Expert Committee, formed to examine the legislative competence of the State Legislature to enact a law to end polygamy in Assam, submitted its report. Assam is now closer of creating a positive ecosystem for women's empowerment irrespective of caste, creed or religion."

Sarma had earlier asserted that a ban on polygamy in Assam will be imposed before

2024 and announced the formation of the four-member expert committee headed by Justice (Retd) Rumi Kumari Phukan on May 12.

The expert committee was given three months' time to submit its report.

The committee was initially given a deadline of 60 days to submit its report. It was tasked to scrutinise the provisions of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, 1937 along with Article 25 of the Constitution in relation to the Directive Principles of State

Code (UCC).

On July 13, Sarma had said the Assam government conveyed to the authorities concerned that it was in support of the UCC and wanted to ban polygamy immediately in

As the report is now tabled before the Chief Minister, the state government may move to bring a law banning polygamy in Assam in next assembly

The move is significant as it has come close to the Centre's efforts to legislate UCC.

### Cong issues whip to its RS MPs, asks them to be present in House today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the Delhi services bill likely to be taken up in Rajya Sabha, the Congress has issued a three-lined whip to its MPs asking them to be present in the Upper House till its adjournment on Monday. Jairam Ramesh, the

Congress' chief whip in the Upper House, issued the three-lined whip on August 4, saying that "very important issues will be taken up for discussion in Rajya Sabha on Monday i.E. August 7, 2023".

"All members of Congress Party in Rajya Sabha are requested to kindly remain present in the House from 11 am onwards till the adjournment of the House on Monday, August 7, 2023, without fail and support the party stand," the chief whip

This may be treated as most important, Ramesh



On Sunday, a reminder was also sent to the party's MPs in Rajya Sabha.

"Be present positively in Rajya Sabha from 10:45 am onwards till the adjournment of the House on Monday i.E. August 7, 2023, and support the party stand, as important items of Legislative Business

will be taken up for voting.

Three-line whip in this regard has already been issued," the reminder said.

The government is likely to bring the Delhi Services Bill for its consideration and passage in Rajya Sabha on Monday, sources said.

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, to replace the ordinance on transfers and postings of senior officers in the Delhi government was passed by Lok Sabha on Thursday amid a walkout by the oppo-

#### No hike in rail fares in name of station revamp: Vaishnaw ple...The political class of

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There has been no hike in fares in the name of station redevelopment project, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Sunday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the revamp of 508 stations across the country.

Vaishnaw said about Rs 25,000 crore needed for the redevelopment project will be allocated through the current Budget, asserting that the project is aimed at facilitating seamless travel for passengers across all strata of society.

"PM Modi is working to elevate the lives of the common people. The aim of station redevelopment is the same. We want them to have world class stations without any burden. We have not increased fare or fixed a fee in the name of station redevelopment," said Vaishnaw at a press conference

The Railways has envisaged a plan to redevelop almost 1,300 prime stations in the country as 'Amrit Bharat



Stations'. On Sunday, Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation stone for 508 Amrit Bharat Stations.

In Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, 55 each such stations will be developed at the cost of about Rs 4,000 crore, 34 stations in Madhya Pradesh at approx Rs 1,000 crore, and 44 in Maharashtra at 1,500 crore. Besides, several railway stations in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, among others, will be redeveloped. Vaishnaw said that the

Railways is training around 9,000 engineers to be part of the station redevelopment project to abreast them of the nittygritty of the project which includes analysis of contract documents, architecture, design, and safety. There has been no dis-

crimination against any state for this project. Over the next two years, we will be able to see substantial progress in the work. We believe in equitable development. Modiji has always said that we will lay the foundation stone of the project and we will inaugurate it too, explaining the speed at which we need to complete the project," he said.

Answering a question on long pending projects like the Sabarimala Rail in Kerala, the railways minister said it was a special case as the state government has "very little interest" in development. The Kerala government

does not have that much interest in the development of the state. That is why even for small things like survey or preparing detailed project report we find so much resistance that it's really difficult to do any work. Even then the Centre is committed to development of rail network in Kerala.

"I will give you one exam-

Kerala created a totally imaginary narrative that Vande Bharat train will not be given to the state. But you see Vande Bharat has been given to every The prime minister said state which has electrified broad gauge network. We believe that the entire country should grow simultaneously but we need the support of state

governments," he said. Earlier, while speaking after the foundation laying ceremony, Prime Minister Modi said in the last nine years, the length of rail tracks laid in the country is more than the combined railway network in South Africa, Ukraine, Poland, the UK and Sweden.

Modi further said that in the last year alone, India laid more railway tracks than the combined railway network of South Korea, New Zealand and Australia.

Today, he said, the government is working to make the rail journey accessible as well as pleasant. "The effort is to provide the best possible experience while on a train or at a station," he added.

He also mentioned better seating arrangements at platforms, upgraded waiting rooms and free Wi-Fi at thousands of

that the modernisation of so many stations will create a new atmosphere for development in the country as they will create a good 'first impression' among the visitors. Ŭpgraded stations will

not only increase tourism but will also give a push to economic activities in the nearby areas, the PM said, adding that the number of unmanned level crossings on large lines is now down to zero.

Pointing out the difficulties faced due to the lack of railway bridges, the prime minister said that there were "less than 6,000 rail overbridges and underbridges before 2014, but today, that number has gone beyond 10,000".

Speaking about the convenience for passengers, the prime minister underlined that special emphasis is being laid upon the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities.

#### Par panel suggests steps to encourage women to join CAPFs, reservation for transgenders

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $H^{ighlighting}$  the low representation of women in the Central Armed Police Forces, a parliamentary committee has asked the Union home ministry to take steps to encourage them to join the services, besides recommending a reservation for transgenders.

In its latest report, the panel said a policy may be explored for women officers to be given soft postings and not subject them to extremely strenuous working conditions.

The Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, headed by BJP MP Sushil Kumar Modi, said the representation of women personnel in the CAPFs and Assam Rifles is 3.76 per cent as on September 30, 2022



The Committee advocates that all necessary steps should be taken by MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) to encourage women to join forces to the maximum possible extent. A major constraint that prevents women from joining forces is the difficult terrains and conditions in which they might have to work," it said in its 131st report on the "Review of Functioning of Recruitment Organisations of Government



## NIA arrest another PFI member in Patna case

Further tightening its noose around the unlawful and Popular Front of India (PFI), the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested one more accused in the Patna case relating to the banned outfit's conspiracy to disturb peace and drive a communal wedge in the country.

The accused, Shahid Reza of Chakia area of East Champaran district of Bihar, was arrested on Saturday, taking the total arrests by NIA in the case to 16.

Reza was taken into custody by the NIA based on the disclosures made by another accused, Md. Yaqub Khan alias Sultan during its investigations.

The agency searched Reza's house and also seized one pistol, ammunition, an air-pistol, one sword and two knives. These weapons were given to Reza by Md. Yaqub



Khan to be kept in safe custody, the NIA said in a state-

NIA has been carrying out extensive investigations in the case relating to unlawful and anti-national activities of members of PFI.

It had earlier arrested 15 accused in the case and also seized several incriminating articles/documents relating to the radical organisation which was raising a PFI Army by radicalization and indoctrination of youth through

false and communal narratives, at the behest of antinational forces operating from across the border, to wage a war against the coun-

try, the agency said. 'The accused had been promoting the unlawful and violent agenda and activities of the PFI and channelising illegal funds from abroad to the PFI members/accused persons in this case for carrying out violent terror acts, it said.

Investigations by the

agency have also exposed the sinister agenda of the PFI, which had been engaged in organizing arms and terror radicalized youth in use of weapons, swords and iron rods to wreak terror and vengeance on their 'enemies'.

On January 7, 2023, the NIA had chargesheeted four accused, followed by a supplementary chargesheet against four more accused on August 3, 2023.

The supplementary chargesheet was filed before the NIA Special Court, Patna against Md Tanweer alias Md Tanweer, Md Aabid, Md Belal and Md. Irshad Alam, who were engaged in propagating the ideology of the banned outfit and in planning criminal acts by arranging arms and ammunition. The case was initially registered as FIR No. 827/2022 dated July 12, 2022 at Phulwarisharif police station of Patna district. It was re-registered by the NIA on July 22, 2022.

#### People supporting Art 370 abrogation unaware of ground situation: Azad

PTI JAMMU

Democratic Progressive Azad Party chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad on Sunday said some people supporting the abrogation of Article 370 in the Supreme Court are unaware of the ground situation and history of Jammu and Kashmir.

He expressed firm belief in the Supreme Court, hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the abrogation of the constitutional provision, and said Article 370 was scrapped in an 'unconstitutional" manner.

"Those who are opposing (Article 370 in the Supreme Court) do not know the ground situation, history, geography, advantages and disadvantages of the constitutional provision. It was not meant for any particular area, province or religion but was

You are now at right place, but



ple living in cities and villages," Azad told reporters on the sidelines of a public rally in Doda district.

He was responding to a question about some parties filing petitions in support of the abrogation of Article 370

in the Supreme Court.
The Centre abrogated Article 370 granting special status to Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019, and bifurcated the erstwhile state into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

#### Centre sanctioned additional 6.5K personnel in last 18 months to CISF's ASG

PNS NEW DELHI

The Centre has sanctioned **1** an additional 6,500 personnel over the last 18 months to the specialised aviation security group (ASG) of the CISF that secures 66 civil airports of the country.

The enhanced manpower allocation is aimed at catering to the ever-increasing load of passengers and expansion of the existing facilities.

With the allocation of fresh personnel, the overall strength of this unit deployed to secure civil airports against terrorist, hijack and sabotage threats is now about 37,000 men and women including trained commandos, officials said.

The fresh manpower has been granted to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) primarily for three rea-



ger traffic volume, expansion of existing airports and the creation of new ones, they said.

The Union home ministry has sanctioned these posts in a gradual manner over the last one-and-a-half year so that around 6,500 personnel could be permanently inducted into the ASG, trained in aviation security procedures and deployed for security duties at 66 airports under the CISF

cover at present. Out of this fresh strength, about 1,700 personnel have been earmarked for the international airport in Bengaluru and 1,400 for the Delhi international airport, sources said.

Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru got a new terminal last November while the Indira Gandhi International Airport has seen an enhanced passenger traffic and expansion of terminals over the last few years. Some of the airports where

this capacity and manpower augmentation will be done include those in Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Chennai. The government has

accorded in-principle approval for deploying its armed personnel at the upcoming greenfield airports at Jewar in Greater Noida (Uttar Pradesh) and Navi Mumbai in

#### Will not abandon Jamui: Chirag

PTI ■ PATNA

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president Chirag Paswan on Sunday announced that he would seek re-election from Jamui, the Lok Sabha seat he is representing for the second consecutive term. Chirag made a statement

to the effect in his constituency, amid speculations that he was planning to shift base and move to Hajipur, which his late father Ram Vilas Paswan nurtured over several decades. "I would not comment

much on politics, things like who will contest from where. But I wish to assure the people of Jamui that I am committed to make this district among the most developed ones in Bihar. I came here as a youngster and will be here till I grow old", the 40 years old leader said.

Chirag has been engaged

in a tiff with his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras, who represents Hajipur currently and became a Union minister after splitting the LJP two years

While the group headed by Paras has come to be known as Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party, the one helmed by Chirag is called Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas). Of late, Chirag has been

claiming that his late father, who chose the Rajya Sabha route in 2019, had wanted him to contest the last Lok Sabha polls from Hajipur. The claim has been strongly contested by Paras even as an unfazed Chirag, whom his

uncle refuses to acknowledge as a part of the BJP-led NDA, has

been asserting that "a candidate

of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram

Vilas) will contest from Hajipur

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Sunday shared the dais with Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar at an event in Pune and

but "came very late" Shah's statement comes more than a month after Aiit Pawar, the nephew of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founder Sharad Pawar, joined the ruling Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government led by Eknath Shinde along with eight party MLAs on July 2. Pawar was made deputy chief minister, while the other eight MLAs, including Chhagan Bhujbal

and Dilip Walse Patil, were

sworn in as ministers.



"This is my first public programme with Ajit Pawar. I want to tell him that he is now sitting at the right place after a long time. This was always the right place for you, but you came to sit here very late," Shah

Shah was speaking after launching the digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) office. CM Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra

Fadnavis were also present at the event. Speaking at the same event, Pawar praised Shah for bring-

ing positive changes in the country's cooperative sector. 'Shah is a son-in-law of Maharashtra, hence he loves Maharashtra more than Gujarat from where he comes. Whether you agree or not, everyone develops more love towards the home of in-laws," Pawar

# Modi launches redevelopment UP Assembly Shrawan pushes works of 3 Varanasi stations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the rejuvenation of 508 railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) including three stations of his parliamentary constituency through virtual medium on Sunday. Top district, police, Railway and other officers apart from ministers, MLAs and other public representatives were present at Banaras, Varanasi City and Kashi railway stations to watch the laying foundation ceremony of redevelopment works at these stations.

Out of 508 railway stations across the country which will be developed with the cost of Rs 24,470 crore, three station of PM's constituency will get stateof-the-art rejuvenation at the cost of Rs 463.2 crore which includes Rs 350 crore for Kashi station of Northern Railway (NR), Rs 53.33 crore for Banaras and Rs 59.87 crore for Varanasi City, both are of North Eastern Railway (NER). In his address, the PM said that the new design of all these stations will be based on the local culture and heritage and India is taking steps towards the goal of development and it is at the beginning of its gold-

At Kashi railway station, UP Cabinet Minister Anil Rajbhar said that in the coming time, the country's stations will look like airports while UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal while addressing the function at Varanasi City said that rejuvenation of railway stations



People watching PM's launching of ABSS at Banaras railway station on Sunday

the culture of city so that the passengers coming to the station get the feeling of coming

Another UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' praised the redevelopment work of stations while speaking at Banaras railway sta-

At all these stations, different cultural and other programmes were organised. As Banaras and Varanasi City sta-tions of NER have already developed to a great extent, the biggest fund has been allocat-ed under the ABSS to NR's Kashi station, located near Rajghat and PM's 'dream pro-Namo Ghat.

The function at Kashi station was also attended by MLA should be done according to Dr Neelkanth Tiwari, others.

Commissioner of Police (CP) Ashok Mutha Jain, District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam, and many senior officers of Indian Railways.

At Banaras railway station, the biggest function was organised and the Divisional Railway Manager (Varanasi Division of NER) Vineet Kumar Srivastava welcomed the guests including UP Minister Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', MLAs Saurabh Srivastava and Dr Aadhesh Singh, regional president of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Dilip Singh Patel, state treasurer Manish Kapoor and many others.

At Varanasi City , Chief Engineer Panna Lal welcomed UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya and many

Under the ABSS, these stations will be developed with a long-term perspective and in this direction a plan has been prepared for expansion of stateof-the-art facilities at stations, its circulating areas, platforms, waiting halls apart from widening of foot over bridges (FOBs) and installation of lifts and

Besides these three local stations, the other stations of Varanasi Divisions (NER) which will be redeveloped are Azamgarh, Deoria Sadar and

escalators.

The functions were also organised at many other stations of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) falling under different railway zones including Bhadohi, Chandauli, Mirzapur, Robertsganj, Chopan and some

# Speaker holds for caste-based all-party meet

Mahana seeks cooperation for smooth conduct of Vidhan Sabha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRA

Utar Pradesh Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana on Sunday sought the cooperation of the leaders of all the political parties for the smooth conduct of the proceedings of the Vidhan Sabĥa.

The monsoon session of the state assembly is beginning here from Monday.

Presiding over the meeting of the leaders of all political parties, Mahana said that debate in the House as per the established democratic conventions strengthened democracy and all parties should take part in the proceedings of the House. The leaders of different political parties assured the speaker of extending their cooperation for the smooth conduct of the proceedings of the House. The leaders said the conduct of the members and the proceedings of the assembly were role models for the rest of the country as the UP assembly was the largest state assembly in India. Mahana said every member would get the opportunity to raise the people-oriented issues and their grievances in the House. He said as

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Prayagraj police have doubled the reward amount from Rs 25,000 to Rs

50,000 on SP leader Pappu Ganjia, who was very close to

slain mafia Atiq Ahmed. More

than 15 cases are registered

against former corporator Pappu Ganjia and he is

absconding.

Named in many cases registered at various police stations, including Naini Kotwali

of Yamunanagar, Pappu Ganjia

is absconding in police records.

An FIR has been registered



during the earlier sessions, the members should raise their sues under relevant rules.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna assured the leaders of all political parties that the government was committed to meaningful and positive debate on all issues to be raised by the members.

