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**MONEY 10**  
FOLLOW-UP TO RECOVER BAD LOANS,  
RBI TELLS COOPERATIVE BANKS

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11 SPORT

## INDIA MUMBAI SUMMIT TO SEEK COMMON GROUND

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With the possibility of the Narendra Modi Government clubbing the Lok Sabha polls with the forthcoming Assembly elections in five States later this year, the Opposition's Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will concentrate on crucial issues like seat-sharing, setting up of a co-ordination committee and also committees to speed up its activities at various levels and the formation of a team to draft a common minimum programme for the General Elections, at the two-day meeting beginning here on Thursday. Prominent among the leaders attending the meeting will be Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, KC Venugopal, all from the Congress, Uddhav and Aaditya Thackeray of the Shiv Sena (UBT), Chief Ministers Mamata Banerjee (TMC), MK Stalin (DMK), Arvind Kejriwal (AAP), Hemant Soren (JMM), RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav, Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav, National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti of the PDP, Sitaram Yechuri (CPM) and D Raja (CPI).

Though there has been speculation in the media that INDIA may announce its Prime Ministerial face at the two-day meet to be held at Grand Hyatt hotel in north-west Mumbai, such a thing is unlikely to cross the minds of 63 leaders from 28 political parties attending the conclave, which is the third such meet being held among the leaders after talks in Patna and Bengaluru. The leaders may ponder over issues like a logo for



the Opposition grouping and a strategy to keep the flock together in the face of out-of-turn statements being made by certain leaders against their counterparts from other constituents of the INDIA grouping at the State-level. NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who is among the hosts of the Mumbai meet, set the tone for the conclave by declaring that "the people of the country" want a change and that INDIA would provide a viable alternative to bring about the change.

Indicating that there might be seat-sharing talks, Pawar said, "INDIA alliance has so far not initiated talks on seat-sharing. Beginning tomorrow, we will discuss common minimum programme and delegate responsibilities. We will explore the possibility of bringing more Opposition parties into INDIA's fold." *Continued on Page 2*

## TMC Chief to tell Congress: Rein in Bengal unit



SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

On the sidelines of the Mumbai Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) meet Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to raise the issue of Pradesh Congress' "belligerence" with the Congress high command, sources in the Trinamool Congress have said. Banerjee

who is in Mumbai to attend the third national meeting of the Opposition alliance is livid with the Pradesh Congress leadership which has publicly said that the State unit of the party will not have any truck with TMC in the forthcoming general elections.

Banerjee is likely to tell the national Congress leadership to rein-in its State counterparts for the better functioning of the grouping in Bengal. Incidentally the Congress with active support from the CPI(M) has of late showed signs of revival in Bengal solely on an anti-TMC Congress plank.

*Continued on Page 2*

## INDIA'S KODAK MOMENT



In this image released by ISRO on Wednesday, Vikram Lander is seen on the surface of the Moon as captured by the Navigation Camera onboard Pragyan Rover. PTI

## Majority Indians favour Modi: Pew

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A whopping 80 per cent of Indians have a favourable view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and around seven in 10 Indians believe their country has recently become more influential, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center.

The survey, released ahead of the G20 Summit to be held in New Delhi on September 9-10, also noted that public opinion of India was generally positive across the world with a median of 46 per cent reporting favourable views of the country as compared to 34 per cent unfavourable views. Sixteen per cent did not share their opinion at all.

Views of India are most positive in Israel, where 71 per cent of the people surveyed say they have a favourable view of the country, the report said.

Pew said the survey was conducted from February 20 to May 22, among 30,861 adults in 24 countries, including India, and examines global views of



School students tie 'rakhi' to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

Prime Minister Modi, the scope of India's global power and Indians' views of other countries. About eight in 10 Indians

report "favourable" views of Modi, including a majority (55 per cent) with a "very favourable" view, according to the survey result released on Tuesday.

This is Modi's second term as Prime Minister and he is also seeking a third term in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Only a fifth of Indians expressed an unfavourable opinion of Modi in 2023, the Pew survey found.

"Indian adults are more likely to believe India's power is on the rise. Around seven in ten Indians believe their country has recently become more influential. This stands in comparison with a 2022 survey conducted across 19 countries, where a median of only 28 per cent said the same," Pew said.

According to the report, about half of Indians (49 per cent) say that the influence of the US is getting stronger in recent years, and 41 per cent say the same about Russia.

Meanwhile, Indians' views on China's influence are somewhat more mixed, it said.

## CHINA IS UNINVESTABLE: US WARNS BEIJING

PTI/AP ■ SHANGHAI

In a development that is of keen interest to India which seeks to replace China as a manufacturing hub and attract investment out of the neighbouring country to its shores, US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo on Wednesday said she warned Chinese leaders that US businesses might stop investing in their country which had become "uninvestable" without prompt action to address complaints about worsening conditions due to raids on firms, unexplained fines and unpredictable official behaviour.

Raimondo's comments add to pressure on Chinese leader Xi Jinping's Government, which is trying to revive investor interest and



reverse an economic slump. Business groups say confidence among foreign companies is at an all-time low. Official figures show foreign investment plunged in the latest quarter. Raimondo visited Beijing as part of US efforts to restore relations that plummeted to their lowest level in decades due to dis-

putes about technology, security, Taiwan and other issues. She called her meetings with China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and other officials "very productive" but said she "didn't pull any punches" in conveying business complaints. Raimondo said CEOs ahead of her trip told her they face increased pressure from Beijing's expansion of an anti-spying law this year, raids on some firms, tighter controls on data and lack of information about rule changes.

"My point was US business needs to see some action taken to address these issues. Otherwise, they will deem it as just too risky and, as I said, uninvestable," Raimondo told reporters at a Boeing Co. Joint venture in Shanghai's eastern district of Pudong.

## Defiant China asserts, Map a routine exercise

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

A day after India strongly protested against China showing Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin as part of its territory in a standard map, Beijing on Wednesday said it is in accordance with the law and "it is hoped that relevant parties will treat it objectively and not over-interpret."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry also said, "The release of the 2023 edition of the standard map of China is the country's normal exercise of sovereignty in accordance with the law." The map's release led to a sharp reaction by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Tuesday.

The MEA said, "We have today lodged a strong protest through diplomatic channels with the Chinese side on the so called 2023 'standard map' of China that lays claim to India's territory."

Enunciating this position, MEA spokesperson Arindam

Bagchi also said, "We reject these claims as they have no basis. Such steps by the Chinese side only complicate the resolution of the boundary question."