Samajwadi Party president and the leader of opposition Akhilesh Yadav did not attend the meeting. The chief whip of SP, Manoj Pandey, attended the meeting. Rajpal Singh Baliyan from Rashtriya Lok Dal, Ram Vilas Verma from Apna Dal (Sonelal), Sanjay Nishad from NISHAD Party, Om Prakash Rajbhar from Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, Aradhana Mishra from Congress, Uma Shankar Singh from Bahujan Samaj Party

attended the all-party meeting. The assembly on Monday will take up obituary references and express condolence of the demise of former members. On August 7 and August 11, the House will congratulate the members of the Vidhan Sabha whose birthday falls in this

386, 323, 504, 586 IPC under

A reward of Rs 25,000 was

case crime number 257/2022 at

declared on him by the police administration. That prize

money has been increased to

Rs 50,000 now. According to

Commissioner of Police,

Santosh Kumar Meena, Mohd

Javed alias Pappu Ganjia, son of

Hifazat Ali and a resident of

Ganjia village of Naini Kotwali

many cases, including murder,

area, is a history-sheeter.

Naini Kotwali.

Yamunanagar



census in UP also

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW

 $B^{\text{ihar cabinet minister and}}_{\text{co-incharge of UP unit of}}$ Janata Dal (United) Shrawan Kumar pushed for caste-based census while addressing a conference of party workers in Basti district on Saturday and urged the Uttar Pradesh government to conduct castebased census in UP also.

Bihar's Rural Development Minister Shrawan Kumar said caste-based census was very important to know about the economic, social and educational status of the people of the state."On the basis of the figures that come up after this census, the government will make plans for the citizens of the state and will make every possible effort for their social, economic and educational uplift," he said. The minister said the Bihar government had decided to conduct a caste census in the state with its own resources. "But it was opposed by the Bharatiya Janata Party and others and they moved to court to stall the census. But the court decided the issue in our favour and the Bihar government has

murderous assault, intimida-

tion, extortion and land mafia

The first case was regis-

again started the work of caste based census and started the survey of all the people," he

Kumar said caste-based census was the need of the hour in UP as it would bring to fore the social, economic and educational status of all the people

Referring to the works and achievements of Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the minister said that remarkable work was being done by the government of Bihar in every

"We are now not a state which is lagging behind. There is an atmosphere of peace in Bihar. The government makes plans and implements them keeping in mind every religion, every caste and every class. Women are given priority in every field and they are being empowered," Kumar asserted.

Senior JD(U) leaders including Raghavendra Chaudhary, Ashutosh Bhartiya, Bihar MLA Niranjan Kumar Mehta, Satyendra Patel, Dr BL Verma, Shalini Patel, Rajneesh Patel and several others were

## Low lying areas facing flood threats in Purvanchal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In the manner the water level of river Ganga has increased sharply during the last 24 hours, it has posed flood threats to the low lying areas of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP). As the water level of river Ganga continued to rise, it reached close to the feet of Sheetla Mata Mandir at Old Dasaswamedh Ghat forcing the devotees to reach the temple through the water. Most of been submerged into the water. The venue of famous regular Ganga Aarti had already been shifted upstairs. Dozens of low lying temples located at internationally famous 84-odd ghats were either submerged into the water fully or partially.

The river, which was rising at a speed of three cm a day ago, was recorded increasing alarmingly 10 cm per hour in the city. According to the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC), during the 24 hours the water level has increased by 82 cm, rising to 66.52 metres at 8 am on Sunday from 65.66 metres a day ago. It continued rising right from Phaphamau to Ghazipur including Prayagraj, Mirzapur and Varanasi. Though it was steady at downstream Ballia at 55.72 metres, the slight rising will deteriorate the situation there as the warning level there is at 56.615 metres. In Varanasi, the same level is at 70.262 metres. The heartbeats of several villages of Daab areas surrounded by rivers Ganga and Gomti have increased as the water level of Gomti has also recorded rising



Ganga water level reaches close to Sheetla Mata Mandir in Varanasi on Sunday.

The situation in Varanasi has turned worse as during the last 24 hours the city has also received heavy rains of 82 mm by 8 am. It is expected that the rains will continue to hit the region in coming days and it may increase the water level of rivers further. The river Ganga was rising at a speed of 80 mm per hour at Mirzapur but 50 mm at Prayagraj (Sangam) and 30 mm at Phaphamau.

Meanwhile, the District Malaria Officer said that in view of the water logging in the villages during the rainy season, with the cooperation and coordination of the Panchayati Raj department, the campaign of

**ASI** continues survey of

spraying is being done by marking the affected sites. 'Under the special communicable disease control campaign, water was drain out in 158 identified water-logging sites in villages by the Panchayati Raj department whereas in urban areas, the work of disposal of water logging is being done by the Nagar Nigam," he said, adding that spraying of anti-lar-vae is being done daily in Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital located in Ramnagar as well as in other hospital premises.

In the Dastak Abhiyan, he informed, a total of 41,236 sources of mosquitoes were destroyed by door-to-door viswater disposal and anti-larva its by ASHA and Anganwadi

workers in 71,286 houses. Out of a total 2,584 people suffering from fever, three malaria and five suspected dengue patients were found and all of them were treated. "Presently, no confirmed case of dengue has been reported in the district," he claimed. However, he said that five beds each at community health centres (CHCs) and two at primary health centres (PHCs) have been reserved for dengue patients apart from 100 beds at Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital and 50 beds each at Shri Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Divisional Hospital and Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS)

# **CORRESPONDENT** ■ MIRZAPUR

road mishap which took place under Rajgarh police station on Sunday. Giving details about the incident Circle Officer (CO/Operation) Anil Kumar Pandey said a Wagon R car was going to Robertsganj from Mirzapur when the driver lost control over the vehicle and it collided with a tree near Nadihar market under Rajgarh police station. He said as a result Gurucharan Anand Saraswati of Markundi in Sonbhadra died on the spot and four others, including driver Vijay Kumar, Dinesh Kumar Gupta, Amareesh Tripathi and Ashish Mishra, were brought to the government hospital Rajgarh. The injured and the body of the deceased was sent for the postexamination. According to the police, the family members of the injured

had reached the hospital. ARRESTED: The Adalhaat police arrested two accused in connection with a rape case on Saturday. A woman had lodged a named FIR on July 26 alleging that the accused persons had raped her and later compelled her to have an abortion. After registering an FIR under relevant sections of IPC the police arrested the accused.

CULPABLE HOMICIDE **CASE:** The Vindhyachal police on Saturday took a woman and her minor son into custody in connection with a culpable homicide case on Saturday. Awadh Narain Maurya of Nakta village had lodged a named FIR on August 3 allegserious. After registering the IPC the police started the died during treatment. After relevant section in the case and

the juvenile home.

GRIEVANCES HEARD: District Magistrate Divya Mittal while hearing the grievances of the people in Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas organised at tehsil Lalganj headquarters on Saturday

he continued to commit Five cases of murder were

filed against Pappu Ganjia and

at various police stations, including Naini, Industrial Area and Muthiganj. He is registered against him. An FIR associated with SP and is close has been lodged against him in to many big leaders of the party. many cases of extortion, threats and murderous attack. According to the police, 19 He is also involved in propertv business. A case is registered cases were registered against against him in which he was absconding. The police had recently attached his luxurious house in Naini on the orders of him. Action has also been taken against him under Goonda Act and Gangsters

He is a history-sheeter of tered against Pappu Ganjia in Naini police station. His gang Pappu Ganjia is named in 1989. This was a case of has more than a dozen active members. murder. After this, cases were

## Bid to keep devotees connected with family through letters

Deputy

**Reward on SP leader doubled** 

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRAJ

With the aim of keeping devotees connected with their family members through letters, the Indian Postal department will also play a role in making Mahakumbh-2025 memorable. The department will be opening one post office in each sector of the 27 sectors in Mahakumbh. Along with these, at least three post offices will also be opened on boats in the mela area. Through these post offices, facilities like speed post booking, registry and account opening will be provided to crores of devotees, tourists and pilgrims. Facilities like e-money order will also be

The Postal department will be opening one post office in each sector of the 27 sectors in Mahakumbh. Along with these, at least three post offices will also be opened on boats in the mela area.

provided for Kalpavasis through these post offices. Foreign currency exchange counter will also be opened for foreign tourists. For this, the Indian Postal department will soon finalise the blueprint.

To enhance the facilities, postal staff from other districts will also be called. Staff members of Kaushambi, Pratapgarh and Fatehpur may be called and

posted in post offices of Maha Kumbh. India Post Payments Bank facility will also be made available at all counters to pro-

vide instant cash to the people. During Kumbh 2019 the department had opened 10 post offices in 20 different sectors in the Mela area, while one post office was built on a boat.

In contrast to this for Maha Kumbh-2025, authorities have

planned post offices in 27 sectors. The number of post offices on boats too will be enhanced. Moreover, a special postage stamp can also be issued by the department to commemorate Mahakumbh, the religious event being held at Prayagraj after the gap of 12 years.

According to senior post master, Rajesh Srivastava, "The Indian Postal department has always been playing its role in making Mahakumbh divine and grand. Post offices in all sectors will be opened to provide postal facilities to the people." The complete outline of the preparation from our side will be finalised in the coming days, he added.

## One killed in road mishap

One person died and four others were injured in a CO said the police rescued the ing that his father Akshaibar Nath (70) was brutally assaulted and his condition was very case under relevant sections of investigation and the injured the death the police added the took a woman, Sunita, and minor son into custody. After completing the legal formalities the police sent the woman to jail and the juvenile offender to

directed the lekhpals to stay in their areas and ensure the dis-

posal of the problems of the aggrieved on the spot. the day an aggrieved woman Pagali of Gadbada village Raja complained that her adversary was creating hindrance in the construction of her house. The SO Halia was asked to visit the spot and dispose of the matter on merit. Shakuntala of Bastara complained that her widow pension had stopped. Probation Officer Shakti Tripathi apprised that due to verification work it was stopped but it will be started in next month. Out of 291 applications

only 10 could be disposed of on the spot and for the rest teams were formed. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS, subdivisional magistrate (SDM )Bharat Lal Saroj and other district level officers were pre-

#### **Gyanvapi premises** underground place of Gyanvapi PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI ing the survey. The tight secumosque and also under three rity arrangement was made The Archaeological Survey particularly at Gate No-4, the I of India (ASI) continued its main entrance point to enter the Shri Kashi Vishwanath survey of Gyanvapi premises in

a scientific way on Sunday amidst the tight security arrangement. The ASI team started its scientific survey around 9 am on the third consecutive day after the Allahabad High Court, cleared the way for it. Both the Hindu and the Muslim sides were present dur-

Mandir to have darshan and worship of Baba Vishwanath. There was curiosity about the on-gojng ASI survey among the devotees waiting for their number in long queues at this

gate for the entry.

It was said that the ASI team conducted a survey in the

domes of the mosque. The team used the technique of Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) to capture 3D pictures of the building of the mosque. The team also took mapping and scanning of the internal parts of the mosque besides making photography and videography. It was said that the ASI team has so far not used any chemical during the

done excavation of any place. The senior administrative and police officers were keeping close monitoring of the sit-

survey and also has so far not

uation at Gyanvapi premises during the survey. The survey work lasted till evening. It is learnt that the ASI has sought a month long time to complete the survey work and the Varanasi court has given the time till September 2 to submit www.dailypioneer.com

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

### **Relief for Rahul**

Rahul Gandhi's SC reprieve on the eve of noconfidence motion will be a boost for the Opposition

fter being convicted in a defamation case by a lower court in Gujarat and receiv-, ing no relief from the Gujarat High Court, Rahul Gandhi has finally found relief from the Supreme Court, which stayed his conviction even though the case continues. Rahul had sarcastically quipped, "Why do all thieves have the Modi surname?" For this remark, he was taken to court by a BJP leader who felt hurt by his jibe as he shared the surname 'Modi'. Interestingly, both the High Court and the lower court did not provide a reason for imposing the maximum imprisonment of two years, which cost Rahul Gandhi his Lok Sabha membership. Even before it was legally established that the speech was delivered by Rahul Gandhi, the court was in a hurry to pronounce him guilty and sentenced him to a maximum sentence of two years. However, the Supreme Court has granted relief to Rahul Gandhi, allowing him to re-enter the hallowed halls of Parliament on the eve of a crucial no-confidence motion. This development carries significant impli-



cations for both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Opposition. This case ostensibly had two aspects: political and legal. Someone seemingly wanted him out of Parliament as the government became uncomfortable following the Adanigate scandal, and Rahul had been posing tough questions. Within 24 hours of the conviction, he was expelled from Parliament and instructed to vacate his residence. This unprecedented turn of events harmed democracy, as it was seen as stifling the voice of the opposition through backdoor means. It also cast the BJP in a negative light, as it celebrated Rahul Gandhi's departure from Parliament and labeled him a "habitual offender."

The implications of Rahul Gandhi's return to the political arena are manifold. Firstly, it rejuvenates the Opposition, injecting new energy and morale into its ranks. Rahul Gandhi's presence and proven ability to connect with the masses might galvanize a more unified Opposition front, capable of challenging the ruling government's policies and decisions more effectively. This unity could potentially reshape Parliament debate and bolster confidence in facing Prime Minister Modi in the forthcoming general elections. This marks a major political setback, making him appear nervous and weak both inside and outside Parliament. The BJP will need to strategize meticulously to counter the charisma and political prowess that Gandhi brings to the table. Additionally, his presence in Parliament during the no-confidence motion lends weight to the Opposition's arguments and lends credibility to their criticism of the government's policies. Indeed, the effectiveness of his presence in Parliament will depend on his ability to lead the Congress party effectively. The path ahead will be defined by his actions, as well as the response of the BJP. As the nation watches this unfolding drama, it is imperative that political actors on both sides adhere to the principles of democracy, healthy debate, and the welfare of the citizens they represent.



shopkeeper arranges tricoloured kites at his shop ahead of the Independence Day, in Jammu

# Why farmers commit suicide?



KC **TYAGI** 

The need of the hour is to constitute a Farmers Commission. Farmers must be involved in the decision making on issues concerning them

he news received from Marathwada division of Maharashtra has created panic. A report prepared by former Marathwada divisional commissioner Sunil Kendrekar warns that nearly 1 lakh farmers in Marathwada alone are contemplating suicide due to crop loss and other financial issues. The report is based on a survey conducted on 10 lakh farmers. This comes after the drought-prone region where on an average at least one farmer ends his life every day. More than 1 lakh farmers among those surveyed admitted that they are depressed and have lost crops due to debt, drought and unseasonal rains. thinking of ending their lives due to failure of agriculture, reduction in minimum support price of crops and not having money to run a household or marry off their daughters. The survey also revealed that

the period from 2012 to 2022, 8719 farmers have committed suicide in Aurangabad alone during 2014-15. Survey of family members claimed that 923 farmers in this list committed suicide due to failure of their crop, 1494 farmers committed suicide due to being in debt and unable to repay it. 4371 farmers committed suicide due to loan as well as failure of their crop while 1929 farmers ended their lives as they were unable to repay the loan. The dismal socio-economic conditions of the plight of Indian villages in the 1930s in Munshi Premchand's epic novel Godan still exist today. Hori, eligible for Godan, had three bighas of uncultivated land and worked on it with his entire family, including his wife Dhania and son Gobar and two daughters Sona and Roopa. Throughout his life he struggled to keep hold of his farm and was forced to work as a laborer from time to time. At one point the family ceases to work as laborers on its own farm when it sells its oxen to the moneylender and is left with no seed to sow and lets another farmer or a person with money grow their land. allows Munshi Prem Chand described Hori's land as three bighe fort which is a symbol of his identity and his pride and exis-



There is a need to investigate the epidemic incidence of farmer suicides in almost all agricultural major states of India, diagnose the continuity of agrarian crisis and determine innovative economic and management solutions beyond the current production-centric agricultural science and technology policy. An indication of the nature of the problem can be traced to the adoption of a liberalized market-based economy with globalization and corporatization. The uncountable series of suicides starts after 1995.

Why is the nexus of politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and industrialists failing to see that the country's working class has migrated en masse? The proportion of the farming population to the total population is rapidly declining and 40% of those who are still holding their 'plows' to defend their agricultural strongholds are waiting to be deserted at the first opportunity. The agriculturist to total population ratio has come down from 23% in 1951 to just 17% by 1991 and to a much lower level by 2015-16. Although statisticians may argue that the ratio of agriculturists to the rural population gives a more comparable picture and elements Meets the homogeneity condition but what they forget is that farmers feed not only the rural population but the



THE COUNTRY HAS SEEN THE FARMER'S **MOVEMENT** GOING ON FOR YEARS IN THE PAST, MORE **THAN 750** FARMERS DIED IN THIS **MOVEMENT**  entire population.