Jaishankar said China has a "habit" of releasing such maps and told Beijing that merely including other countries' territories in its maps meant nothing. *Continued on Page 2*

## CAPSULE

### GHAZIABAD LAWYER SHOT IN HIS CHAMBER

Ghaziabad: A lawyer was shot dead in his chamber in Ghaziabad district court complex on Wednesday. As per initial reports, advocate Manoj Chaudhary was having lunch, when two attackers entered chamber 95 and started firing indiscriminately. Chaudhary's blood-covered body was found slumped in the chair.

### AMAZON'S MANAGER MURDERED IN DELHI

New Delhi: A 36-year-old man identified as Harpreet Gill was shot dead and his relative was injured after five men opened fire on them in Northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura. Gill was working as a senior manager with e-commerce platform Amazon. Following the shooting, the assailants swiftly fled the scene of the crime.

## Trauma and despair compel parents to rush to Kota

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/KOTA/JAIPUR

Reports of suicides almost every alternate day by the engineering and medical entrance aspirants in India's coaching hub Kota in Rajasthan have set major alarm bells ringing and sent parents rushing to their children.

Even the Rajasthan Government has pitched in to contain such cases and has asked parents to stay occasionally with their wards for proper "acclimatization".

The District Collector had also recently asked the coaching institutes not to hold frequent tests of the students for a few months.

The directive from the Government came after two students, preparing for competitive exams in Kota, allegedly

committed suicide a few days ago within a span of four hours. According to authorities, 22 students have ended their lives so far in 2023 — the highest for any year. Last year, the figure was 15.

Back-to-back study schedules, cut-throat competition, pressure to do better, the burden of parents' expectations and homesickness, are among the common struggles of the students at the Kota coaching hub. Many parents are now averse to putting their children in hostels and instead they are renting accommodation in Kota and staying with their children by taking sabbaticals from work — all for shaping the career of their ward and ensuring that they stay healthy and alive.

Even grandparents are pitching in and 80-year-old

Bhama Ojha from Bihar's Saharsa has shifted to Kota to be with her grandson who is preparing for the tough IIT entrance exam at an institute. A middle-aged mother, Anchal Srivastava from Bhopal is staying with her son.

"Several parents like me are now staying with their children and many are set to join their wards shortly with the rising untoward incidents. Kids are tender and they need emotional support rather than peer pressure," she said.

Sandhya Dwivedi from Madhya Pradesh's Satna is staying with her son here while her husband manages other responsibilities back home.

"Now I worry less. My son studies at night... I give him tea or coffee. He knows I am here to talk to him and comfort him. He was ill twice this month and



Sandhya Dwivedi from Madhya Pradesh living with her son in Kota as he prepares for JEE. PTI

I was here to take care of him. I want him to crack JEE but I don't want to lose him in the process... We have been hearing about student suicides and we cannot take that risk," she said.

To keep a check on student

suicides, Kota Police said it is very important that parents acclimatize their children to the struggles of the city so they do not feel lost here. "We understand that not all parents can be here. But when they come to drop their children to Kota they

should stay with them for at least a month to let them get used to the place, the schedule and the whole situation... This is crucial, especially for those who are going to live away from their parents for the first time," Chandrasheel Thakur, the Additional Superintendent of Police, Kota, said.

Recently Rajasthan Education Secretary Bhawani Singh Detha held a meeting with the Kota Collector and other officials via video conference that was attended by representatives of coaching institutes and hostel associations. The coaching institutes have been asked to stop conducting routine tests of students preparing for NEET, JEE and other competitive exams for the next two months in the wake of the recent suicides. The reason behind the suicides was the fact

that the aspirants were apparently under pressure for scoring low marks during routine tests conducted by the coaching centres and then under peer and parental pressure to perform. Another reason is the unfair practice of coaching institutes segregating students who are performing well and then reportedly focussing more on them as compared to the rest who are then tutored separately. This puts pressure on the students to do well so that they can be included in the premier group where the *creme de la creme* are coached. More than two lakh students move to Kota annually to prepare for competitive exams such as JEE for admission to engineering institutes and the NEET for entrance to medical colleges.

# Rahul attacks Govt over China's new Map release

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing with his direct attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday demanded a statement from the PM in response to China's release of a map that claims ownership of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, which has been categorically rejected by India.

"I have been saying for years that what the PM said, that not one inch of land was lost in Ladakh, is a lie. The entire Ladakh knows that China has transgressed. This map issue is very serious.

They have taken away the land. PM should say something about it," Rahul said while leaving for Karnataka. Last week too addressing a rally

during his Ladakh tour, Rahul had raked up the Indo-China border crisis and said Modi is 'lying' that not an inch has been doled out to China whereas every individual in the Union Territory knows that China has "taken away our land". "I visited the whole of Ladakh on my motorcycle over the past week...Ladakh is a strategic place and when I was at Pangong lake, one thing was clear that China had taken over thousands of kilometers of Indian land.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister during an Opposition meeting makes a statement that not an inch of our land was taken away which is 'absolutely false'," Rahul said in his address on the last day of his nine-day tour of Ladakh.

"Every individual of Ladakh knows that China has taken away our land and the

prime minister is not speaking the truth," he alleged. Rahul's statement fuelled political attacks with few Opposition leaders questioning Modi on cede of Indian land to China under the NDA regime. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi demanded that Centre call a special session of Parliament to discuss the loss of 2,000 km sq territory to China and questioned why was Prime Minister has been keeping the countrymen in the dark.

Expressing concern over the 'distorted' map, other Opposition parties too suggested the Centre to use the upcoming G20 Summit in the national Capital to expose China's transgressions into Indian territory at the global stage. Another party leader said that India should conduct a surgical strike on China.

# TMC slams Delhi Police for not allowing rally in Capital

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has strongly criticized the Delhi Police's denial of permission to the TMC to hold a rally in October in the national Capital.

In pursuant to an announcement by party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee that the TMC would hold a public rally in Delhi against the central deprivation of the Bengal ruling outfit had on August 23 written to the Delhi Police seeking permission to organize a rally on October 2.

However, the permission has been denied, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "this is a politically motivated which once again proves that Delhi Police is not guided by law but the whims and fancies of the BJP." Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek were to



Mamata Banerjee... they think that she will expose them in public and so they have denied the permission to her to hold a rally here."

Earlier in a rally in Kolkata Abhishek Banerjee has said that he would lead lakhs of people to Delhi where they would hold a dharna to force the central government to release the funds. "We are not begging for alms... we are asking for what is our rightful dues... they are not releasing the funds because they want to Bengal to starve... they want the people of Bengal who have voted against them to starve... so they are not releasing the funds... we will stage a big dharna and take lakhs of people from Bengal and force them to give what is rightfully ours," the junior Banerjee who is also the MP from Diamond Harbour constituency had said.

hold a public rally in Delhi pressing for the State's demands, he said. "Our leadership was supposed to highlight the State's demands and dues and the central deprivation... as to how they have not released more than Rs 1.15 lakh crore towards the clearance of 100-days' work scheme, rural housing scheme and other projects... but the BJP Government is afraid of

# Quad may hold meet on UNGA sidelines next month in NY

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As China has adopted an aggressive posture in the strategically important Indo-Pacific and its ongoing tension with India at the border in Ladakh, the Quad grouping may hold a meeting in New York next month. The foreign ministers of this combine may hold parleys on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session there.

The Quad includes India, US, Japan and Australia and the likely meeting of its foreign ministers on September 19 is likely to review cooperation between the four countries to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific against China's belligerence there, sources said here on Wednesday. The min-

isters may also discuss the ongoing Ukraine conflict. Incidentally, Beijing has all along criticized the Quad claiming it will lead to the militarization of the region thereby increasing tension.

The likely meeting will be the first between External affairs minister S Jaishankar, Australian foreign minister Penny Wong, Japanese foreign minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken after they met here on March 3 to discuss key challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

In March, the four foreign ministers of the Quad denounced the threat of use of nuclear weapons in context of Ukraine conflict and opposed unilateral actions to change the status quo or increase tensions in South and East China Seas.

# Cash-for-jobs scam executed under Balaji's tenure: ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has claimed in a recent chargesheet that the entire recruitment process in the Tamil Nadu transport department during the tenure of accused Minister V Senthil Balaji was turned into a "corrupt chiefdom" and the "cash-for-jobs scam" was executed under his authority.

The prosecution complaint, filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), was submitted by the agency on August 12 before a special court in Chennai recently. DMK leader Balaji (47) was arrested by the ED on June 14 in connection with the "cash-

for-jobs scam" alleged to have taken place when he was the transport minister in the previous AIADMK regime in Tamil Nadu from 2011 to 2016. Despite undergoing judicial custody, Balaji continues to be a minister without portfolio in the Chief Minister M K Stalin-led cabinet and his judicial custody has been extended till September 15.

"The whole recruitment in the transport department during the tenure of the then minister V Senthil Balaji has turned into a corrupt chiefdom, in which, as per the illegal directions of the chief (V Senthil Balaji), recruitment process was designed and implemented," the ED alleged in chargesheet.

# ED raids 27 locations in HP scholarship case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has carried out search operations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act at 24 locations in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi in the case of Himachal Pradesh Scholarship Scam.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the CBI, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh in connection with the scholarship disbursed by Directorate of Higher Education, Himachal Pradesh under Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC/ST/OBC Students. PMLA searches were conducted on officials of the State Education



Department, banks and owners of entities related to private universities and institutions which were involved in large scale misappropriation of disbursement of scholarship funds, the ED said in a statement.

"During the search operations, unaccounted cash of Rs 75 lakh was seized and an amount of Rs 2.55 crore lying in the bank accounts was frozen. Various incriminating documents and digital devices have also been seized from various locations," it added.

# Untouchability still lives in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Though the intelligentsia proclaims Kerala as a role model for the rest country it is far from truth. On Chingam 1, which fell on August 17 this year, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, hosted some special guests in the Raj Bhavan. A group of six children from Kozhikode travelled all the way to Thiruvananthapuram at the invitation of the first citizen of the State and spent hours with him. What makes the visit of this children to the Raj Bhavan unique is the fact that they belong to the Scheduled Caste community (Harijans) and they are from the Government owned Welfare Lower Primary School at Perambra in Kozhikode district. This is the

only school of its kind which is meant for children hailing from Harijan community. When asked why there were only six children in this school, the authorities replied: "Parents of children belonging to upper caste would not send their children to this school because of untouchability."

What is disturbing is the fact that the school was established in 1956 which means that untouchability continues with impunity in the State where the Communists have an upper hand. The media in Kerala literally celebrated for days the incident from Uttar Pradesh where a Muslim boy was slapped by his colleagues but the plight of this school has been blacked out by the media here, showing double standards.

# Aaditya ups ante over 'terrible condition' of BMC-run hospitals in Mumbai, attacks Maha CM

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having flagged the issue of alleged corruption and mis-governance in the poll-bound Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Maharashtra's former minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray on Tuesday once again upped the ante against the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnis government over the "terrible condition" of the BMC-run hospitals in the metropolis and "zero" support to them from the "illegal regime" in the state.

Nearly two months after he led a massive morcha to the BMC over the alleged financial irregularities in the projects undertaken by the country's

biggest civic body, Aaditya took to twitter to accuse Eknath Shinde as the "Contractor Mantri (CM)" and the state government as "looters of Mumbai" and express his serious displeasure over the manner in which the civic services were being run in Mumbai.

Putting out a series of tweets on the sorry state of affairs in the various BMC-run hospitals in the city, Aaditya said: "It is infuriating to see the way this illegal Mindhe-BJP regime-looters of Mumbai, are running the civic services in Mumbai. The BMC administration, directly run by the Contractor Mantri (CM) office for a year, has only been seen serving builders- contractors, but not people."

# Election commission chief meets pol parties in Mizoram

PTI ■ AIZAWL

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Wednesday met leaders of various political parties here to discuss poll-related issues ahead of the Mizoram Assembly elections scheduled later this year. Talking to reporters, Kumar said 95 polling booths will be managed by women and 11 by people with disabilities. He said the team met representa-

tives of various parties including the Congress, BJP, AAP and Mizo National Front (MNF) to discuss election-related issues.

"Representatives of all the parties requested us to increase the limit of expenditure for candidates," Kumar said. He said the parties also requested the poll panel not to hold the polls on Saturday or Sunday. "In all, 95 polling booths will be managed by women, 40 by youth and 11 by people with disabilities," he said, adding

that total number of voters is 8.38 lakh. Kumar said to ensure that polls are held peacefully, there will be extra vigil along international and inter-state borders to check inflow of liquor, cash and drugs. "Check-posts on strategic locations with CCTV monitoring, action against drug and liquor kingpins and strict watch over online bribery and cash distribution will be done to ensure that polls are held devoid any corruption," he said.

# PM's Principal Secy reviews G20 preparation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the national capital is geared up to host the G-20 summit from September 8-10, Prime Minister's Principal Secretary PK Mishra on Wednesday chaired the ninth meeting of the G20 coordination committee to take stock of preparations for the upcoming high-profile event.

In a statement after the meeting, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said a mobile app (G20 India) has been launched for G20 for the first time and is now available for download both on Android and iOS. The PMO said G20 delegates and members of the media will also witness digital India first hand through the 'Innovation Hub' and 'Digital India Experiential Hub' which are being set up at the Bharat Mandapam.

# Premises of Nityanandam raided by NIA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday raided the premises of the key accused, including an undisclosed residential property of the main accused, Shri Niti alias Shri Nityanandam, in connection with the assassination attack with a bomb and knives/machetes in March this year.