The resurgence of suicidal tendencies among farmers since 2014-15 has not only disproved the common belief that the farmer is on the way out of the crisis as announced in government releases. A recent study by the Agricultural Economic Unit, Agricultural Development and Rural Change, Society for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru, has revealed that main form in crisis covers small and marginal farmers. The size of agricultural holdings among farmers who died by suicide showed that small and marginal farmers were the most affected in all major states.

An important feature of the size of land holdings and the incidence of farmer suicides is that the states that have predominantly small and marginal farmers, ranging from 48.3% (Chhattisgarh) to 90% (Telangana), also have the highest incidence of suicides among small and marginal farmers without exception. The number of small farmers holding 1-2 hectares of land has also increased by 4.5%. Its percentage was 20.4 in 2003 and now it has increased to 24.9%, similarly the percentage of medium farmers has aecreased to 14./

country's farmers are in debt. More than 90% farmers of Andhra and Telangana are

lakh. More than 60% of the farmers of Rajasthan are indebted, while every farmer of Jharkhand has the lowest debt of Rs.8500. The farmers of Punjab and Haryana have a debt of about Rs 2 lakh each. Agriculture is continuously proving to be a loss-making deal. According to a report of the National Sample Survey, the average monthly income of farmer families from crops is just Rs.3798, out of which he has already spent Rs.2959 on the crop, that is, he gets only Rs.839 on an average in a month. The country has seen the farmer's movement going on for years in the past, more than 750 farmers died in this movement. A committee was formed by the Prime Minister by repealing all the three agricultural laws, although the organizations protecting the interests of the farmers were absent. The need of the hour is to set aside all prejudices and constitute a Farmers Commission. The participation of farmer experts should be increased in undertakings like the Agricultural Price Commission of MSP. There should be a scientific nature of evaluation and on the lines of other market products, a statucreased to 14.7. tory warning should be issued not to sell the farmer's produce

indebted. On an average, every

farmer has a loan of Rs 2.45

(The writer is a former MP, views are personal)

at less than the fixed price.

#### **LETTERS** TO THE EDITOR

# Damocles sword hangs over forests



The Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 is bound to affect the status of forest cover in the country

o we need forests or do we need development? It's a question that has always perplexed the human mind. From time immemorial humans have been destroying forests for their vested interests. All great civilizations that we study in our textbooks, flourished by utilizing natural resources. Different civilizations have had different impacts on their surrounding forests, depending on their technological advancements, cultural practices, and population size.

From the perspective of the human species (Homo sapiens), the dominating species that controls the whole biosphere, the priority was always development. We need good infrastructure, but none of us is concerned at what cost these developments have come. In our civilization, forests have been considered sacred and are often preserved in the name of God or deities. This preservation of forests is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural beliefs of people, which have evolved over thousands of years. We offer divinity to many species of plants and animals. It is increase in the forest cover has



these traditions that helped us to protect whatever remnants of forests that we see around us. But with the advancements in science and technology, the societal perception towards traditions has

After independence within 30 years, we destroyed more than 4.2 million hectares of forests till 1980. It is at that juncture the government introduced Forest Conservation Act (FCA) in 1980. After the introduction of FCA only 1.5 million hectares have been lost. As per the latest forest survey in 2021, the total forest and tree cover in India is 80.9 million hectares, which is 24.62% of the geographical area of the country. As compared to the assessment of 2019, there is an increase of 2,261 sq km in the total forest and tree cover of the country. Out of this, the been observed as 1,540 sq km and that in tree cover is 721

This increase was only because of stringent regulations in the act. The Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 passed by parliament though addresses the concerns and challenges faced by today's citizens, is bound to affect the status of forest cover in our country. The act will facilitate the decisions making process on the proposals involving non-forestry use of forest land by the authorities for national security and infrastructure projects. Non-forest purposes include the use of land for cultivating horticultural crops or for any purpose other than reafforestation. The blanket exemption for projects like zoos, eco-tourism facilities, and reconnaissance studies emphasised in the bill could hurt forest land and wildlife.

All these exemptions will bring more destruction to forest cover. Already in regions of Western Ghats people are doing non-foresty activities like the cultivation of exotic plantations and cash crops that have destroyed our bio-

For the past several years we have seen environmental havoc due to natural calamities in different parts of the country. Forests are nature's conservatories, if we take care of them there is no need for botanical and zoological gardens in the country. The mature forest ecosystem that we see today is the result of 200 to 1000 years of formation. It would be difficult to restore a lost ecosystem within our generation's timeline even with the best available compensatory mechanisms. Humans have destroyed all the natural resources available on this planet and we can't expect more destruction during our lifetime. Instead of making forests open for developmental activities, the government should declare all forests in our country as a National heritage and prevent their further destruction. Let's keep developmental activities away from forest covers for the survival of the human species. There is no meaning in development if there are no human species available on this planet.

(The writer is a science communicator & columnist)

#### SATPAL MALIK ATTACKS BJP AGAIN Sir — According to reports, former

Jammu and Kashmir governor Satyapal Malik, who often faces criticism from the ruling BJP party for his government critiques, has once again launched a scathing attack on the BJP and the Haryana government regarding the Nuh violence. Malik revealed that the riots in Haryana's Nuh were orchestrated by cow vigilantes, and the top brass of the Haryana BJP were aware of it. He alleged that cow vigilantes had planned the route of the Brij Mandal Yatra and incited the 'other side' during the Shobha Yatra procession. He stated that they were operating as a gang under the guise of cow protection and evading consequences due to protection from leaders and the government. Some of these cow vigilantes even displayed sophisticated weapons openly on social media. The source of these advanced weapons needs investigation by the NIA, Malik said.

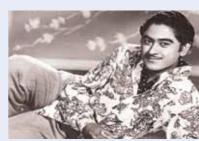
Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot accused the Khattar government of not cooperating with the Rajasthan police. Malik, who previously accused the Central government of complicity in the Pulwama terror attack, claimed that the Nuh violence was planned to gain political advantages in neighboring Rajasthan, where assembly elections are scheduled at the end of this year. However, their plan failed as Jats refused to support Hindutva elements against Muslims. With this, Malik seems determined to expose BJP wrongdoing as the 2024 Lok Sabha elections draw near. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

#### PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE **REPORT ON DRUGS**

Sir —According to a parliamentary panel report on drug abuse among young individuals and its problems and solutions, Punjab alone has over 66.70 drug users, and 6.97 children aged 10-17 are ensnared by drugs. Among them, 18,100 are consuming cocaine, approximately 3.43 lakh children are taking opioid drugs includ-

ing heroin, and about 72,000 children are imperative.

## 94th birth anniversary of Kishore Kumar



✓ ishore Kumar, a rejuctant actor who initially sought to avoid acting by feigning madness, only aspired to be a singer and admired KL Saigal. His elder brother Ashok Kumar, a superstar at the time, compelled him to act. Kishore Kumar attempted to undermine his acting career by delivering a subpar performance in his debut film Shikari (1946). However, his plan backfired, and he became a popular actor excelling in comedy, romance,

using 'inhalants' in Punjab. The commit-

tee further highlighted that the worst

affected states and union territories are

Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh,

Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat,

Maharashtra, NCT of Delhi, Odisha,

Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West

Bengal. The PSC expressed shock upon

discovering that an estimated 10,432,000

children aged 10-17 years were using var-

ious substances. The panel also noted,

based on a focused thematic study by the

Department of Social Justice and

Empowerment, that among school and

college-going children in 10 locations

across India, tobacco was the most com-

monly used substance, followed by alco-

hol. The committee expressed dismay over

the rapid proliferation of drug addiction

among adults, young adults, and even chil-

dren in India. Establishing a platform for

various stakeholders to periodically dis-

cuss drug trafficking issues and coordi-

nate efforts against the drug menace is

and tragedy with equal ease. He starred in numerous hit films, including Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi, Half Ticket, Jhumroo, Padosan, Door Gagan Ki Chhaon Mein, and more. He also directed films and composed music for them. He won eight Filmfare Awards for Best Male Playback Singer and received the Padma Shri

Kishore Kumar was a complex and contradictory figure. He was a talented singer and actor, but he was also known for his eccentric behavior. A perfectionist who constantly strived to refine his craft, he was also impulsive and unpredictable. He was a loving husband and father. Despite his imperfections, Kishore Kumar remains a true legend of Indian cinema. A versatile artist who could make people laugh, cry, and sing along, his songs and films continue to be cherished by millions

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

Sir — Tesla is not yet officially available in India, but the company has plans to enter the Indian market soon. If it does, India will gain access to Tesla's advanced technology, potentially boosting economic growth and creating job opportunities. However, Tesla is facing entry barriers such as high import duties and a lack of charging infrastructure. To address these challenges, Tesla could collaborate with the Indian government to reduce import duties. Additionally, Tesla could invest in building more charging infrastructure across India. On the other hand, the entry of Tata Motors and Mahindra into the EV market has intensified competition, which bodes well for

Anmol Porwal | Ujjain

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### **FIRST COLUMN**

#### **STRONG WOMEN DO NOT HAVE ATTITUDES**

They have standards and boundaries. And they have grace and elan too



SAKSHI SETHI

n today's scenario, any person who shines with vibrant health commands respect as it is a sign of commitment, discipline and dedication. Self-respect is not selfish, it's admirable. Living a life from a strong position of mindset denotes that one should held their standards high. It definitely takes a shift in the mindset and habits, but it's a trait that can be completely developed by anyone at any stage of life. Talking on similar grounds, there comes a time in every woman's life, when she has to choose from two options vis a vis accepting the scrap from men or deciding upon that she deserves more than that. It's quite obvious that any woman who was made to be self-independent will definitely choose second option in comparison to the first.

Strong women do not have attitudes...they have standards and boundaries unyielding in their worth and unstoppable in their grace. As a woman, one should be unapologetically SHE herself. She should be proud of her strength, stand tall with her standards and make her ambitions shine high. As its said "The closed mouth doesn't get fed", the same way a woman who will never expand her idea of what's possible will always get less than what she deserves. There is no denying the fact that the greatest things come from humble beginnings. However, one should have the audacity to ask for what they want, to ask for more than what people expect to be okay with. Above all the woman of today demands self-respect as it's the self-respect that protects an individual from all manner of crappy people and circumstances.



The successful women of today such as our honourable President of India Ms. Droupadi Murmu, Ms. Mary Kom, Ms. Indra Nooyi, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, Ms. Sudha Murthy, Dr. Kiran Bedi, Ms. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Late Kalpana Chawla and personalities such as Malala Yousafzai, Oprah Winfrey, Taylor Swift or Ellen Degeneres and the list goes endless show that whatever they have achieved it in their lives is only because they are the ones who dared to ask for it and also the ones who dared to believe that they were worthy for it.In today's stereotype world, many men don't even know how to handle a woman with her boundaries, her schedule and the busy life. They still are into their old school belief, that a woman has to be ready for every beck and call of them. Remember, the woman who decides she is worthy of the dreams she has, no matter what her circumstances look like is on her way to lead a life of power. One should never be bullied into accepting the crumbs if fulfilment, sophistication and satisfaction is the ultimate goal in life. Fulfilment doesn't come from another individual. It comes only when the person understands that they were made singularly for the intent of love.

On the similar grounds, no healthy, wealthy and quality man will ever respect or fall for a woman who does not have self-respect. They will always want to have a woman whose personality and energy brings out the most capable and confident version of them rather than the one standing by his side and propping up emotionally, financially or otherwise. A confident woman knows her worth and will attract a man that will value her throughout as a top tier. Nobody can respect, if an individual doesn't respect himself/herself.

(The writer is an educator)

# NPAs down but pain points still remain



UTTAM GUPTA

Low recovery despite government efforts is because of judicial overreach that has rendered Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) process dysfunctional



s per the information given by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in Parliament, during the last nine years, scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) have undertaken an aggregate recovery of Rs 10,16,617 crore of loans that had gone bad or non-performing assets (NPAs) as these are called in banking parlance. In reply to a question given in the lower house, Minister of state for finance Bhagwat Karad informed that "Comprehensive measures have been taken by the Government and RBI to recover and to reduce NPAs, including those pertaining to corporate companies". These include the 2016 Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and the establishment of the National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL), among other mea-

At banks' level, the efforts involve early recognition and reporting of stress assets; prompt adoption of resolution plan (RP); creation of stressed asset management verticals for stringent recovery and extensive use of credit data available in the of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) database. Willful defaulters (refers to borrowers who can pay back yet decide not to) are not sanctioned any additional facilities by banks or financial institutions, and their unit is debarred from floating new ventures for five years. Additionally, they and companies which have them as promoters/directors are debarred from accessing capital markets to raise funds. Furthermore, under IBC, such promoters can't remain in control of the entity.

Looking at the quantum of reduction in NPAs, one gets a sense that the achievement is commendable; all the more when we consider the fact that the quantum of recovery at Rs 10,16,617 crore was almost close to the amount of bad loans written off by the bank's worth over Rs 10,57,000 crore in the last five years (as per the information shared by RBÍ in reply to RTI question). But, there is a catch. During 2016 - 2021, the Central government gave around Rs 300,000 crore as budgetary support to shore up the capi-



**DEFAULTERS** (BORROWERS WHO CAN PAY **BACK YET** DECIDE NOT TO) ARE NOT SANCTIONED ANY **ADDITIONAL** FACILITIES BY BANKS OR **FINANCIAL** INSTITUTIONS, AND THEIR UNIT IS DEBARRED FROM FLOATING **NEW VENTURES** FOR FIVE YEARS

(The writer is a policy analyst)

tal of public sector banks (PSBs). Furthermore, in the budget for 2021-22, it committed another Rs 200,000 crore by way of 'sovereign guarantee for the security receipts (SRs) to be issued by NARCL where the majority shareholding is vested in PSBs. Surely, this Rs 500,000 crore would have gone towards reducing NPAs. Adjusting for this amount, recovery from defaulters would be only Rs 516,617 crore.

According to a joint report by ASSOCHAM and Crisil Ratings, gross NPAs of banks were around percent as on March 31, 2023. Taking overall outstanding loans of Rs 143,00,000 crore across all SCBs on this date, the value of gross NPAs works out to Rs 715,000 crore. But, for Rs 500,000 crore PSBs got by way of budget support and sovereign guarantee for the SRs of NARCL, the NPAs would have been Rs 1215,000 crore. This would be even higher than the NPAs of Rs 1036,000 crore as of March 31, 2018.

Clearly, the recovery of bad loans has been dented. Look at it from another angle. According to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), of the total 5,636 cases under IBC, 3,637 have been closed. Of the closed cases, nearly half i.e. 1,703 have ended in liquidation. Besides, the recovery by financial creditors was a record low of 13.4 percent of the admitted claims during October-December 2021 (during January-March 2022, this was even lower at 10.2 percent). Moreover, in 363 major cases, banks took a hair-cut of 80 percent on an average (for some such as Videocon, it was even higher at 95 percent).

Even in respect of bad loans transferred by banks to the NARCL, the haircut is expected to be steep. To get a sense of this, let us look at the broad contours of the

action plan put in place by the finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman on September 16, 2021 following announcement on NARCL in the 2021-22 budget. Under it, the NARCL will purchase NPAs worth Rs 200,000 crore (Rs 90,000 crore of fully provisioned stuff in phase I and remaining Rs 110,000 crore in phase II) from the banks under the so called 15:85 structure.

It involves the NARCL paying 15 percent of the agreed/discounted value of the loans in cash and issue Security Receipts (SRs) for the rest. The Union Government will provide sovereign guarantee valid for a period of 5 years – for the SRs issued by NARCL. The guarantee would be invoked to cover the loss being the difference between the realized value (resolution/liquidation) and face value of SRs. A provision of Rs 30,600 crore has been made for this purpose. This budget provision tells

It implies that the entire banks' bad loan book of Rs 200,000 crore would be available to the NARCL for a mere 18 percent of the face value or Rs 36,000 crore. Of this, the latter pays 15 percent or Rs 5400 crore upfront in cash to the former and for the balance Rs 30,600 crore, it will issue SRs. To redeem these SRs, NARCL must realize at least Rs 30,600 crore from selling the NPAs to investors. Even if it doesn't realize, the entire amount will be paid by the Centre.

Just as for major cases under IBC, the haircut to be taken by banks while taking NARCL route is a steep 82 percent. A paramount reason for woefully low recovery in spite of credible steps taken by Modi – government has to do with judicial overreach that has rendered IBC process dysfunctional.

As per a circular issued by RBI on February 12, 2018, for accounts with aggregate exposure greater than Rs 2,000 crore, as soon as there was a default in the account with any lender, all lenders singly or jointly - shall initiate steps to cure the default by preparing and implementing a resolution plan (RP). This needed to be done within 180 days from the date of default. In case of failure to meet this deadline, the lenders were required to refer the account to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for resolution under the IBC. The NCLT would get 180 days to complete the process. Following petition by defaulting borrowers, the Supreme Court (SC) declared the February 12, 2018 circular unconstitutional.

This forced RBI come up with a revised circular dated June 7, 2019. It gives banks 180 days to come up with RP . If the banks don't meet this deadline, they nave to make an additional provi sion of 20 per cent. If they don't finalize within a year, an additional 15 percent has to be made taking the total to 35 percent. Add to this, normal ageing provision of 40 percent (applicable in case the loan default extends upto 15 months), the total provisioning will be a steep 75 percent. Having provided for such a huge amount, there won't be any incentive left for the bank to recover the money under

This has led to a scenario where the banks are neither under any compulsion nor have any interest in referring the NPA for resolution under IBC. The soul of IBC process lies in inviting bids for the entity as a 'going concern'. This way alone, it is possible to maximize value thereby trimming the haircut. By striking down the February 12, 2018, RBI circular, the SC has struck at the soul.

# Welfare of the weaver community must be paramount

On the weaver's day spare a thought for the weaver community in the country, one of the most skilled but least privileged class of workers

The handloom sector is a symbol of our country's rich and varied cultural heritage, and is an important source of livelihood in rural and semi-rural parts of our country. It is also a sector that directly addresses women's empowerment with over 70% of all weavers and allied workers being female. Rooted in nature, it has eco-friendly production processes with minimal requirement of capital and power, and provides flexibility to innovate to meet changes in fashion trends and fast-changing customer

preferences. The Swadeshi Movement which was launched on 7th August, 1905 had encouraged indigenous industries and in particular handloom weavers.





DIMPLE KHOKHAR

(Sunil Goyal is an Eminent Social Scientist, Columnist, and Dean and Chairman - Board of Studies at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences and Dimple Khokhar is a Research Scholar)

In 2015, the Government of India decided to designate the 7th August every year, as the National Handloom Day. The first National Handloom Day was inaugurated on 7 August 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Chennai.

On this day, we honour our handloom-weaving community and highlight the contribution of this sector in the socio-economic development of our country. We reaffirm our resolve to protect our handloom heritage and to empower the handloom weavers and workers financially and instilling pride in

their exquisite craftsmanship. According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census, the total number of households in India engaged in handloom activities (weaving lakhs. This is an increase over the Third census where the count was 27.83 lakhs. The principal reason behind this increase may be attributed to the success of various initiatives undertaken by the Government of India, as well as several levels of due diligence that have been built into the census design, involving various oversight measures by multiple stakeholders from the Government machinery.

and allied activities) is 31.45

As far as weaver's households are concerned, four States of India account for 18 lakhs of all weaver households in the country. These States are Assam (10.9 lakhs) households, West Bengal (3.4 lakhs), Manipur (2.1 lakhs)

and Tamil Nadu (1.7 lakhs).

22.5 lakhs (or 88.7%) weaver days). In comparison, the households are located in rural areas while 2.8 lakhs (or 11.3%) are in urban areas, with nearly 72% of handloom weavers being female. Across both urban and rural areas, the share of weavers aged 14 18 years is 2.4% only.

Nearly one in four weavers have not received any formal education while a further 14% have not completed primary level. As per the Fourth All India Handloom Census, among the 26.73 lakh weavers enumerated, the average number of person days of engagement in weaving activity is 208 days in the past one year. Engagement opportunities are more for workers residing in urban areas (262 days) as against those in rural areas (201 This proportion has come Development

average number of person days of engagement was 183 days during the third handloon census.

The top five States with highest average number of person days of work are Maharashtra (310), Andhra Pradesh (302), Delhi (292), Chhattisgarh (290) and Puducherry (286). Majority (66.3%) of the weaver households earn less than Rs.5,000/- per month. 36.1% of weaver households from urban India earn more than Rs.5,000 a month as compared to only 25.1% living in rural areas. According to the Third Handloom Census, it was estimated that 99% of all weaver households earned less than Rs.5,000 per month.

down to 66.3% in the Fourth Handloom Census, while proportion earning between Rs.5000 to Rs.10,000 a month has gone up to 26.3%. There are 3 States where 60% or more of the weaver households have earned in excess of Rs.5000 per month. These are Goa (95.5%), Uttarakhand (69.8%), and Maharashtra (60.3%).

The increase in earnings may be attributed to the several initiatives taken up by Government of India for the welfare of the weaver community, including providing financial assistance under flagship schemes such as National Development Programme (NHDP), Comprehensive Handloom Cluster

Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme (HWCWS) and Yarn Supply Scheme (YSS). In addition, setting up of CFCs at block/ municipality level, concessional credit under Weaver's MUDRA scheme and introduction of the India Handloom Brand to enhance market demand have also been impactful interventions in the sector by the Government. The research analysis of the available data reveals that majority of the weaver household members are not aware of various schemes available to enable them in the weaver activities of handlooms. Response on lack of awareness on the existing schemes, trainings and other enablers is more Scheme than 65% and beyond.

(CHCDS),

he pioneer

# 30 killed, 100 hurt in Pak train accident Khan's party accuses authorities

t least 30 people were Akilled and nearly 100 others injured on Sunday when several compartments of an express train derailed in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, in the latest rail disaster to hit the country. The Hazara Express train travelling from Karachi to Rawalpindi derailed in Nawabshah district near the Sarhari Railway Station, 275 kilometers from the provincial capital Karachi.

Commissioner Benazirabad division Abbas Baloch said in a statement that at least 30 people died in the accident while passengers are still stranded in a bogie.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who spoke to the media at People's Medical College Hospital in Benazirabad — the district home to Nawabshah, confirmed the death toll, the Dawn newspaper reported.

He added that the injured



Pakistan railway tragedyThe Hazara Express train en route from Karachi to Rawalpindi derailed near the Sarhari Railway Station in Nawabshah district in Sindh

could be shifted to Karachi if needed and directed the local administration and health officials to expedite relief and

media that the number of casualties could rise as some of the injured were in critical after being hospitalised. He said around 10 bogies

Federal Railways Minister had derailed and the cause of Saad Rafiq earlier told the the accident is being investiPakistan Railways Sukkur Additional troops have

been called in to assist the rescue operation. Army Aviation helicopters are also reaching the spot to rescue the injured 'The rescue operation of

Pakistan Army will continue till the transfer of the last injured to the hospital and the rehabilitation of the people trapped at the accident site," it A spokesperson of the

Pakistan Railways in Karachi said at least eight bogies derailed and the intensity of the accident increased due to delayed application of brakes. The official said the affect-

ed bogies would be lifted off the track in a few hours using heavy machines and added that trains departing from Karachi might face delays. Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Rafiq said the train, carrying over 1,000 passengers, was travelling at a reasonable speed, which initial investigations showed.

# of denying access to him

Imprisoned former prime min-ister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on Sunday accused authorities of denying his legal team access to the leader to get his signatures on essential documents for court purposes. Khan, 70, was arrested from his home in Lahore on Saturday shortly after an Islamabad trial court found him guilty of "corrupt practices" in the Toshakhana corruption case and sentenced him to three-year imprisonment. Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, is lodged in the Attock Jail after being sentenced for concealing the sale of state gifts. The case

The PTI in a statement shared on a WhatsApp group termed Khan's arrest as an "abduction". "Chairman's legal team is not being given access to

was adjudicated by a sessions

court in Islamabad.

him for getting legal documents signed, as per the prerequisite, despite appeals made to Superintendent Attock Prison & Additional Home Secretary Punjab," it said.

arrest at all, it sounds like an abduction."After his arrest, Khan was taken by road to Attock City, the last major town of Punjab on the boundary with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.

"This doesn't sound like an

Initially, it was expected that he would be kept in the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, but, for security reasons, he was taken to

Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who is leading the PTI in the absence of Khan, in a video message urged workers to take to the streets but remain peaceful. "Peaceful protest is our right but no state asset is to be damaged. Don't take the law in your hands," he cautioned.

A similar message was given by Khan in a pre-recorded clip which was run by the party on social media platforms, but the supporters' response was not electric .However, his arrest failed to bring crowds of supporters on the streets, a stark contrast with his arrest on May 9 when thousands of them came out to protest against the detention The major reason for the lukewarm response is that the party has considerably shrivelled after the May 9 violence that saw organised attacks on military installations and other state

#### Nepal PM to visit China in September

Kathmandu (PTI): Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' will visit China in September end Foreign Minister N P Saud said on Sunday, a trip aimed at maintaining a balance in ties with both the neighbours - China and India. This will be Prachanda's second foreign trip after assuming the office in December last year. The 68-yearold Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre (CPN-MC) leader visited India in June as his first foreign trip after assuming office for the third time. Foreign Minister Saud said the prime minister would pay an official visit to the northern neighbour towards the third or fourth week of September.

"Preparations are almost complete for the prime minister's upcoming visit to China," Saud said while speaking at a programme.

### Pak court ordered ex-PM to be put in Adiala jail: Report

PTI ISLAMABAD

**T**mran Khan awoke on ■Sunday as an inmate in the high-security Attock prison in Attock city but should have been in Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, according to the order issued by an Islamabad trial court that found the former Pakistan prime minister guilty in a corruption case. Khan, 70, was arrested from his home in Lahore on Saturday shortly after being convicted and sentenced to three-year imprisonment in the Toshakhana corruption

According to the court order, additional district and sessions judge Humayun Dilawar ordered the Islamabad police chief to arrest the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief, instead it was the Punjab police that arrested Khan.

The court also ordered

the Adiala jail superintendent to receive Khan, who was taken to Attock jail amid tight

The court order issued for the inspector general of police (IGP) Islamabad said: "This is to authorise and require you the I.G. Islamabad Police to arrest the convict Imran Khan Niazi son of Ikramullah Khan and to send him to Central Prison Adyala, Rawalpindi, for serving out the stated sentences," the Dawn newspaper the Dawn newspaper "This is to authorise and

require you the said superintendent to receive the said convict Imran Khan Niazi into your custody in the said jail, together with this warrant for serving out the stated sensaid another court order issued for the Adiala jail superintendent.However, Khan was neither arrested by the capital police nor detained at

Adiala jail, the report said. It quoted sources in Punjab police as saying that the Lahore police were alerted before

He said that the cause of

the accident is being investi-

gated.The state-run Radio

Pakistan reported that the

Pakistan Army and Rangers

have started relief and rescue

activities at the accident site.

been started on the special

directives of Army chief

The rescue operation has

ly after the court verdict. Therefore, a team of Lahore police constituted under the supervision of a senior police officer was put on standby, which then reached Khan's Zaman Park residence shortly after the verdict was announced, the sources added.

noon and an order was given

to them to arrest Khan short-

Instead of taking Khan to a state-run hospital for medical examination before shifting him to prison as ordered by the court, a senior police officer took Khan directly to Attock jail and handed him over to the prison's superintendent, the report said. PTI spokesperson Zulifi Bokhari said on Saturday that Khan was shifted to Attock Jail in the city of Attock amid tight security.

# 'Imran's arrest to help PML-N get 'desired results' in polls'

**PTI** ■ LAHORE

 $\mathbf{I}$ mran Khan's conviction and his three-year jail term in a corruption case have cleared a "major hurdle" in holding general elections in Pakistan and will help the ruling PML-N and the powerful military establishment to get the "desired results" in the polls, some analysts and political leaders believe.Former Pakistan prime minister Khan, 70, was arrested from his home here on Saturday shortly after an Islamabad trial court found him guilty of "corrupt practices" in the Toshakhana corruption case and sentenced him to three years in jail, which automatically disqualified him for five years from holding any public office.

The case alleges that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

chief "deliberately concealed" details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana, a repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept, during his time as the prime minister and proceeds from their reported sales.

From political analysts to politicians of the mainstream parties, there has been a discussion in Pakistan in recent weeks that the general elections October/November will only be held once Khan is sent to jail, making it easier for the military establishment to get the "desired results" (in the polls) and install a set up of its choice in Islamabad.

Political analyst Hasan Askari Rizvi told PTI that after the arrest of Khan, there seems to be no reason left to delay the polls. Both the ruling PML-N and the military establishment appear to be on the same page," he said.
Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif last week told leaders of the allied parties that he would send advice to the president for the dissolution of the National Assembly on August 9. The election is set to be delayed for a couple of months

because of the census issue, Rizvi said, adding that otherwise no other "major hurdle" is left.Sharif recently said that elections will be held under the digital census of 2023. Senior PTI leader Mussarat Cheema said Khan,

who was hoping to win the next general election and return as the prime minister later this year, was arrested to meet the demand of the PML-N, especially its chief organis-

er Maryam Nawaz who had set this condition for going into

polls.
"Today, justice was slaughtered by disqualifying and convicting a national hero (Imran Khan) in a phoney case. This is what Maryam Nawaz has long been demanding - a level playing field to go into elections," she said in a tweet.A senior PML-N leader in Punjab told PTI that Khan's arrest has paved the way for general elections.

"There was an apprehension both in the establishment and PML-N that as long as Khan is a free man, it will not be easy to contain him in polls.

Therefore, his arrest was a prerequisite to the polls...otherwise delay was imminent," he said on the condition of

#### Pope announces next World Youth Day will be in Seoul

 $P_{\text{Sunday that the next World}}^{\text{ope Francis announced on}}$ faith festival, will be held in Seoul, South Korea in 2027. The announcement marks

the first time the festival returns to Asia since 1995, when millions of people turned out for one of St. John Paul II's biggest events, in Manila, Philippines.
Francis announced the

location Sunday at the end of the Lisbon edition of World

### PILGRIMS BRAVE SCORCHING HEAT FOR POPE'S VIGIL

An estimated 1.5 million (15 lakh) young people filled a field on Saturday in the Portuguese capital for Pope Francis' World Youth Day vigil, braving scorching heat to secure a spot for the evening prayer and to camp out overnight and be in place for his final farewell Mass on Sunday morning.

Temperatures soared to 38 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) on Saturday in Lisbon and were forecast to top 40 C (104 F) on Sunday. The heat forced pilgrims to shelter under umbrellas and makeshift shades of plastic canvas sheets tied between trash bins in the otherwise exposed field on the edge of the Tagus river.

Crews blew misters at the pilgrims to try to cool them down as they made their way into the venue, many flying their national flags. They formed long lines in the heat of the day to fill water bottles from what organisers said were more than 400 faucets around the field. Smoke from a spate of

wildfires that broke out around Portugal during a weekend spike in temperatures cast a haze over the sky as they arrived on foot from all around the city for one of the liturgical highlights of the Catholic youth festival. Citing local organisers, the Vatican said an estimated 1.5 million people were on hand. Francis was presiding over



shrine in Fatima

There, he ditched his prepared speech and a prayer for peace, the third time he has opted to speak casually to the crowds in his native Spanish. The prayer had been expected to be a highlight of Francis' visit to Fatima, given the shrine's century-old affiliation with exhortations of peace and conversion in Russia and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Francis instead "prayed silently for peace, with pain", while meditating for a long period before a statue of the Virgin Mary, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said. And the Vatican later posted the prayer on the platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

people turned out for Francis' visit to Fatima, packing the central esplanade long before the red-tinted moon set and the sun rose. Nearby wildfires turned the sky smoky black and sent ash snowing down on the crowd."We are here with great joy," said Maria Florido, a 24-year-old Spaniard who also saw Francis in Lisbon. "We woke up very early to come here and see the pope ... and we are here with great enthusi-

The Fatima story dates back to 1917, when according to tradition, Portuguese siblings Francisco and Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia said the Virgin Mary appeared to them six times and confid-

first two described an apocayptic image of hell, foretold the end of World War I and the start of World War II, and portended the rise and fall of Soviet communism. In 2000,

the Vatican disclosed the longawaited third secret, describing it as foretelling the May 13 1981, assassination attempt against St John Paul II in St Peter's Square, which fell on the anniversary of the original According to later writings

by Lucia, who became a nun and died in 2005, Russia would be converted and peace would reign if the pope and all the bishops of the world consecrated Russia to the "Immaculate Heart of Mary". Lucia later claimed that John Paul fulfilled An estimated two lakh that prophecy during a 1984 Mass, even though he never specified Russia in the prayer.

Fatima has long captivated Catholics, because of its blending of mystical, Marian apparitions, apocalyptic prophesies about the rise and fall of Soviet communism and the death of a pope. While Saturday's wildfires and related ashfall were easily explained, they also harked back to another element of the Fatima phenomenon, an unusual weather phenomenon known as the "Miracle of the Sun". According to legend, on October 13, 1917, the Fatima "seers" predicted that the Virgin would perform a miracle that day, and tens of thousands of people

flocked to Fatima.

# German far-Right says EU a 'failed project'

The far-right Alternative for Germany declared the European Union a "failed project" in its current form as it June's European Parliament election at its party convention in the eastern city of Magdeburg on Sunday, the German news agency dpa reported. The text states that The programme adopted in Magdeburg on Sunday takes the EU has "completely failed" in all important areas, including its migration and climate policy, and it rejects the Euro

However, the party stopped short of demanding Germany's exit from the EU. Instead, the AfD is calling for the EU to be re-founded as a "federation of European nations", dpa report-

as a currency.