A total of four premises were searched during the day in Puducherry and Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, leading to the seizure of digital devices (mobile phones), SIM cards, dongle, motorcycle and other incriminating documents, the NIA said in a statement. The raids were part of the NIA investigation to untangle the complete conspiracy hatched by Nityanandam and the other accused and suspects.

# Offshore security coordination panel meet to be held tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 135th meeting of the Offshore Security Coordination Committee (OSCC) is scheduled to be held at Ahmedabad on Friday under the Chairmanship of Coast Guard chief Rakesh Pal to review the preparedness and effectiveness of the security of India's offshore installations. Giving details here, Coast Guard officials said on Wednesday the meeting will be attended by stakeholders and representatives from various organizations namely Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy, IAF, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Director General (DG) Shipping, Ministries of Home Affairs and External Affairs and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

# Defiant...

From Page 1

Stating this in an interview to a private television channel, Jaishankar had said, "China has put out maps with territories (that are) not theirs. (It is an) old habit. Just by putting out maps with parts of India... this doesn't change in anything. Our government is very clear about what our territory. Making absurd claims does not make other people's territories yours."

"China has even in the past put out maps which claimed territories which are not China's, which belong to other countries. This is an old habit of theirs," Jaishankar said. "It is not something which is new. It started in the 1950s. So just by putting out a map claiming territories, some of which are part of India. I think this doesn't change (anything). These are very much part of India," he added.

India has repeatedly told China that "Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India."

# Rein-in Bengal...

From Page 1

The young leaders of the party like Kaustab Bagchi want to continue on the same lines. "Our workers are being murdered, their houses looted and they are framed in false cases every day... many others are forced to join the Trinamool under gunpoint and... there if the national leadership forces us to support the TMC then there will be a revolt... the grassroots will not accept that and finally the Congress will be wiped out from Bengal," Bagchi a party Young Turk earlier said forcing PCC president Adhir Chowdhury too to make it clear that there was no question of any alliance with the TMC in Bengal.

"The TMC is licking the Congress' feet out of fear... they are doing so for their own survival... so there is no question with joining hands with them," Chowdhury said. Though Banerjee who had in past couple of months been making measured statements on the Congress however has not taken PCC leaders' stand happily and is likely to ask the Janpath to reign its State leaders when she meets them in Mumbai.

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (BUILDING)**  
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**NIT No. 16/2023/Tender/G/CE(B)** **BHOPAL DATE 21/08/2023**

Online bids for the following works are invited from registered contractors and firms of repute fulfilling registration criteria:

S. No.	Tender Portal No.	Name of Work	District	Probable Amount Contract (Rs. in lakh)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (Rs. in Rs.)	Cost of Bid Document (in Rs.)	Period of completion (in months) ic Rainy Season)
1	2023_PWPIU_301581_1	CONSTRUCTION OF RENOVATION UPGRADEATION ADDITIONAL NEW CONSTRUCTION IN GOV HSS GURWAPIARIY DIST BETUL UNDER CM RISE SCHOOL	BETUL	2996.65	1498325	50000	18 months ic Rainy season
2	2023_PWPIU_301805_1	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT EXCELLENCE HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL BHIMPUR DIST BETUL UNDER CM RISE SCHOOL	BETUL	2563.08	1281540	50000	18 months ic Rainy season
3	2023_PWPIU_301810_1	CONSTRUCTION OF RENOVATION UPGRADEATION ADDITIONAL NEW CONSTRUCTION IN GOV HSS SHAHAPUR DIST BETUL UNDER CM RISE SCHOOL	BETUL	2615.19	1307595	50000	18 months ic Rainy season
4	2023_PWPIU_301567_1	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL HIDLI DIST BETUL UNDER CM RISE SCHOOL	BETUL	2392.85	1196425	50000	18 months ic Rainy season
5	2023_PWPIU_301422_1	Architectural design & DPR consultancy services for construction of various buildings works in the year of 2023-24 under PWD (Building) Division Narmadapuram	NARMADA PURAM	200.00	200000	15000	12 months ic Rainy season
6	2023_PWPIU_301095_1	CONSTRUCTION OF MINI PARK FOR SAHID SMARAK SEKDAKHEDI SEHORE, DISST. SEHORE (M.P.)	SEHORE	399.62	399620	15000	14 months ic Rainy season
7	2023_PWPIU_301109_1	CONSTRUCTION OF COMPOSITE BUILDING AT VILLAGE JAIT TEH BUDHNI DISTT. SEHORE	SEHORE	328.70	328700	15000	14 months ic Rainy season
8	2023_PWPIU_301117_1	CONSTRUCTION OF STADIUM AND SPORTS GROUND NEAR HIGH SCHOOL AT VILLAGE JAIT DISTT. SEHORE (M.P.)	SEHORE	131.61	131610	12500	10 months ic Rainy season
9	2023_PWPIU_301134_1	CONSTRUCTION OF SAMUDAYIK BHAWAN AT BAKTRA, DISTT. SEHORE (M.P.)	SEHORE	79.50	79500	10000	08 months ic Rainy season
10	2023_PWPIU_301166_1	CONSTRUCTION OF OPEN THEATER AT VILLAGE JAIT TEHSIL BUDHNI DISTRICT SEHORE (M.P.)	SEHORE	79.52	79520	10000	08 months ic Rainy season

1. All details relating to the Bid Document (s) can be viewed and downloaded free of cost from the website: <http://mptenders.gov.in>

2. Bid Document (s) can be purchased after making online payment of portal fees through Credit/Debit/Cash Card/Internet Banking.

3. The Bid Document (s) can be purchased only online from 10:30 (time) 21.08.2023 (date) to 17:30 (time) 05.09.2023 (date). Other key dates may be seen in Bid Data Sheet.

4. Amendment (s) to NIT, if any, shall be published on website only, and not in newspaper.

**CHIEF ENGINEER (BUILDING)**  
**PWD BHOPAL M.P.**

**G-18998/23**

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

## CHANGE OF NAME

I Reenu Rani W/o Mr. Munendra Yadav R/o Village-Sithauli. Tehsil-Bisauli, Distt: Badaun, U.P.-202523. Have Change My Name to Reenu Yadav For all Future Purposes. PD(146)C

**the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS**

## NOTICE

I have changed my name from Ruchita Sharon Lyall, Ruchita Lyall & Ruchita Sharon Cutting to Ruchita Cutting. In future, I shall be known & identified as Ruchita Cutting. Add- 112-113-B, Shastriapuram, Sikandar, Agra, U.P. 282007

**Public Notice**  
Notice is hereby given to the General public that Mrs. Anjali Sharma's absolute owner of Property bearing no. 1127 (new) & 68 (old), having land area measuring 52 sq. yds., out of Khazra no. 252, at Gali 74, Deva Ram Park, Tri Nagar, Delhi 35 by way of GPA, AFS & Will, dated 02.04.2003, executed by Mrs. Maya Devi, now Mrs. Anjali Sharma's intending to sell the above said property to Mr. Jagdish and further Mr. Jagdish, is mortgaging the said property with SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. Grihashakti, & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhanwan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-II Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9866707172/ 9812289636 (M).