According to the election programme, the main tasks of the new federation should be the protection of external borders against migration, strategic autonomy in security polferent identities" in Europe.

Recent polls put support for the AfD at 19-22 per cent, behind only the main conservative opposition bloc. AfD tions in eastern Germany to lead a county administration for the first time since the 1930s and now holds the mayoralty in a town with a population of

a softer line towards the EU than the draft programme from June, in which the AfD said it would seek the "orderly dissolution of the EU". Several AfD officials had

previously voiced their desire for Germany to exit the EU altogether, in what is called

However, the new program says the AfD supports the idea of a "Europe of fatherlands, a European community of sovereign, democratic states." AfD co-leader Alice Weidel

said that the new compromise had been reached during negotiations late Sunday night, dpa reported.

ized the AfD's list of 35 candi-Parliament election next year. Maximilian Krah was

selected last weekend as the AfD's lead candidate with 65.7 per cent of the votes. Krah has been a member of the European Parliament since 2019.Leading members of the AfD spoke out on Sunday against cooperating with the country's main opposition conservative bloc, the Christian Democratic Union of former chancellor Angela Merkel.

Their statements stand in contrast to previous calls by AfD leader Tino Chrupalla, who had urged the CDU to dismantle the "firewall" against his party. Opening the convention last week, Chrupalla pointed to his party's prospects of winning three state elections in eastern regions next year, telling delegovernment responsibility". AfD co-leader Alice Weide

had made similar statements The convention also final- about the party's aspirations to government before.

AfD Stephan Brandner told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on Sunday edition that he did "not see a reason to approach" the Christian Democratic Union, adding that the conservative party had had their chance for "much too long".Brandner has been a member of the German Parliament since 2017 and was the AfD front runner candidate in the state of Thuringen for the 2017 German federal elections.

The CDU's main leader, Friedrich Merz, insisted that there would be no cooperation even at the local level between his Christian Democratic Union and AfD, after his apparent suggestion that they might work together prompted criti-cism from fellow conserva-

#### S Arabia urge citizens to leave Lebanon

Beirut (AP): Bahrain called on its citizens on Saturday to leave Lebanon "for their own safety", same without giving a reason. The decision by the two Gulf nations came after days of fighting in the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon between members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah group and militants of Islamic groups.

The four days of fighting in the Ein el-Hilweh camp near the southern port city of Sidon has left 13 people dead and dozens wounded. Bahrain's Foreign Ministry said Bahrainis should abide by the government's previous decisions to avoid travel to Lebanon. The Saudi embassy in Beirut posted a statement late on Friday night on X, calling on its citizens to avoid going to areas where there are "armed conflicts" and also to leave Lebanon quickly.

#### Eight killed as boat capsizes in B'desh

At least eight people, including three children, were

killed after a trawler carrying 46 passengers collided with a sand-laden vessel and capsized in a branch of Padma River in Bangladesh, according to media reports. According to Louhajung Fire Service Station Officer Qais Ahmed, the accident occurred around 8.30 pm on Saturday in Munshiganj district."So far, we have recovered the bodies of eight people, and four of them have been sent to the local hospital. Two bodies, including a child, remain on the river bank," the Dhaka Tribune newspaper quoted Ahmed as saying. The Fire Service and Civil Defence resumed the rescue operation for the missing on Sunday morning after it was halted at around 2 am due to the weather and strong currents in the river. The dead could not be



include three children, two women and a man. Munshiganj Superintendent of Police Aslam Khan said the passengers from Sirajdikhan were on a daylong picnic on the boat, bdnews.com reported. They were returning home when the accident occurred. Most of them managed to swim ashore, Aslam said. Deltaic Bangladesh is crisscrossed by several hundred rivers while hundreds of people die each year in boat and ferry accidents in Bangladesh, largely due to overcrowding and poor safety standards of

#### Musk-Zuckerberg cage fight to be streamed on social media

AP KNEW YORK

Elon Musk says his potential Ein-person fight with Mark Zuckerberg would be streamed on his social media site X, formerly known as Twitter. The two tech billionaires seemingly agreed to a "cage match" faceoff in late June. Zuckerberg is actually trained in mixed martial arts, and the Facebook founder posted about completing his first jiu jitsu tournament earlier this year.

"Zuck v Musk fight will be live-streamed on X," Musk wrote in a post Sunday on the platform. "All proceeds will go to charity for veterans." Musk said earlier Sunday

he was training for the fight by lifting weights.

Don't have time to work out, so I just bring them to work," Musk wrote on X.

Whether or not Musk and Zuckerberg actually make it to the ring has yet to be seen -

especially as Musk often tweets

about action prematurely or without following through. But even if their cage match agreement is all a joke, the banter has gained attention.It all started when Musk, who owns X, responded to a tweet about Meta preparing to release a new Twitter rival called Threads. He took a dig about the world becoming "exclusively under Zuck's thumb with no other options" - but then one Twitter

user jokingly warned Musk of

Zuckerberg's jiu jitsu training. "I'm up for a cage match if he is lol," Musk wrote late Tuesday. Musk's push to stream the

video live on X comes as he's pushing to turn the platform into a "digital town square." However, his much-publicised Twitter Spaces kickoff event in May with Florida Gov Ron DeSantis announcing his run for president struggled with technical glitches and a near half-hour delay.

### USE OF WATER CANNON ON BOAT IN DISPUTED SEA

# **Philippine military flays Chinese coast guard**

The Philippine military on Sunday condemned a Chinese coast guard ship's "excessive and offensive" use of a water cannon to block a Filipino supply boat from delivering new troops, food, water and fuel to a Philippine-occupied shoal in the disputed South China Sea.

The tense confrontation on Saturday at the Second Thomas Shoal was the latest flare-up in the long-seething territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and

The disputes in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest sea lanes, have long been regarded as an Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the rivalry between the United States and China in the

China claims ownership over virtually the entire strategic waterway despite international rulings that invalidated Beijing's vast territorial claims, such as that of 2016 by the Court Permanent Arbitration, an international body based in The Hague; China rejects that ruling.

Philippine navy personnel on board two chartered supply boats were cruising toward Second Thomas, escorted by Philippine coast guard ships, when a Chinese coast guard ship approached and used a powerful water cannon to block the Filipinos from the shoal that China also claims, according to Philippine military and coast guard officials.

The Chinese ship's action was "in wanton disregard of the safety of the people on board' the Philippine navy-chartered boat and violated international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, said the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which did not say if any of its sailors were



offensive actions against Philippine vessels" near the prevented one of the two Filipino boats from unloading supplies needed by Filipino troops guarding the shoal onboard a longmarooned Philippine navy ship, the BRP Sierra Madre, the Philippine military said in a

It called on the Chinese coast guard and China's central military commission "to act with prudence and be responsible in their actions to prevent miscalculations and accidents that will endanger people's

Several countries expressed concern over the actions of the Chinese ship.

The United States immediately expressed support to the Philippines and renewed a warning that it's obliged to defend its longtime treaty ally when Filipino public vessels and forces come under an armed attack, including in the

The US State Department said in a statement that "firing water cannons and employing unsafe blocking maneuvers, PRC ships interfered with the Philippines' lawful exercise of

crew." It used the acronym for the People's Republic of China.

It added that such actions are the latest by the PRC in the South China Sea and are a direct threat to "regional peace and stability.

Australia expressed its concern, describing the actions of the Chinese coast guard ship as "dangerous and destabilising."

Japan said it supported the Philippines, adding that "the harassment and action, which infringe on lawful activities of the sea and endanger naviga-tional safety," were "totally unacceptable?

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila did not immediately issue any reaction but has filed a large number of diplomatic protests over increasingly hostile actions by China in recent years. Chinese government officials did not immediately comment on the

China has long demanded that the Philippines withdraw its small contingent of naval forces and tow away the activecommissioned but crumbling BRP Sierra Madre.

The navy ship was deliberately marooned on the shoal in 1999 and now serves as a fraghigh seas freedom of navigation and jeopardised the safety of rial claim to the atoll.

# Kim vows to boost war readiness

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un toured the country's key weapons factories, including those producing artillery systems and launch vehicles for nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, and pledged to speed up efforts to advance his military's arms and war readiness, state media said

Kim's three-day inspections through Saturday came as the United States and South Korea prepared for their next round of combined military exercises planned for later this month to cope with the growing North Korean threat. Tensions on the Korean

Peninsula are at their highest

level in years as the pace of North Korea's missile tests and the joint U.S.-South Korea military drills, which Kim portrays as invasion rehearsals, have both intensified in a tit-for-tat cycle. Some experts say Kim's tour of the weapons factories could also be related to possible military cooperation with Moscow that may involve North Korean supplies of artillery and other ammunition as Russian President Vladimir Putin reaches out to other countries for support in the war in Ukraine. During Kim's visit to an unspecified factory producing large-caliber artillery systems, he stressed the factory's "important responsibilities and tasks in perfecting (the North's) war readiness," North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said.

Kim praised the factory's efforts to employ "scientific and technological measures" to improve the quality of shells, reduce processing times for propellent tubes and increase manufacturing speed, but also called for the need to develop and produce new types of shells, KCNA said.

At another factory manufacturing launcher trucks designed to transport and fire ballistic missiles, Kim said increasing the supply of the vehicles is a top priority for the military and complimented workers for establishing a "solid foundation" for production.

At a factory producing engines for cruise missiles and drones, Kim called for "rapidly expanding" production, KCNA said. Kim's stops also included a small arms factory, where he stressed the need to modernize the weapons carried by soldiers. Photos published by state media showed Kim firing at least two different scoped



rifles from a table. In the face of deepening confrontations with Washington and Seoul, Kim has been trying boost the visibility of his partnerships with Moscow and Beijing as he tries to break out of diplomatic isolation and insert himself into a united front against the

His tour of the weapons factories comes after a giant military parade last month in North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, where Kim was joined by Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and a Chinese ruling party official while rolling out his most powerful missiles designed to target South Korea and the United

Shoigu's presence at the July 27 parade, which came after Kim took him on a tour of a domestic arms exhibition, demonstrated North Korea's support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine and added to suspicions the North was willing to supply arms to Russia to support its war efforts.

Cheong Seong Chang, an analyst at South Korea's Sejong Institute, said Kim's visits to the factories likely had a dual goal

of encouraging the modernization of domestically produced weapons and examining artillery and other supplies that can possibly be exported to

Kim's comments at the artillery factory about improving the quality of shells and the need to develop new types of ammunition, which he described as key to the country's "defense economic projects," clearly communicate an intent for exports to Russia,

Cheong said. North Korea has been aligning with Russia over the war in Ukraine, insisting that the "hegemonic policy" of the U.S.-led West forced Moscow to take military action to protect its security interests. But Pyongyang has denied U.S. accusations that it has been providing arms to Russia to aid ts fighting in Ukraine.

Cheong said Kim's com-ments at the factory about making missile-launch trucks could indicate that the North is seeing some progress in increasing the production of those vehicles, which would possibly improve the operational range of its ballistic weapons designed to target neighbouring rivals and the US

#### 3 killed in US shooting

Washington (AP): A shooting on a street in the nation's capital left three people dead and two others hospitalised Saturday night, police said.

Officers responded to the sounds of gunshots around 8 p.m. in the 1600 block of Good Hope Road Southeast and found five victims who had been shot. Two men and a woman were pronounced dead at the scene and two men were transported to area hospitals, Washington, DC, Metropolitan Police Department Acting Chief Pamela Smith said during a news conference at the scene. The conditions of the hospitalised victims were not immediately known.

"This kind of gun violence is not acceptable in the District of Columbia. This is not a war

zone. We want our residents to feel safe," Smith said. Smith asked for help from the public in collecting information about what she called a disturbing

fatal shooting.
"We realise that there may be others who may have been injured tonight. We are asking you to come forward," Smith said, adding that the community needs to be involved in stopping the city's violence. "It can't rest upon the metropolitan police department to determine what works and what doesn't work." Washington experienced another mass shooting last month when nine people were wounded while celebrating Independence Day in a neighbourhood about a 20minute drive east of the White

#### China releases TV docu showcasing army's ability to attack Taiwan

Taipei (AP): China has released a new documentary about the army's preparation to attack Taiwan and showcasing soldiers pledging to give up their lives if needed as Beijing continues to ramp up its rhetoric against the self-ruled island. "Chasing Dreams," an eight-part docuseries aired by state broadcaster CCTV earlier this week to mark the People Liberation Army's 96th anniversary, features military drills and testimonials by dozens of soldiers, of which several express their willingness to die in a potential attack against Taiwan. China claims Taiwan, a

self-ruled democracy, as its

own territory, to be conquered by force if necessary.
State media and the PLA

frequently release propaganda materials promoting the army's modernisation as well as sleek videos of military

The materials serve to fan rising Chinese nationalism and display military confidence against Taiwan and, implicitly, its ties with the United States. While the US doesn't recognize Taiwan as a sovereign country, it has pledged to help the island defend itself in case of an invasion. Last month, the White House announced a \$345 million military aid package for

Taiwan. The move, which experts said drew on lessons from the US military assistance to Ukraine, was criticised by Beijing. The "Chasing Dreams" documentary showcased, among other things, the PLA's "Joint Sword" drills, which simulated precision strikes against Taiwan. The exercises were undertaken around the self-governed island in April after a visit by Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-

Among the more dramatic parts of the programme are pledges by PLA soldiers from various divisions to relinquish life in a potential attack on

## Russia mounts a massive missile and drone attack against Ukraine

Sunday, following through on its promise to retaliate for a Ukrainian attack on a Russian tanker. Russian and Ukrainian shelling across the country overnight killed in at least six people, officials said.

Separately, Moscow's second-largest airport briefly suspended flights early Sunday following a foiled drone attack near the Russian capital.

Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 70 attack drones and missiles, including cruise missiles from aircraft over the Caspian Sea and Iranian-made, Shahed-136/131 strike UAVs. Serhiy Tyurin, deputy head of Ukraine's Khmelnytsky region military administration, said three waves of missiles hit the Starokostiantyniv area, damaging several buildings and igniting a fire at a warehouse. The strike may have been intended

for the city's airfield, officials that as transporting fuel for Ukraine as Kyiv continues to Zaporizhzhia region had also come under attack. The Russian barrage came after a Ukrainian drone attack on a Russian tanker in the Black Sea near Crimea late Friday. Ukraine also struck a major Russian port with drones earlier the same day.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova condemned what she called a Ukrainian "terrorist attack" on a civilian vessel in the Kerch Strait. "There can be no justification for such barbaric actions, they will not go unanswered and their authors and perpetrators will inevitably be punished," Zakharova posted on the Telegram messaging app. An official with Ukraine's Security Service confirmed to The Associated Press that a Ukrainian drone packed with 450 kg (992 pounds) of explosive the service struck the tanker

said. Ukrainian President Russian forces. The official Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the spoke on condition of anonymi-

Russia's Federal Agency for Marine and River Transport posted on Telegram that although the drone blasted a hole in the tanker's engine room, there were no casualties among the 11 crew members.

Two of the six fatalities overnight Sunday occurred during a Russian air strike in Ukraine's Kharkiv region, according to the head of the local regional military administration, Oleh Syniehubov. Another four people were injured. Zelenskyy said that a guided bomb had hit a blood transfusion centre in the area's Kupyan district late on August 5. "This war crime alone says everything about Russian aggression," Zelenskyy wrote on social media. "Defeating terrorists is a matter of honour for everyone who values life."

Heavy shelling continued along the frontline in Eastern

push forward with its ongoing Moscow unleashed a mas-Sive missile and drone Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the facilities of aircraft engine man-ty because he was not autho-the Kharkiv region, a 58-yearcounteroffensive. Elsewhere in year-old man was hospitalized after Russian shelling of the village of Podoly, an official said.

In Ukraine's eastern Kupyan region, Russian missiles injured a 55-year-old man and ignited a forest fire, officials said on social media. Russian attacks in the Donetsk region villages of Torske and Niu-York killed two people, local governor Pavlo Kyrylenko posted on social media. Ukrainian shelling in Russianheld Donetsk killed a woman in her eighties, the city's Moscowappointed mayor Alexei Kulemzin said Sunday. The shelling also set the main building of a university on fire, according to the Moscow-installed head of the illegally annexed Donetsk People's Republic, Denis Pushilin. Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said that the blaze caused the building's root to collapse, but that there were

#### **Hiroshima mayor calls N-deterrence** 'folly' on atomic bombing anniv

Hiroshima officials criticised growing support for resulting from uneasiness over toward our ideal world." tensions in the Koreas, commenting Sunday as the city remembered the atomic bombing of 78 years ago. The observance came two months after Hiroshima hosted a summit of the Group of 7 major industrial nations, at which G7 leaders visited the city's peace park and a museum dedicated to those who died in the word's first atomic attack.