**Public Notice**  
Notice is hereby given that on the direction of our client RBI Bank, Mr. Raju and Mrs. Anuradha Devi are in process to purchase (revolving loan from RBI Bank Ltd.) Property bearing New MP, No. WZ-256/F-13 measuring 157 Sq. Yds., built on Old Plot No. 5 (previous known as WZ-256/F-1), part of Khazra No. 153B, situated in the area of Village Naraina, in the abadi of colony now known as Indrapuri, New Delhi from Mrs. Lata Garg (25% undivided share) and Mrs. Ayushi Garg (25% undivided share), who purchased the said property from Mr. Jatin Basra vide Sale Deed dated 17.02.2002, Document No. 509. All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Unit No. FF-2, First Floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vasthali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351

# INDIA MUMBAI SUMMIT...

From Page 1

Sources in the alliance said that at the meeting, INDIA would chalk out a broad-based formula for seat-sharing, set up State-wise committees to identify the seats to be contested by each of the constituents in the alliance and also finalise a logo for the front.

Keen on roping in BSP supreme Mayawati as a constituent of the alliance, the Opposition leaders may appoint a senior leader to hold talks with her and convince her to join the joint Opposition front.

However, when asked about Mayawati, Pawar chose to remain non-committal. "It is not known on whose side she is.

Earlier, we had heard she had a dialogue with the BJP" On a day when the Peasants and Workers' party, the number of the political parties went up

to 28 as against the tally of 26 parties that attended the second INDIA meet in Bengaluru. Interacting with the media, Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said: "Today we have 28 parties with us. Our strength has increased from 26 at Bengaluru meet was 26."

Describing the NDA as an amoeba that had no shape and size, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray said: "Our agenda is to protect the Constitution and throw out dictatorship from the country. We pledge not to allow any dictator to come to power again. We will do everything to ensure that the federal structure is destroyed in the country."

On who is going to be INDIA'S Prime Ministerial candidate, Uddhav said: "We have several choices for PM's post, does the BJP has a choice?" While espousing the cause of women, Uddhav said: "We will

provide a government that will protect the rights of women." RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav indicated that the joint Opposition leaders would discuss matters relating to seat-sharing at the meeting: "Elections are approaching. If candidates have to be decided, we need to sit together."

Replying to a question, Yadav said that the INDIA alliance would decide on the choice of its convener during the meeting. "Eleven sitting Chief Ministers are part of the INDIA alliance.

INDIA will take ahead the ideology of Shahu-Phule-Ambekar and ideals of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj... the challenge before us is to prevent the fascist forces from ruining the country. On Rakshabandhan day, we pledge to protect India," former chief minister and senior Congress leader Ashok Chavan said.

# Amazon manager shot dead in Bhajanpura

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A tragedy struck as a 36-year-old man identified as Harpreet Gill was shot dead and his relative was injured after five men opened unprovoked fire on them in Northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura. Gill was working as a senior manager with e-commerce platform Amazon.

Following the shooting, the assailants swiftly fled the scene, leaving behind a grim aftermath.

The incident took place at around 11.30 pm on Tuesday when five unidentified people opened fire at Harpreet Gill (36) and his relative Govind Singh (32) in Subhash Vihar. Shot in the head, Gill was pronounced brought dead by doc-

tors at the Jag Pravesh Chandra Hospital, while his relative was under treatment in LNJP hospital, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast) Joy Tirkey said the two friends were on their motorcycle when they were attacked. Gill was a resident of Bhajanpura and worked as a senior manager with Amazon. The bullet entered from the right side of his head behind the ear and exited from the other side. Hospital's report said he died of gun shot injury to head, with the entry wound on the right side behind ear — exit on the other side while his friend Govind Singh received a bullet injury on his right ear.

Singh lives in Bhajanpura too and owns an eatery in the area. He was also shot in the



head and admitted to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital, the DCP said.

Singh, 32, is a resident of Bhajanpura and owns an eatery called 'Hungry Momos' in the area. He is currently being treated at LNJP

hospital.

As authorities delve into the investigation, CCTV footage within the vicinity is undergoing thorough scrutiny to piece together the events that transpired. At this point, the motive behind this unfortunate event remains shrouded in mystery, awaiting further examination by law enforcement.

Tirkey said that a case has been registered even as the motive behind the murder remained unclear. "The reason behind the firing incident is being ascertained," DCP said.

According to the police, six teams have been formed to work on the case. A preliminary probe has suggested that an argument broke out between the two sides before the shooting took place, police

said.

Singh told police that the assailants appeared to be in the age group of 18 to 19 years. During the investigation conducted so far, the name of a local criminal, Maya, has cropped up and he is one of the suspects, police said.

Meanwhile, Gill's parents demanded justice for their son and strict action against his killers. "At around 10.30 pm on Tuesday, Harpreet told his mother that he was going out and would have dinner later. My brother-in-law was also with him when the incident took place," Karnail Singh, the father of the deceased, said.

"My son had no enmity with anyone. He was a very hardworking man. I want my son back. We want justice for him," his mother said.

# Lawyer gunned down inside Ghaziabad court

STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD

A lawyer was shot dead at his office in Ghaziabad on Wednesday in his chambers inside the district court complex. As per initial reports, advocate Manoj Chaudhary alias Monu Jaat was having lunch, when two attackers entered chamber 95 and started firing indiscriminately. Chaudhary's blood-covered body was found slumped in the chair. After the incident, there was ruckus in the entire tehsil.

On receiving information about the incident, police reached the spot and investigating the incident is on. The miscreants entered the chamber and shot a lawyer named Monu Chaudhary, due to which the lawyer died on the spot. The body has been sent for postmortem.

Police said the two attackers have been identified in the



Advocate Manoj Chaudhary was shot dead by two assailants in his chambers in Tehsil court of Ghaziabad

CCTV footage who entered the tehsil at around 1:38 pm and had hid faces with handkerchief. Preliminary information said Chaudhary was shot dead at 2 pm. The attackers reportedly arrived on foot and fled after committing the crime.

A case was filed with the Sihani Gate Police Station and the investigation is ongoing, as

part of which a forensic team gathered evidence and the body has been sent for post-mortem. Chaudhary had contested election for the Tehsil Bar Association.