The leaders issued a joint statement calling for the continued non-use of nuclear weapons, but they also justified having such arms to "serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war and coercion."

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui rejected that position in his peace address at the commemoration. "Leaders around the world must confront the reality that nuclear threats now being voiced by certain

nuclear deterrence theory," he said. "They must immediately take concrete steps to lead us

v. Hidehiko Yuzai questioned the growing calls for reinforced nuclear deterrence around the world, including in Japan, since Russia invaded Ukraine and warned of possible nuclear weapons use, while North Korea advances its missile and nuclear development.

'Believers of proactive nuclear deterrence, who say nuclear weapons are indispensable to maintain peace, are only delaying the progress toward nuclear disarmament," Yuzai said. The atomic bomb dropped by the United States on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, destroyed the city, killing 140,000 people, and a second bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed an additional 70,000. Japan surrendered on August 15, ending World War II and Japan's nearly half century of aggression in

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who represents Hiroshima in parliament, has sought to highlight the G7 nuclear weapons as a deterrent from the dangerous present commitment to nuclear disarmament and a condemnation ic weapons. But he has been faulted by survivors for refusing to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon. Arguing the pact is unworkable because no nuclear-armed state has signed, Kishida has pledged to serve as a bridge between nuclear and non-nuclear states and work for nuclear disarmament. His critics say it is a hollow promise because Japan relies on the US nuclear umbrella for protection and has been rapidly expanding its military. Japan, the United States and South Korea are stepping up security cooperation in response to a more assertive China and the growing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea. Washington and Seoul have agreed to strengthen their nuclear deterrence cooperation, and Japan also wants stronger protection

#### Quake jolts parts of eastern China

Beijing (PTI): A 5.5 magnitude earthquake jolted parts of eastern China on Sunday, injuring 21 people and collapsing over 100 buildings. The guake that jolted Pingwan quake that jolted Pingyuan County in Shandong Province at 2:33 am was also felt in sevincluding Beijing and Tianjin and the provinces of Henan and Hebei, according to the local media reports. Pingyuan is about 345km south of

So far, a total of 21 people have been injured and 126 buildings in the earthquake zone collapsed, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

According to videos posted online, the quake shook furniture in homes and sent residents seeking refuge outside.

More than 20 trains scheduled to depart from Beijing, Tianjin, and Cangzhou were halted. Some 30 trains by way of Shijiazhuang-Jinan Highspeed Railway were also halted, according to China Railway Beijing Group Co, Ltd.

Local authorities have launched an emergency response to organise rescue and assess possible risks.

# Social media influencer charged with inciting riot in NYC

**AP** ■ NEW YORK

Social media influencer Kai Cenat is facing charges of inciting a riot and promoting an unlawful gathering in New York City, after the online streamer drew thousands of his followers, many of them teenagers, with promises of giving away electronics, including a new PlayStation.

The event produced chaos, with dozens of people arrested some jumping atop vehicles, hurling bottles and throwing punches.

Cenat was released early on Saturday from police custody after being issued a desk appearance ticket, which police issue to require a suspect to appear in court to answer charges. A police spokesperson said he is to appear in court on August 18. The mayhem in New York City's Union Square on Friday afternoon put further focus on the hold social media

influencers have on the people who follow and fawn over

"Our children cannot be raised by social media," Mayor Eric Adams said on Saturday during a press briefing on an unrelated crime. Police said they arrested 65 people, including 30 juveniles. Several people were injured, including some with bloodied faces. At least four people were taken away in ambulances. "I do not think people realise the level of discipline that we showed to take a very dangerous, volatile situation and to be able to bring it to a level of resolve without any loss of life or any substantial damage to property and without young people harming themselves," Adams said.

Cenat, 21, is a video creator with 6.5 million (65 lakh) followers on the platform Twitch, where he regularly livestreams. He also boasts four million (40 lakh) subscribers on YouTube,

where he posts daily life and comedy vlogs ranging from 'Fake Hibachi Chef Prank!" to his most recent video, "I Rented Us Girlfriends In Japan!"

His 299 YouTube videos have amassed more than 276 million (27.6 crore) views among them. In December, he was crowned the streamer of the year at the 12th annual

AMP, which represents Cenat and a small group of other influencers, said in an email on Saturday that the Union Square event was intended to show

Streamy Awards. Media representatives for

appreciation to fans.

"We have hosted fan meet ups and video shoots in the past, but we have never expe-

rienced anything at the scale of what took place yesterday," AMP said.

"We recognise that our audience and influence is growing, and with that comes greater responsibility," the statement continued. "We are deeply disheartened by the outbreak of disorderly conduct that affected innocent people and businesses, and do not condone that behaviour."

In its apology, the company said it was cooperating with authorities. Livestreaming on Twitch from a vehicle as the event gathered steam, Cenat displayed gift cards he planned to give away. Noting the crowd and police presence, he urged, "Everybody who is out there, make sure you all (are) safe.... We are not going to do nothing until it is safe."

Eventually, he and an entourage got out of the vehicle and hustled through a crowd, crossed a street and

went into the park, where Cenat was surrounded by a cheering, shoving mob.

Chief Jeffrey Maddrey of the New York Police Department said Cenat at some point in the afternoon was removed "for his safety" and police were in contact with him. Videos posted on social media and taken from news helicopters showed Cenat being lifted over a fence and out of the crowd and then placed in a police vehicle.

Aerial TV news footage showed a surging, tightly packed crowd running through the streets, scaling structures in the park and snarling traffic. Shouting teenagers swung objects at car windows, threw paint cans and set off fire extinguishers. Some people climbed on a moving vehicle, falling off as it away. Others pounded on or climbed atop

#### Lanka to launch climate justice forum for vulnerable countries Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka will

launch a climate justice forum for vulnerable and developing countries, a senior minister said here on Sunday. "Sri Lanka has proposed the establishment of a Climate Justice Forum (CJF) with the aim of accelerating the financing of losses and damages and providing an alternative and non-traditional approach," Environment Minister Naseer Ahamed said. The country will launch the CJF for the vulnerable and developing countries at the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) at the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference.

by US nuclear weapons.

The conference will be held from November 30 to December 12 in Dubai. Sri Lanka, Ahamed said, is also "of the opinion that it is appropriate to include debt justice as an essential component of the overall solution proposal to be given to the climate-vulnerable and developing countries for

their mitigation and adaptation interventions, taking into account the debt crises faced by those countries." The minister said Sri Lanka

in collaboration with the United

Nations Environment Programme will host the fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific. It will be held from October 3-6 in Colombo. The Forum will provide a platform for governments, intergovernmental organisations and other stakeholders to discuss and prioritise environmental issues in the Asia Pacific region, he said. Ahamed said in addition to the Gazette notification that was issued on March 31, 2021 for banning some single-use plastic items, plastic garlands, single-use spoons, forks, yogurt/ice cream spoons, plastic straws, stirrers, spoons and plastic string hopper trays will be banned within the next couple of weeks.

# **RBI** may continue to hold rate amid concern over inflation, say experts

The Reserve Bank is likely to continue with the pause on the key interest rate at its upcoming monetary policy review, as concerns on the inflation front and keeping the borrowing cost stable to maintain the economic growth momentum persist, said

The RBI Governor-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) meeting is scheduled on August 8-10. The policy decision will be announced on August 10 by Governor Shaktikanta Das.

The borrowing cost, which started rising in May last year, has stabilised with the RBI keeping the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent since February when it was raised from 6.25 per cent. Later, in the two bi-monthly policy reviews in April and June, the benchmark rate was retained.

Punjab & Sind Bank Managing Director Swarup Kumar Saha said the RBI factors in many things, including global developments. So, it will also take into account interest rate hikes effected by many central banks like the US Fed



recently. Due to interest rate increases, yields in the domestic markets have gone.

"Looking at the overall situation, my guess is that the RBI would retain the repo rate at the present level. The interest rate is likely to be stable for the next 2-3 quarters if the global situation remains stable," Saha

LIC Housing Finance Managing Director Tribhuwan Adhikari too said the central bank is unlikely to tinker with interest rates and maintain the

status quo in the upcoming monetary policy review.

The interest rate is likely to remain stable in the near term, Adhikari said.

The government has tasked the central bank to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. The central bank factors in the CPI to arrive at its bi-monthly monetary policy decision.

Indranil Pan, Chief Economist at Yes Bank, said that taking consideration of the

prices led by tomato, there is likely to be no consideration from the MPC to make any alterations - both to the rate and stance.

The decision would also be based on the continued firmness in the macro data flows from the advanced economies that are likely leading to uncertainties on the rate hiking cycle in the AEs, especially the US,

"India and US rate differential has fallen to historic low levels and may soon have its implications for flows. We would expect the RBI to sound a bit cautious and therefore hawkish in its communication. Expectations are for the RBI to move higher its own inflation projections for the remainder of the FY while keeping the growth estimates unchanged," Pan said.

India's retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to a three-month high of 4.81 per cent in June, mainly on account of hardening prices of food. The inflation, however, remains within the RBI's comfort level of below 6 per cent. The inflation data for July will be released on August 14.

MPC, Pankaj Pathak, Fund Manager- Fixed Income, Quantum AMC, said that since the last RBI policy, inflationary pressures have increased.

Sharp jumps in vegetable prices have pushed expected inflation for the next 2-3 months above 6 per cent. Cereal and pulse prices have also moved up.

"We expect the RBI to remain on hold and maintain its policy stance as a withdrawof accommodation. They might raise their CPI inflation forecast for FY24 by 20-30 basis points to around 5.3 per cent-5.4 per cent. A hawkish pause is widely expected and is already a part of the market psyche," Pathak said.

The last MPC meeting was held during June 6-8.

The MPC consists of three external members and three officials of the RBI. The external members of the panel are Shashanka Bhide, Ashima Goyal and Jayanth R Varma. Besides Governor Das, the other RBI officials in MPC are Rajiv Ranjan (Executive Director) and Michael Debabrata Patra (Deputy

## CBIC mulling organisational restructuring to make it more effective, do away with overlapping

The CBIC is mulling a comprehensive restructuring of the organisation, set up 6 decades ago, to make it more effective and remove overlapping, if any, as many of its functions have undergone transformation following introduction of new technologies, abolition of service tax and roll-out of GST which has subsumed several levies.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs or CBIC (formerly knows as Central Board of Excise and Customs) was set up in 1964.

Last in 2014, a cadre restructuring and reorganisation of field formation was undertaken under which 23 central excise zones, 4 service tax zones, 11 customs zones, 60 appeal commissionerates, 45 audit commissionerates, 8 large taxpayer units and 20 directorate generals/directorates were approved to be

set up. Extensive use of big data analytics, introduction of faceless assessment in Customs and electronic filing of various documents, claims and payment of taxes have

taking inputs from field formations on making the ecosystem more taxpayer friendly and synchronize with the policy decisions of the government," the official

The CBIC presently has over a dozen attached and subordinate offices, including Directorates of Revenue Intelligence, GST Intelligence, Valuation, logistics, International Customs, Anti Profiteering, Audit, and performance management.
The CBIC, the then

CBEC, was set up under the Central Boards of Revenue Act 1963 and dealt mainly with the formulation and implementation of policy concerning the levy and collecadaptive to changing times tion of duties including Customs, central excise and Goods and Services Tax; pre-An email sent to CBIC vention of smuggling, administration of matters relating to indirect taxes and narcotics.

The CBIC is headed by a chairman and has six members in the board. The board is assisted by principal chief commissioners/chief commissioners and principal director generals/director generals.

#### No sugar mill in Maharashtra should be without ethanol distillery, says Amit Shah

PTI PUNE

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said there should not be a single sugar mill in Maharashtra that is not producing ethanol.

He was speaking at an event after launching the digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) office in Pune.

"Huge funding is available under various schemes for cooperative societies which can be utilised for setting up distilleries. Sugar mills in the state should avail of the loan facility. There should not be a single sugar mill in Maharashtra that is not making ethanol. It is an emerging market and rates are also good for the same," Shah said.

On the digital portal of the CRCS office launched by him, the Union minister said, "The digital portal is aimed at increas-



parency. The cooperative sector cannot move forward without modernisation, transparency and accountability.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who joined the Eknath Shinde-BJP government last month, was present on the occasion.

Shah said, "This is my first public programme with Ajit Pawar. I want to tell him that he is now sitting at the right place after a long time. This was always the right place for you, but you came to sit here very State Chief Minister Eknath

Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis were also

### British demands on data related issues, duty concessions on dairy out of India-UK FTA: Sources

Protecting the interest of domestic players, India has kept demands of Britain on data related issues and giving any kind of duty concessions on dairy sector out of the ambit of the proposed free trade agreement being negotiated between the two countries, sources said.

However, India is looking at providing duty concessions on auto, and certain confectionery items, they said.

The negotiation for the agreement has reached a critical stage and in all likelihood it could be concluded by October end or November.

The talks received a great impetus due to the recent visit of Commerce and Industry Minister Pivush Goval and Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal to London in July, where both held a series of meetings with different stakeThe negotiation would get

a further fillip during the meetings of trade ministers of India and the UK at the sidelines of G20 trade ministers meeting this month in Jaipur. The visit of the Indian

minister and secretary was very positive for the negotiations. Most of the issues are sorted out between the two countries," one of the sources To provide duty conces-

sions in the automobile sector, several rounds of consultations have been held with the domestic players. In the dairy sector, India

would not touch any product because of the sensitivities of the domestic players, they As both India and UK are

strong players in the services sectors, the two sides are negotiating hard for easing of norms in a number of sectors such as



education, medical practices, banking, insurance, legal, and telecommunications. The UK has shown keen

interest in areas like banking, insurance, legal, and telecommunications The UK firms have raised

concerns over data localisations norms in India.

Another official said that India and the UK are very close to concluding negotiations for a proposed free trade agree-

issues including investment treaty, intellectual property rights (IPRs) and rules of ori-Out of the total 26 chapters

in the FTA, 19 have been

closed. In the rules of origin

chapters, both countries are talking about product specific rules, value addition, and certification. The 'rules of origin' provision prescribes minimal processing that should happen in

an FTA country so that the final manufactured product may be called originating goods in that country.
Under this provision, a country that has inked an

FTA with India cannot dump goods from some third country in the Indian market by just putting a label on it. It has to undertake a prescribed value addition in that product to export to India. Rules of origin norms help contain

#### **Bank credit growth to MSMEs** decelerates in Q1: RBI data PTI NEW DELHI small industries, the credit

Bank credit growth to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has decelerated on a year-on-year basis in the first three months of the current fiscal, according to Reserve Bank data. Players in the MSME sec-

restructuring a necessity, an

of the organisation is needed

to make it more lean and

and taxpayer needs," the offi-

seeking comments on the

story did not elicit a response.

the organisation restructuring

that is being thought about

will be different than the

cadre restructuring which

takes place at regular inter-

The official further said

"A holistic restructuring

official said.

cial told PTI.

tor, the backbone of domestic industry and largest employer, said risk averseness makes banks reluctant to provide loans to small units, leading to a deceleration in bank credit

As per the latest Reserve Bank data, the credit to medium industries in June grew by 13.2 per cent (47.8 per cent last year) and micro and small industries by 13 per cent (29.2 per cent a year ago).

In absolute terms, the gross bank credit outstanding to medium industries at June-end was Rs 2,63,440 crore compared to Rs 2,32,776 crore in June last year.

outstanding in June was Rs 6,25,625 crore against Rs 5,53,675 crore in the corresponding month of 2022.

In May, the credit to medium industries grew by 18.9 per cent (42.9 per cent last year) and micro and small industries by 9.5 per cent (32.7 per cent a year ago).

According to another set of RBI data for April, loan growth of medium industries was 19.1 per cent against 53.7 per cent last year. The growth in the case of micro and small industries was 9.7 per cent in April 2023 compared to 29.8 per cent in the year-ago

FISME Secretary General Anil Bhardwaj said while the RBI data showed double-digit growth in bank credit to MSMEs, which might indicate a free flow of institutional

#### **Mutual fund houses** go slow on NFOs; file draft papers for 59 schemes in Apr-Jul

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $W_{ing\ mutual\ fund}^{ith\ a\ wide\ array\ of\ exist-}$  schemes, asset management companies are going slow on launching new ones in a highly competitive landscape as they filed draft documents for 59 new fund offerings (NFOs) in the first seven months of the year.

In comparison, draft papers for 70 NFOs were filed in the year-ago period. In 2022, a total of 228 new schemes were floated against 140 in 2021, industry data showed.