In addition, security footage from CCTV cameras installed across the court premises are being secured, police said.

Officials from the Singhni Gate police station have launched an investigation and are examining the footage to identify the murderers. A team of forensic experts was also called to the site for further investigation.

The killing comes as legal practitioners across western UP went on a 24-hour strike on Wednesday to protest the clash between lawyers and police in the state's Hapur region.

In anticipation of further clashes police had been deployed at all court and tehsil complexes in the State.

# Services Act licence for officers to rebel against orders of elected Govt: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP leaders including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal slammed the GNCTD (Amendment) Act, 2023, as a licence for the bureaucrats to "openly rebel" against the orders of an elected government and defy ministers' directions.

The sharp reaction came just after Services Minister Atishi told a press conference that the principal secretary (finance) A C Verma refused to comply with her direction to depute a lawyer to file a petition in the Supreme Court challenging a High Court order against the Delhi government in a matter related to GST refund.

Citing Atishi's allegations that after the chief secretary, the finance secretary has also



refused to obey the order of the elected government, the chief minister said the Services Act (GNCTD, Amendment, Act, 2023) will "ruin" Delhi.

"Delhi Services Act gives license to officers to openly rebel against written orders of elected Govt. And officers have started refusing to obey orders of elected Ministers. Can any state or country or institution run like this? This Act will ruin Delhi n (and) this is what BJP



wants. Act needs to be struck down as soon as possible," Kejriwal posted on X.

Atishi claimed that the fear of a "revolt" by the officers after the enforcement of Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Amendment Act, 2023, seems to be coming true. She alleged that efforts were on to scuttle the Delhi government's functioning using the Services Act.

"What was said about the

revolt of the officers seems to be coming true. After the Chief Secretary in Delhi, now the Finance Secretary has also written a 40-page letter refusing to obey the orders of the elected government," Atishi alleged.

She said her predecessor Kailash Gahlot had in June directed filing a petition in the Supreme Court in the GST matter involving a refund value of around Rs 1 crore. She said she too issued a similar order on July 12.

"It was not any controversial matter, it was only a day-to-day matter. But from June 5 till date, the case has not been filed even on the request of the ministers. Now by sending a 40-page letter, the principal secretary of finance refuses to accept the order," she said.

# NCCSA writes to CMO to hold meeting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Civil Services Authority (NCCSA) has urged the office of the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to fix suitable time for the authority meeting.

In a letter to Ramchandra M Shingare, Additional Secretary to Chief Minister, NCCSA member secretary Ashwini Kumar requested that a suitable time may be indicated by Chairman (NCCSA) / Chief Minister.

The agenda of the 9th meeting of the NCCSA includes disciplinary action against the officers involved in demolition of listed heritage monument and constructing a bungalow for the then CEO,

Delhi Jal Board, irregularities in the construction of Rani Jhansi flyover and Lokpal Bench Order dated September 15, 2020, among others.

Other items like follow-up on the proposal regarding transfer/posting of Grade-I (DASS) and "Posting and Transfer of Grade-II (DASS) Officials" have withdrawn from the agenda as NCCSA has jurisdiction for transfer/posting in respect of only Group-A Officers, DANICS and IAS.

The authority will also take up the matter related to complaints against some officials of the Forensic Science Laboratory and capacity building of the civil servants.

The authority has requested the Additional Secretary to

Chief Minister for submission of the files relating to these cases.

The officers who are waiting for their postings include 1989-batch IAS officer Umang Narula, 2011-batch officers Ajay Kumar Bisht, Anil Kumar Singh, 2017-batch officer Yash Chaudhary, 2019-batch officers Rishita Gupta and Lakshay Singhal, and 2013-batch officer Kirti Garg.

These officers are due to join the Delhi government in compliance with the Union Home Ministry order dated June 8 and they are not joining in Delhi due to the impasse and non-convening of the meeting of NCCSA.

Vinod P Kavle, R. Lalramghaka, Binay Bhushan, G Sudhakar, Pankaj Kumar

and Kishore Kshirsagar Lakshman are other officers to join Delhi government, waiting for the NCCSA meeting.

The NCCSA, mandated to decide on transfers and postings of bureaucrats in the Delhi government under the newly enacted Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2023, has postponed its meeting five times since June 29. It only met once before that, on June 20.

Since the inception of NCCSA, as many as five meetings between June 29 and July 28 have been postponed at the behest of the Chief Minister. On July 27, only two members attended the NCCSA meeting and recommendations were sent to the Lieutenant Governor for approval.

# G20: Govt takes care of healthcare arrangements

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Wednesday took stock of healthcare arrangements in lieu of the G-20 Summit scheduled in the national Capital next week. Five Government and three private hospitals have been kept on high alert with formation of 80 teams of doctors and nursing staff.

These include primarily Lok Nayak Hospital, GB Pant Hospital, GTB Hospital, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, Babasaheb Ambedkar Hospital, along with Primus Hospital Chanakyapuri, Max Hospital Saket, and Manipal Hospital Dwarka. Besides a total of 106 fully-equipped ambulances have been readied with all advanced facilities.

According to Health Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj, out of these 80 teams, 75 teams will work in shifts. Each hotel has been assigned three teams, each working in eight-hour shifts. These teams will remain dedicated to serving our incoming guests 24/7 according to their respective time schedules. Additionally, five backup teams



have been kept in reserve. "If any difficulty arises or if any doctor or nursing staff is unavailable for any reason in any team, the doctors and nursing staff from these five backup teams will be deployed," he said.

Earlier Bhardwaj conducted a review meeting attended by the Health Secretary; Special Secretary, DHS; Director General, Health Services; Medical Director, Lok Nayak Hospital; Medical Director, GTB Hospital; Medical Director, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital; Medical Director, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Hospital; Medical Superintendent, Nursing Homes DHS (HQ); In-charge, Disaster Management Cell DHS (HQ); among other high-ranking health officials. Alongside health department officials, senior offi-

cers from various major hospitals in Delhi were also present.

Bhardwaj in a Press statement said Kejriwal is paying utmost attention towards the successful hosting of the G-20 Summit.

Arrangements have been made for foreign guests coming for the Summit to stay at various hotels across Delhi. The teams will serve all guests in these 25 hotels.

Bhardwaj explained that Lok Nayak Hospital has reserved 20 rooms, GB Pant Hospital has reserved 10 rooms, GTB Hospital has reserved 20 beds, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital has reserved 65 beds, and Babasaheb Ambedkar Hospital has reserved 40 beds for addressing any situation that may arise during the G-20 Summit.

# Planted 36 lakh saplings, shrubs: Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday claimed that the City Government has already planted over 36 lakh saplings and shrubs, completing 69 per cent of the annual plantation.

Rai said approximately 300 officers and employees of the department have been entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining these plants.