Moreover, the remaining months of 2023 are not expected to see NFO numbers anywhere close to those of 2022 or 2021, SAS Online founder and CEO Shrey Jain

The reasons behind the decline in NFOs could be a combination of the factors as the mutual fund industry's dynamics are influenced by various internal and external

"AMCs may be concentrating on managing and promoting their existing schemes, rather than launching new ones. This strategy allows them to maximise the returns for existing investors and maintain stable assets under management," Jain said.

Also, the current market reaching an all-time high could be another reason for AMCs showing caution in launching NFOs. During such periods of elevated market levels, AMCs might anticipate the possibility of a market correction or downturn, he

#### Biz optimistic on demand, climatic factors a concern for food prices: Britannia

 $B_{\text{mistic on demand condi-}}^{\text{usinesses in India are opti-}}$ tions despite apprehensions about global recession though challenges from a shortfall in monsoon due to 'El Nino' conditions still persist, said leading bakery and food company Britannia Industries.

The trajectory of inflation during FY24 would depend on a host of domestic and global factors, said Britannia Industries in its latest annual

"The outlook for the food prices and rural growth would depend significantly on climatic factors and adequacy of

monsoon rainfall," it said. Any shortfall in monsoon due to the 'El Nino' conditions as forecasted, would also have a higher impact on rural consumption and the Indian econ-

"Availability and prices of input materials like wheat, sugar, milk and edible oil could be affected, thereby posing severe risks to the business growth," it said.

According to Britannia Industries, makers of popular brands such as Good Day, Tiger, NutriChoice, Milk Bikis, and Marie Gold, milk prices are expected to remain high on account of high input costs and good demand.

"Prices of other essential inputs like wheat, sugar, edible oil and fuel continue to be subject to high uncertainty. However, it is expected that a good crop would help keep prices in check and strengthen rural demand," it said.

Besides, the government's thrust on capital expenditure and private sector manufacturing and service activity should also support income generation and bolster economic activities.

#### After retail and telecom, Ambani casts eye on financial services, new energy business

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After creating India's largest retailers and telecom operator in the shortest span of time, billionaire Mukesh Ambani has now set his sight on propelling newly-carved financial services business unit into country's largest non-banking lender while transitioning the conglomerate to net carbon zero by 2035.

The recently demerged Jio Financial Services Ltd will leverage the prowess of digital and retail businesses, Ambani said in the latest annual report of Reliance Industries Ltd. The unit, which "will lever-

age the technological capabilities of Reliance and digitally deliver financial services, democratising access to financial services offering for Indian citizens", is expected to be listed soon, he said.

The demerger of the financial services business into JFS



and planned listing on the stock exchanges promises to unlock

JFS's digital-first approach will help deliver distinctively simple, affordable, innovative and intuitive financial services products to all Indians, the annual report said without saying when the recently demerged firm would be listed.

A guidance may be provided in the annual shareholders' meeting of Reliance on August

The new firm, which has little revenue as of now but owns 6.1 per cent stake in Reliance, last month announced partnership with BlackRock to set up HDFC Bank's Jagdishan highest paid bank CEO in FY23 with ₹10.55 cr pay

**PTI** MUMBAI

HDFC Bank's Sashidhar Jagdishan has emerged as the highest-paid bank chief executive in FY23, grossing over Rs 10.55 crore in overall

Jagdishan's colleague Kaizad Bharucha, the deputy managing director of the largest private sector lender, drew Rs 10 crore for the fiscal year and may be the secondhighest grossing banker in the country, according to disclosures made in annual reports.

Among the bank CEOs, Axis Bank's Amitabh Chaudhry's Rs 9.75 crore payout was the second biggest and he was closely followed by Sandeep Bakhshi of bigger rival ICICI Bank, who drew Rs 9.60 crore for the fiscal

Uday Kotak, who holds

over 26 per cent of Kotak Mahindra Bank, continued with his decision to take a token Re 1 as remuneration

started in the pandemic, even

in FY23.

At a time when the banking sector is grappling with the attrition problem, Kotak Mahindra Bank stood out on the compensation front, reporting a 16.97 per cent increase in the average remuneration to its staffers excluding the managerial talent.

Staffers at ICICI Bank were given an 11 per cent hike, while those at Axis Bank enjoyed an inflation-beating 7.6 per cent average increase. HDFC Bank reported an average pay hike of 2.51 per cent. Interestingly, south-based Federal Bank, which has among the lowest attrition rates in the industry, reported an average pay hike of only 2.67 per cent.

and Indian Bank at 3.61 per cent during the quarter. During the quarter, four lenders logged a profit of

over 100 per cent. The highest percentage growth was record-

Bank of India (SBÍ), which recorded a 178 per cent bottom line growth at Rs 16,884 crore and the Bank of India with a 176 per cent surge, earned Rs 1,551

#### ONGC plans oil-to-chemical plants in pivot towards energy transition strong and will continue to be a ONGC Petro-Additions Limited

India's top oil and gas producter ONGC is planning to set up two oil-to-chemical plants in India to convert crude oil directly into high-value chemical products as it prepares for energy transition that is shaking up the industry worldwide, chairman Arun Kumar Singh said.

Crude oil, which companies like ONGC pump out from below seabed and from underground reservoirs, is a primary

source of energy. It is processed in oil refineries to produce petrol, diesel and jet fuel. With the world looking to transition away from fossil fuel, companies around the globe are looking at new avenues to use crude oil. Petrochemicals are chemi-

cal products derived from crude oil and are used in the manufacturing of detergents, fibres (polyester, nylon, acrylic etc.), poly-

thene and other man-made

plastics. "The demand for petro-

chemicals is expected to remain

key driver of oil and gas demand in the future," Singh said in the firm's latest annual report. "With this objective, ONGC is collaborating with other entities to explore opportunities in the oil to chemical (O2C), refining, and petrochemicals. We are

also planning to set up two greenfield O2C plants in India." He, however, did not give details. The firm already has two subsidiaries, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited and

that run petrochemical units at Mangalore in Karnataka and Dahej in Gujarat, respectively.
"MRPL and OPaL are

strongly engaged in the diversification plan from oil to the petro-chemical sector," Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) said in the 2022-23 annual report. "ONGC is also partnering with players to explore opportunities in the Oil to Chemical (O2C) and Oil to Petrochemicals (O2P).

#### Bulk drug imports from China hit 75% in FY23: Report PTI MUMBAI in terms of both value as well

Bulk drug imports from China increased from 62 per cent to 75 per cent in the past nine years and India continues to depend on Chinese shipments despite commissioning of various domestic manufacturing projects under the government's productionlinked incentive scheme, a report said.

According to a report by Care Ratings, imports of bulk drug from China have soared

as volume from 64 and 62 per cent in FY14 to 71 and 75 per cent in FY23, respectively. In value terms, during FY14

to FY23, the country's total bulk drug imports from China increased at a compounded annual growth rate of about 7 per cent, indicating that the country continues to rely heavily on its northern neighbour for some of the critical key starting materials (KSMs), said Ranjan Sharma, a senior director with Care Ratings.





#### **Profit of PSU** banks more than doubles to ₹34,774 cr in Q1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Public sector banks (PSBs) have once again posted stellar performance by registering more than double profit of Rs 34,774 crore for the first quarter ended June 2023. During the April-June peri-

od of the previous fiscal, all 12 state-owned banks had recorded a total profit of Rs 15,306 crore, according to quarterly numbers published by public sector lenders. The high-interest regime

helped banks to earn a good net

interest margin (NIM) during

the quarter. Most banks had recorded NIM of over 3 per Pune-based Bank of Maharashtra posted the highest NIM of 3.86 per cent, followed by Central Bank at 3.62 per cent

ed by Punjab National Bank, which earned a profit of Rs 1,255 crore against Rs 308 crore in the same quarter of the previous year, a growth of 307 per cent. It was followed by the State

# SWEDES KNOCK US OUT OF WC



**AFP** MELBOURNE

Sweden stunned the United States 5-4 in a sudden-death penalty shootout Sunday to consign the defending champions to their earliest-ever Women's World Cup exit on Sunday.

Sweden set up a quarterfinal against Japan and ended the Americans' dreams of an unprecedented third World Cup title in a row in the most painful and dramatic fashion.

The title-holders dominated the 90 minutes of normal time but a breakthrough proved elusive with Swedish goalkeeper Zecira Musovic making some startling saves to keep her side

With the 0-0 deadlock remaining after extra-time it went to penalties in Melbourne and the tension went up another notch.

Sweden's Nathalie Bjorn was the first to miss, skying high, only for Megan Rapinoe me personally, I'm just like, this

Sakkari dominated the

A double fault handed

"Things were tricky in the

first set and went up 4-1 in the second but Pegula broke

Sakkari in the seventh game

and held to pull level at 4-4.

Pegula a break chance in the

ninth game and Sakkari swat-

edge. The American then held

second set," Sakkari said. "In

the third, I just tried to stay in

the present. I tried to over-

come myself and take it as a

third set and again in the

final game on a backhand

winner to advance after two

dominant form as she won the

opening set against

Samsonova without facing a

the second set, winning her

fifth break point of a marathon

game with a volley winner before completing a 6-3, 6-3

win to reach her second final

an amazing forehand so I

wanted to see how I would do

upon that battle and I think I

did pretty well," said Gauff.

game for a long time and it's

going to be a difficult match,"

"She's a server and she has

hours and three minutes.

Sakkari broke early in the

Third-seeded Gauff was in

She then took a 2-1 lead in

force a third set.

new challenge.

break point.

of the year.

to do the same.

Both teams missed again, but when Kelley O'Hara hit the post, it was all down to Sweden's ina Hurtig. She hit the winner -- but only after VAR ruled her kick had crossed the line by the most slender of margins.

It was an inglorious end for the US and especially Rapinoe, the Golden Boot winner at the 2019 tournament. She will retire

at the end of the season. "This is like a sick joke. For is dark comedy. I missed a penalty," the 38-year-old told Fox Sports.

"I think it can be cruel and

just not our day."
She added: "I thought we played really well. I'm so happy for us that we went out like that, playing the way that we did."

Expectations were high

coming into the tournament for the four-time champions, who had made at least the semi-finals at every World Cup.
But despite belatedly turn-

against Sweden to be proud of, Vlatko Andonovski's side have never really got going at this tournament.

They leave with just one win, against Vietnam, and were held by the Netherlands, debutants Portugal and Sweden, who are now the highest-ranked side left at three in the world.

This devastating early exit will be seen as a major under-achievement for the Americans, who have been the superpower of international women's football for so long.

It may have been a different story but for Musovic, who was named player of the match and kept the US at bay for 120

"Somehow we managed to get to the penalty shootout, where we showed a lot of courage and I'm extremely proud of the girls that we could go there and win the game," said the stopper, who had got the nod as goalkeeper ahead of Jennifer Falk.

"It's a huge win for us. I had a really good feeling before the

Musovic stands firm

Andonovski came into the game under pressure after the Americans laboured into the last

He made two changes from the team that drew 0-0 against Portugal, with Emily Sonnett in for suspended midfielder Rose Lavelle and Trinity Rodman preferred up front to Lynn Williams.

# Netherlands set up Spain clash

The Netherlands set up a heavyweight Women's World Cup quarter-final clash with Spain after ending South Africa's historic run with a 2-0 victory on Sunday.

But the 2019 runners-up suffered some anxious moments in front of 40,000 in Sydney and had goalkeeper Daphne van Domselaar to thank for keeping the African champions at bay in the first

Jill Roord scored after nine minutes to put the Dutch on their way against a team ranked 45 places below them and featuring in the knockout rounds for the first time.

South Africa goalkeeper Kaylin Swart then made a mess of an innocuous Lineth Beerensteyn shot midway through the second half to give the Dutch a second.

The Netherlands will meet Spain on Friday in the last eight but Van Domselaar was called into action numerous times.

"It wasn't our best game but happy to play my part in the clean sheet," said the stopper, who plays for Aston Villa and was named player of the match.

"I don't know if it was my best (game) but I will be looking back with pride."

Netherlands coach



Andries Jonker was relieved afterwards that his side avoided becoming the latest to be on the end of a World Cup shock.

He said his team can beat anyone, but was scathing of their first-half performance.

"We lost the ball too often in the first half and gave a few chances away," he said.

"Daphne saved us a few times and I was happy to lead 1-0 at half-time.

"We did much better in the second half and had much more control of the game.

"We deserved to score again and in the end deserved

to win." The 54th-ranked South Africa will be kicking themselves after having numerous chances in the opening 45 minutes, almost all to their

could have scored. South Africa coach Desiree Ellis was proud but felt her side should have won.

On six minutes the strik-

The Dutch took the lead

er fired straight at Van

Domselaar -- it was to become

three minutes later, midfielder

Roord nodding in from close

range following a corner for her

fourth goal of the tournament.

winner over Italy that gave

South Africa their first win ever

at the World Cup, was a con-

Four more times in the first half the US-based Kgatlana

stant threat with her pace.

Kgatlana, who scored the

"We had a lot of chances, especially in the first half, to kill off the game," she said.

"The chances we created should have put us out of livewire captain Thembi



#### Americans Pegula and Fritz fall in semi defeats in Washington prior meeting in February's Doha semifinals.

**AFP** ■ WASHINGTON

American top seeds Jessica Pegula and Taylor Fritz suffered semifinal defeats at the Washington Open on Saturday but Coco Gauff kept the star spangled banner flying by earning a place in Sunday's final.

Greek fourth seed Maria to capture her third victory in 26 hours and she will face another home favorite in the final after Gauff defeated Russian Liudmila Samsanova, the defending champion, in straight sets.

Fritz fell to Tallon Griekspoor 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 and the Dutchman will play for the title against Britain's Dan Evans, who beat Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov 6-3, 7-6 (7-4).

Ninth-ranked Sakkari, forced to play twice Friday due to rain on Thursday at the WTA and ATP hard court event, reached her first final since losing to Pegula last October at Guadalajara.

"It would have been ideal if I could be off the court an hour earlier," Sakkari said. "But at the end I got the win which is what I wanted the

Sakkari, who reached her seventh career final, won her only WTA title in 2019 at Rabat.

Pegula, the 2019 Gauff has lost four of her Washington champion, was five meetings with Sakkari denied her fifth career final but says she has learned from those losses. but will match her career high "She's an incredible play of third in the world rankings next week. er. She has been the top of the

Sakkari improved to 5-3 in her career rivalry with Pegula, who won their most recent

## Nigeria target 'transformational' win over England at World Cup

AFP BRISBANE (AUSTRALIA)

Nigeria coach Randy Waldrum believes knocking European champions England out of the Women's World Cup would be "transformational" for the sport in the country as the sides prepare to meet in the last 16 on Monday.

The Super Falcons have appeared at every Women's World Cup going back to the inaugural edition in 1991 but their build-up to this year's tournament was overshadowed by a row with their national federation over bonuses. They had even threatened

to boycott their opening game but put that behind them to draw with Olympic champions Canada and then beat co-hosts Australia.

of Ireland then ensured that they qualified for the last 16 at the expense of Canada and set up a clash with strongly-fancied England in Brisbane. "It would be a huge win,

obviously," Waldrum said Sunday when asked about what knocking out England would

"Álready with what we have accomplished Nigeria is buzzing again, from what I understand.

"I don't think people expected us to get out of the group and to get the results we have got, so I think it has already been a big success.



not only beat the Olympic gold medallists but turn around pions then it would be something extremely special back home for all the people in Nigeria, and more importantly for this squad, for what they have worked so hard to do.

"So it certainly could be transformational in a lot of different ways."

#### 'SO MANY WEAPONS' It is the third time that

Nigeria have made it out of their group at the World Cup but they have never won a knockout tie.

Waldrum confirmed that star striker Asisat Oshoala is "fit and healthy" and said fellow

"But obviously if you can forward Desire Oparanozie could feature for the first time both," Waldrum said of the difsince picking up an injury ferent tactical possibilities.

> He also said he was eparing his team to face an England side with, or without, Keira Walsh after the star midfielder missed the Lionesses' last group game with a knee injury.

Walsh trained with the squad on Sunday for the first time since being stretchered off in England's 1-0 win over Denmark in their second group

But England coach Sarina Wiegman could opt to stick with the three-woman defence which helped them outclass China 6-1 without Walsh, or revert to a back four.

"We have to prepare for

her to go with a back three because they played ever so well in the last match with that and I don't know why she would change.'

Of Walsh, he added: 'Obviously she is a key player in their midfield for them.

"But England also has so many weapons. You go down the list and you look at their players and all of them play in a high-profile setting so there are certainly more that can do damage to us than just her.

They have given us a lot of challenges to prepare for and that will be just another one if she comes in.

### SA coach issues call for more help after WC run

Couth Africa coach Desiree Sellis appealed Sunday to the government and sponsors to step up if women's football in the country is to push on after the team's historic World Cup run.