Rai said that plantation is being done along major roads of the city and nearly 5.20 lakh flower pots have been placed to beautify the city roads.

Moreover, the Delhi Government is racing towards its goal of planting 52 lakh trees in this year.

"We aimed to plant 50 per cent of these saplings ahead of the G20 Summit.

"I am pleased to share that we have surpassed this target, planting more than 36 lakh (69 per cent) saplings and shrubs," Rai said during a press conference.

# Benefits of MACP scheme for retired principals: LG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a far-reaching decision that will go a long way in helping government servants, not belonging to organised services, Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has decided that the benefits of Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP) scheme must be given to retired Principals, Education Officers, Deputy Education Officers and Deputy Director Educations of the Education Department.

Giving details of the decision, officials said on Wednesday the personnel will be entitled to draw salary in the higher grade



admissible arrears, immediately.

This decision will pave way for grant of financial benefits to similarly placed employees of other departments also.

Despite these retired officers being eligible for financial upgradation from year 2008 and their eligibility upheld by various Courts and even by Supreme Court, these officers had to go through trauma and harassment all these years for no fault of theirs due to indifferent and inhuman attitude of the Education Department, they said.

With this decision, the

retired Government servants will be getting their due benefits pending for 15 years.

In order to provide relief to government employees due to stagnation in their post, government of India had brought MACP Scheme effective from 01.09.2008 under which financial upgradations are granted to Government employees after completion of 10, 20 and 30 years of their service.

The benefits under the scheme are granted from the date an employee becomes eligible and he is also eligible for arrears on the benefits in case of delays.

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# Kejriwal a strong contender for PM post: AAP

Arvind not in race for PM's post: Atishi, Sanjay



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

**RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI**  
Ahead of the meeting of the Opposition bloc India (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) in Mumbai, one of the constituent of the 26 party coalitions Aam Admi Party (AAP) has thrown its hat in the ring to announce that party's convener Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is a strong contender for the Prime Ministerial candidate post.

AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar stirred the pot by expressing her desire for Kejriwal to be the prime ministerial candidate for the

alliance. Kakkar praised Kejriwal for his vocal stance on various issues, positioning him as a strong contender against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. But party colleagues Atishi who is also a Minister in Delhi Government and Sanjay Singh, the Rajya Sabha MP quickly pitched in to deny that the Delhi Chief Minister had no such aspirations. Atishi said Kejriwal is not in the race for

the Prime Minister's post. Sanjay Singh concurred with Atishi and said Kejriwal had joined the INDIA bloc to save the country. "Arvind Kejriwal's aim, objective and intention to join the INDIA alliance is to save this country. His aim is not to become the PM. He is not in the race to become PM," Singh asserted. Meanwhile in Mumbai Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said the

opposition India bloc has several choices to project as the PM candidate, while the BJP has only one. "The question about choice for the prime minister's post should be asked to the BJP, which has only one choice that we have seen for the last nine years.

India alliance has several choices for the PM post. What choices does the BJP have?" Thackeray said in response to a question on PM aspirations amongst the alliance partners.

Kakkar highlighted the achievements of the AAP-led Delhi government, including free essential services, even in the face of inflation.

When asked who should be the leader of the INDIA grouping, Kakkar said, "If you ask me as a party spokesperson, I will put forward the name of Arvind Kejriwal. He has consistently raised issues of the people, has given a model due to which inflation is the lowest in Delhi."

"A model in which the tax collected from the public have been spent on public and despite all these welfare schemes he has presented a profitable budget.

But this decision (to select the leader of INDIA) is not on me," she added. Kakkar's statement has evoked mixed reactions with some welcomed support for Kejriwal, while others have criticized her for creating unnecessary discord within the alliance. It remains to be seen whether Kejriwal will be the alliance's choice for PM, but Kakkar's statement has certainly put the issue on the table.

The statement comes ahead of the scheduled two-day meeting of the opposition INDIA bloc in Mumbai where hectic parleys are expected to take place to announce a coordination committee and a logo for the alliance. Kakkar also took a swipe at the BJP-led central

government over its decision to slash prices of cooking by ₹200, saying the fuel prices would also come down after the third meeting of opposition INDIA bloc. "LPG rates were reduced by ₹200 after Patna and Bengaluru meetings (of INDIA alliance). I am sure that petrol and diesel rates will come down after the Mumbai meeting," she said.

Delhi convener and Environment Minister Gopal Rai was asked about it, he said that every member of the AAP wants Kejriwal for the prime minister's post but a decision on it would only be finalised by all the members of the INDIA bloc. "Every party wants their leader to become prime minister."

AAP members also want their national convener to become PM. All members of the INDIA alliance will sit down and whatever the decision is, we will go accordingly," he said. When asked whether

the AAP will propose Kejriwal's name as a prime ministerial candidate, he said, "There is nothing like giving a name. We are already its part and Arvind Kejriwal is a part of the bloc." Atishi, however, said Kejriwal is not in the race for the prime minister's post.

Responding to a question on Kakkar's comments, the Delhi cabinet minister said, "I am making it official that Arvind Kejriwal is not in the race to become the prime minister of the country."

"He has joined the INDIA bloc to save the Constitution, democracy and the country," she said, while stating that Kakkar's views were personal. Two meetings of the 26 party INDIA bloc have taken place. During the second meeting in Karnataka, the bloc was officially named 'INDIA'. The third alliance meeting is scheduled to occur in Mumbai on August 31 and September 1.

AAP has confirmed its participation in this upcoming meeting. Leaders of the opposition bloc would chalk out a joint campaign strategy to take on the BJP-led NDA in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and iron out the differences among themselves.

The leaders are also likely to announce a few panels to draft a common minimum programme of the alliance, to frame joint plans for holding agitations across the country and for seat sharing.

Last year, the then Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia had also pitched for Kejriwal as prime minister. "Ek Mauka Kejriwal Ko" (One chance to Kejriwal) has become a national level talk, Sisodia had said in an interview. "People see Kejriwal as an alternative to (Narendra) Modi in 2024 because he talks about health, education and employment," he had said.

## BJP raps Bihar Govt's move to reduce festival holidays from 23 to 11 during Sept-December

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Attacking the Bihar Government's move to reduce the festival holidays from 23 to 11 during September-December in government schools, the BJP on Wednesday described the move as "politics of appeasement" and against the interests of the majority community.

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Sushil Modi alleged that the State Government had shown their "anti-Hindu identity." "By can-



celling and reducing the festive holiday of Raksha Bandhan, Teez, Juitiya, Diwali and Chhath proves their anti-Hindu identity. Why the holidays of Raksha Bandhan and several other festivals have been cancelled? Let the holi-

days of Muslims like Chehlum and Muhammad Prophet's birthday continue. I have no objection but what government wants to prove by cutting the holidays of Hindu festivals like Chhath and Diwali? I demand that the anti-Hindu circular should be rolled back immediately," Modi said.