The African champions won a World Cup game for the first time in stunning Italy 3-2 to seal a landmark place in the last 16 in Australia and New

Their run came to an end in a 2-0 defeat to the Netherlands in Sydney, but they gave the 2019 finalists numerous scares, especially in the first half.

"To the sponsors: I don't know how you can ignore something special like this," said Ellis, who felt her team had enough chances in the opening 45 minbeen out of sight

"I don't know how you can't assist in getting us to climb up the ladder and assist in getting us better." Ellis said there were players

in her squad who still had fulltime jobs outside football and called for South Africa to establish a professional league.

"What this team has achieved, I think the corporate world needs to stand up and really take notice and be counted," she said.

"Otherwise we will come back in four years' time and go through the same thing... we could have gone further.
"When I looked at how the



World Cup was going (with surprise results), the possibility of us winning it was there.

"So we urge the corporates to assist here. We urge the government even to step in and assist and push the corporates to come on board.

"It's not just our senior -- there's no sponsors." South Africa, who were

squeezed out 2-1 by Sweden and drew 2-2 with Argentina in the group stage, had half a dozen chances in the first half against the Dutch.

But together with some wasteful finishing, they found goalkeeper Daphne van

Domselaar in unbeatable form. "We spoke about underdogs yesterday, I don't think there's underdogs in this World Cup," said Ellis, whose players were given a warm reception by the Sydney Football Stadium crowd on a lap of honour at the end.

#### Tsitsipas defeats de Minaur to capture ATP Los Cabos title

**AFP** ■ LOS CABOS (MEXICO)

¬reek top seed Stefanos Greek top seed character defeated Australian fifth seed Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-4 on Saturday to capture the ATP Mexico Open for his first title in 14

Tsitsipas, this year's Australian Open runner-up, claimed his first ATP outdoor hardcourt crown in his third

final of the year, having fallen

to Novak Djokovic at Melbourne and top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz at Barcelona in

captured his 10th career title and first since June of last year at Mallorca to snap a five-final win drought.

Tsitsipas improved to 10-0 all-

time against 19th-ranked de

Minaur, who was hoping for a

Mexico double after winning

The 24-year-old Greek star World number five



the title at Acapulco in February.

"It was a great match," Tsitsipas said. "I'm really happy we were able to deliver a great quality in the final

The 24-year-old from Sydney was denied an eighth career ATP crown in his third final of the year. He also lost to Alcaraz in June's trophy match at Queen's.

After Tsitsipas dominated

the first set, de Minaur surrendered a break on a double fault to open the second set but broke back at love in the sixth

game to pull level. Tsitsipas, who won 23 of his 28 first-serve points, responded with a break in the ninth game, seizing a 5-4 edge with a blistering forehand winner, then held serve to finish off the Australian after 86 minutes when de Minaur sent a forehand long.

# Celtic mark Rodgers' return with flying start, Rangers rocked

**AFP** GLASGOW

hampions Celtic marked Brendan Rodgers' return as manager with a 4-2 victory over Ross County, while Rangers crashed to a shock 1-0 defeat at Kilmarnock in the opening weekend of the Scottish Premiership season on Saturday.

Rodgers is back in charge of the Glasgow club after Ange Postecoglou's departure for Tottenham in the close season. After leaving Leicester by mutual consent prior to their rel-

League last term, Rodgers has opted to return to Scotland's dominant force rather than stay south of the border in England. The former Liverpool boss,

egation from the Premier

confirmed as Celtic manager in June, won two Scottish titles, two Scottish Cups and three Scottish League Cups in his first spell at Parkhead between 2016 and 2019.

With Postecoglou having led Celtic to the domestic treble last season, Rodgers will be expected to maintain the Hoops' dominance, while also looking to progress in the Champions On the evidence of their

comfortable start to the new season against Ross County, Rodgers' side should be capable of emulating last season's success under his predecessor.

Rodgers preferred David Turnbull to Reo Hatate in his first competitive match since returning and the midfielder vindicated his faith with two first-half goals.

The 24-year-old had not started a league game since November 12 last year.



on the scoresheet for Celtic, with Matt O'Riley completing the hosts' goal spree.
"I spoke to him in pre-sea-

Kyogo Furuhashi was also

son and told him it would be a shame if you don't achieve what you can do at a club like this," Rodgers said of man of the match Turnbull. "You have the talent, but

you have to be a working talent, and you have to be able to run and be aggressive in your their Old Firm rivals. game. If you can do that, then your qualities will come

County's players and manager Malky Mackay gave

Celtic a guard of honour as they entered the field before Hoops substitute James Forrest raised the league flag to cheers from the sell-out

While Celtic lived up to their billing as title favourites, Rangers endured a worrying start to their bid to dethrone

Michael Beale's lacklustre side had laboured in the first half at Rugby Park and there was no

improvement after the break before they were stunned by Brad Lyons' goal after 65 min-

The 26-year-old Northern Irishman pounced inside the box to fire home and Rangers were unable to respond.

It was a huge setback for Beale, who has signed nine new

players in an attempt to close the gap on Celtic. Beale knows the margin for error is already slim in the title race and now he must lift his

players for the first leg of their

Champions League qualifier

against Servette at Ibrox on Wednesday. "It's a very poor opening day for us. We need to move forward very quickly," Beale said.

The excitement over the summer is going to be tempered. We have to show the fans and excite them and they have to get behind us, it works

both ways. "I expect us with the quality we have to execute in the moments we had. If we don't, I expect a hard-fought away draw

rather than coughing up a real-

# WI BEAT INDIA BY 2 WICKETS



PTI PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

West Indies beat India by two wickets in the second T20 International to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series here on Sunday. Opting to bat first, India scored 152 for seven. West

Indies completed the chase of 153 with seven balls to spare, as Nicholas Pooran blazed his way to a match-winning 67 off 40 balls. Earlier, playing in only his second match, Tilak Varma topscored for the visitors with a 41ball 51, which is also his maiden half-century at this level.

Star spinner Kuldeep Yadav is missing the second T20I between Hardik Pandya-led Indian cricket team and Rovman Powell's West Indies at the Providence Stadium in Georgetown, Guyana, on

Sunday. There were two wickets apiece for Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph and Romario Shepherd for the home team at the Providence Stadium.

Skipper Hardik Pandya made 24 off 18 balls, while opener Ishan Kishan was dismissed after a 23-ball 27.

India lost the series opener by four runs at Tarouba, Trinidad. Negotiating disciplined bowlers, Tilak Varma produced a well-calculated halfcentury, his first in T20Is, to take India to 152 for seven against

We did not ask India to send 'little kids': Mohammad Haris

West Indies in the second match here on Sunday.

The fearless Varma continued his good run in the short-est format as the 20-year-old scoped, swept and heaved the ball all around to ground to score 51 off 41 balls, becoming the youngest Indian to score a fifty in T20 Internationals.

Coming out to bat with India in a spot of bother at 18/2, Varma put up a crucial 42-run partnership with Ishan Kishan (27) before joining forces with skipper Hardik Pandya to stitch a 38-run stand.

Hardik (24) tried to inflate India's total by hitting two sixes but Alzarri Joseph (2/28) produced a cracking yorker to get rid of the Indian skipper.

Opting to bat, the script didn't go as per plan for the visitors as they lost wickets at regular intervals. West Indies skipper Rovman Powell kept shuffling his bowlers, a move that paid dividends. Kishan (27) played a few shots in his 23-ball stay including a six off Akeal Hosein (2/29) over deep square leg but couldn't convert his start into a meaningful innings as he was bowled by Romario Shepherd. Shubman Gill's (7) stay in

the middle was once again a brief one. With pressure building on him after successive dot balls, he showed his class by sending the ball for a maximum



#### Ravi Bishnoi replaces injured Kuldeep

PNS NEW DELHI

Star spinner Kuldeep Yadav Sis missing the second T20I between Hardik Pandya-led Indian cricket team and Rovman Powell's West Indies at the Providence Stadium in Georgetown, Guyana, on Sunday.

Kuldeep injured himself in the nets yesterday while bat-ting. However, as per the Indian captain Pandya, the injury is not serious and he has been rested as a precautionary measure. Ravi Bishnoi has replaced him in the playing 11. Hardik Pandya Informs

About Kuldeep Yadav's Injury Hardik won the toss and elected to bat first. He informed about the change and

Kuldeep's injury after the toss.
"We will bat first, surface looks good. We will put good score on the board. I don't think we did much wrong in the last game, we spoke about it and the focus is to learn and keep going ahead. When we

have these totals (chasing 9 or 10 an over), you gotta keep wickets in hand and that's what happened in the last game where we lost a couple of wickets during crunch moments," said Pandya after

"We have a forced change. Kuldeep got a hit on the hand yesterday in the nets, it is not serious and just a precautionary measure. Ravi Bishnoi comes in place of him," he added.

"Looks a pretty good sur-face and hopefully gets better as the day goes along. We did-n't lose wickets in clusters in the last game which was good to see. We have grown as players and it is about continuing to do the right things and keep improving as a batting unit. We are going with the same team,' said Powell after losing the toss.

Team India will be looking to level the series 1-1. The weather forecast did predict rain but the sky looks clear as



### Kuldeep is bowling well and that's why team is backing him: Chahal

PTI PROVIDENCE

**L**Chahal understands why Kuldeep Yadav is playing ahead of him in the ODI format and is not losing sleep over his place in the Asia Cup and World Cup squad.

Chahal did not make the playing eleven in the three ODIs against the West Indies. Featuring in his first game since the IPL, Chahal made his presence felt with a twin strike in his opening over but India lost the game by four

"Team combination is our priority and it is not something new. At 7 we generally play Ravindra Jadeja or Axar Patel. Three spinners can only play if the wickets are spin-friendly," said Chahal ahead of the second T20

"Kuldeep is bowling really well, he is in a great rhythm and that's why team is backing him. I keep working on nets so that whenever I get the chance I will grab it," the leg-spinner added.

The focus is on ODIs ahead of the World Cup at home in October-November but Chahal has not been able to get a game since January.

However, the 33-year-old is happy as long he gets to be part of the squad,

"We are professional cricketers. I was playing after two doesn't change much.

months, last I played was in the IPL. It is all about the preparasport, you are playing here for your team. There are times when players has to sit out for two series, so it doesn't mean that they are not part of the team," said the former statelevel chess player. Chahal said that instead of

thinking about missed chances, he considers himself lucky to be wearing the India Blues.

"I am very happy that I am getting to wear the blue jersey everyday. I am not sitting at home. I am travelling with the team. I am part of the team.

"I have played chess, it is an

individual game but cricket is a team sport. Out of fifteen people in the squad only eleven can play," he added. Nicholas Pooran has been

in menacing form of late and loves smashing the spinners in the cow corner region. Chahal enjoys his battles against the West Indian.

"I love my battles against Nicholas Pooran. I have got him out a few times and in some other occasions, he has hit me for sixes. I try not give him freebies or I know he will hit me out of the park."

Having played under multiple captains since his debut under M S Dhoni in 2016, Chahal feels his equation with whoever is leading the team

#### PTI KARACHI

 $M_{
m expressed\ dissatisfaction}^{
m ohammad\ Haris\ has}$ over the reception of his team Pakistan Shaheens' win against India A in the final of the ACC Men's Emerging Cup, saying they did not ask the Indian board to send "little kids" to the tournament.

Pakistan defeated India by a huge margin of 128 runs in the summit clash to win the trophy, but there was some criticism for the winners since they had plenty of players with international experience compared to a young Indian

Wicketkeeper-batter Haris nine T20Is while the team also featured Mohammad Wasim Jr, who has played two Tests, 14 ODIs and 17 T20Is for

Pakistan. Wasim Jr took 2/26 and scored 17 not out in the

Haris, who was among eight international players in the Pakistan Shaheens' squad, questioned the Indian cricket

"Did we ask the Indian board to send little kids to the tournament?" Haris said in a Haris said he was upset

because of people saying that the Pakistan team won since it had more senior and experienced players compared to the Indian outfit.

"We had players who have hardly played a few games for the senior team, but if you look players have appeared in around 200 IPL matches," he

"They say that we had



international experience in our team. How many international matches have we played? Saim has played 5, I have played 6. Those guys (India players) have played 260 IPL matches," Haris said. The Pakistan squad fea-

tured opening batter Saim Ayub who has played eight T20Is, Tayyab Tahir (three T20Is), Shahnawaz Dahani (two ODIs and 11 T20Is), 27year-old Aamir Jamal (two T20Is) and Arshad Iqbal (one

The Indian team, captained by Yash Dhull, had no player with international experience while it had those who have featured in the Indian Sudharsan, Åbhishek Sharma, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, Harshit Rana and Rajvardhan

## Pakistan gets government clearance for WC participation

PTI KARACHI

The Pakistan government on Sunday gave clearance to the country's senior men's team to travel to India for the 2023 World Cup, ending months of uncertainty over their participation in the showpiece.

A press release from the foreign ministry informed that Pakistan has consistently maintained that sports should not be mixed with politics. It has, therefore, decided to send its team to India to compete in the upcoming World Cup.

"Pakistan believes that the state of bilateral relations with India should not stand in the way of fulfilling its international sports-related obligations," the release said.

The ministry said that



We expect that the full safety and security of the **Pakistan cricket** team will be ensured during its visit to India

Pakistan, however, has deep concerns about the security of its team and it would convey them to the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Indian authorities.

"We expect that the full safety and security of the Pakistan cricket team will be ensured during its visit to India," the release said.

It also said that Pakistan's decision shows its "constructive and responsible approach".

PNS NEW DELHI number 6, either it's KL Rahul or (Ajinkya) Rahane. When  $F_{\text{Salman Butt wants the}}^{\text{ormer Pakistan captain}}$ there's pressure, the youngsters stutter. You need expe-Indian cricket team to conrience," said Butt.

Salman Butt wants India to

consider Dhawan, Rahane for WC

#### sider out-of-favour batters Shikhar Dhawan and Ajinkya Rahane for the

World Cup 2023. Butt feels India should rely on experience rather than backing the youngsters for the mega cially after being ignored for the ODI series against Butt suggested that Shikhar Dhawan could open West Indies. KL Rahul has also been

for India alongside Rohit Sharma or Shubman Gill. 'They will need Shikhar Dhawan on top. I don't see any of the top-order batters, among right-handers, who can open as good as him. Either Shikhar and Shubman (Gill) can open and Rohit (Sharma) comes one down, or Rohit can open with Shikhar," said Butt on his

YouTube channel. The former cricketer also said that India should play Ajinkya Rahane or KL Rahul at number 6. "They will need experience in World Cup. They also need a guy in at

Shikhar Dhawan's Return To Indian Team Unlikely Shikhar Dhawan has been out of the Indian team for a while and does not seem to be in contention for the World Cup spot, espe-

out of the team owing to injury but is on his way to recovery and is likely to find a spot in the World Cup squad. Rahane showed good form in IPL 2023 but that will not be enough to earn him a place in the World

Cup squad.

The World Cup is set to get underway on October 5, with England taking on New Zealand. India vs Pakistan will take place on October 14 in Ahmedabad. The match was rescheduled due to Navratri.

# Afghanistan announce squad for ODI series against Pak

PNS NEW DELHI

 $A^{
m fghanistan}$  have announced the squad for the three-match ODI series against Pakistan. Ace spinner Noor Ahmed has been added to the squad following his consistent run in T20 match-

Left-arm spinner Zia Ur Rahman Akbar, who recently made his ODI debut against Bangladesh, has been dropped from the team. Fast bowlers Mohammad Saleem Safi and

Wafadar Momand have secured their spots in the ODI squad.

The three-match ODI series will start on August 22, with matches on August 24 and August 26. The first two ODIs will be played in Hambantota while the final game will be played in Colombo.

"Our whole concentration is to prepare the team for the upcoming two big events of Asia Cup and the World Cup 2023," ACB Chief



Selector Asadullah Khan said. "This three-match ODI

series against Pakistan provides us with a wonderful opportunity to prepare the team for the forthcoming two events.

"The preparations for the Pakistan series are progressing well. The players have recently performed well in the Kabul Camp, which has been supervised by ACB's HPC staff. The team will also undergo a week-long conditioning camp prior to the Pakistan series."

ODI Series Against Pakistan Hashmatullah Shahidi (C), Rahmanullah Gurbaz,

Afghanistan squad From

Ikram Alikhil, Ibrahim Zadran, Riaz Hassan, Rahmat Shah, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Nabi, Azmatullah Omarzai, Rashid Khan, Noor Ahmad, Mujeeb Ur Rehman, Fazal Haq Farooqi, Abdul Rahman, Mohammad Saleem Safi and Wafadar Momand.

Reserves: Farid Ahmad Malik and Shahidullah Kamal