A Bihar government's Education Department notification has said that to enhance the quality of the education in the schools, the number of holidays was being reduced as per the Right to Education Act

2009 between September and December 2023. The holidays for Raksha Bandhan, Teej, Juitiya, Vishwakarma Puja, Janmashtami, and Guru Nanak Jayanti have been cancelled as well. For Durga Puja, the earlier six-day holiday has been reduced to three.

The department says in the notification that it is necessary to have at least 200 working days in primary schools and 220 days in middle schools but due to elections, examinations, festivals and natural calamities, studies are affected.

## Rahul making baseless allegations: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The slugfest between the ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress on the issue of ongoing tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh continued on Wednesday with the saffron party attacking Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for claiming that China had usurped India's land and accused him of making "baseless allegations."

The BJP sought to 'remind' the Congress leader that China captured over 43,000 sq km of Indian land when Jawaharlal Nehru was prime minister .

The current verbal spat broke out following Rahul's renewed allegation that China has captured Indian land.

An aggressive BJP in its riposte flagged a 2008 MoU between the Congress and Chinese Community Party to target Rahul, asking if the agreement required him to work against India's interests and to hurt the morale of Indian forces. BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia's attack came hours after Rahul reiterated his charge that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion during the early weeks of the Ladakh standoff that China had not captured any part of Indian territory was an

"absolute lie." "The whole of Ladakh knows that China has usurped our land," the former Congress president told reporters.

Bhatia said China captured over 43,000 sq km of Indian land when Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister and asked if Gandhi believed the stalwart Congress leader and his great grandfather was a "traitor."

The term 'gaddar' (traitor) was used by Gandhi recently for those who "gave away a part of Bharat Mata" to China, the BJP leader said.

Rahul should disclose the details of the MoU signed between the Congress and the CCP, he said, alleging it has

been claimed the agreement requires him to "spy" against India and to break to morale of Indian forces when they act decisively against the Chinese.

Does this MoU also require him to mock a prime minister, who is the protective shield for every citizen and has elevated India's global stature, as "surrender Modi"? Bhatia asked in a reference to Congress leader's earlier swipe at him.

He asserted that no one can dare to capture an inch of Indian land under Modi's leadership. The people of India will bless him again in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and the BJP will retain power with a bigger mandate, Bhatia said.

**Government of Goa**  
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## Congress MP Adhir's suspension revoked

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader of the party Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury got a breather from the Privileges Committee of Lok Sabha on Wednesday which unanimously adopted a resolution to revoke his suspension after the Congress leader regretted his certain remarks.

Sources said the resolution was adopted after Chowdhury appeared before the Committee and expressed regret over certain remarks made by him in the House which had led to his suspension from the Lok Sabha on the last day of the monsoon session of Parliament on August 11. Chowdhury is learnt to

have told the Committee, chaired by BJP member Sunil Kumar Singh, that it was never his intention to hurt anybody's feelings and expressed regret for certain remarks made by him.

"The Committee has adopted a resolution to revoke the suspension of Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury from the Lok Sabha.

The resolution will be sent to the Speaker as soon as possible," a committee member said. Chowdhury was named by Speaker Om Birla for "unruly conduct" on August 11, the last day of the monsoon session and was suspended from the membership of Lok Sabha pending a report from the Privileges Committee.



President Droupadi Murmu with children during the celebrations of Raksha Bandhan festival, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Wednesday

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**PROCLAMATION OF SALE**

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R.C. No. 321/2019 Dated: 05.08.2023

In the matter of: **ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. Mr. Romit Manchanda**

To, **CD Mr. Romit Manchanda (Borrower)**  
S/o. Shri Rajinder Kumar Manchanda, R/o. C-193, Vivek Vihar-I, Delhi- 110095

Whereas as per Recovery Certificate No. 321/2019 dated 08.07.2019 drawn by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, DRT-II, Delhi mentioning a sum of Rs. 14,62,787.51 (Rupees Fourteen Lacs Sixty Two Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Seven And Paise Fifty One Only) has become due from you as per the said Recovery Certificate drawn up in O.A. No. 996/2017 by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, Debt Recovery Tribunal-II Delhi. The applicant is entitled to recover the sum of Rs. 14,45,787.51 (Rupees Fourteen Lacs Forty Five Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Seven And Paise Fifty One Only) along with interest at the contractual rate of 14.01% per annum simple from the date of filing of the O.A. i.e. 14.09.2017 till realization from the CD.

2. And whereas the undersigned has ordered the sale of the hypothecated vehicle mentioned in scheduled property for satisfaction of the said Recovery Certificate.

3. Notice is hereby given that in the absence of any order of postponement, the said hypothecated vehicle (mentioned under the schedule of property below) shall be sold through e-auction through <https://auctions.cardekho.com/auctions@cardekho.com>, by e-auction at 11.00 AM on 05.10.2023.

4. The CH bank shall ensure that prospective bidders are allowed inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle (mentioned under the schedule of property below) before day of auction for which interested individuals may contact the concerned officer of CH Sh. Rajeev Ranjan (Mob: 8584874809).

5. The sale shall be of the movable property of the above named Certificate Defaulters (CD), subject to the liabilities and claims attaching to the said hypothecated vehicle, if any.

6. The sale shall be stopped if, before lot is knocked down, the arrears mentioned in the said certificate, interest costs (including cost of sale) are tendered to the officer conducting the sale or proof is given to his satisfaction that the amount of such certificate along with the interest and costs has been paid to the undersigned.

7. At the sale the public generally are invited to bid either personally or by duly authorized agent. No officer or other person, having any duty to perform in connection with this sale shall, however, either directly or indirectly bid for, acquire or attempt to acquire any property sold.

8. The property is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS" BASIS and "AS IS WHAT IS" BASIS. The sale shall be subject to the conditions prescribed in the Second Schedule to the Income-Tax Act, 1961 and the rules made thereunder and to the following further conditions:

9. The particulars specified in the Schedule have been stated to the best of the information of the undersigned, but the undersigned shall not be answerable for any error, mis-statement or omission in this proclamation.

10. The Reserve Price and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) be fixed as follows:-

Details of property	Reserve Price (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (in Rs.)
Hypothecated vehicle namely make "PAJERO/2 8 GL" having the registration No. UP-14DT-0022	2,00,000/-	20,000/-

11. The amount by which the bidders are to be increased shall be determined by the Officer conducting the sale. In the event of any dispute arising as to the amount of bid, or as to the bidder, the lot shall at once be again put to auction.

12. Intending bidders shall be required to pay Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) by way of pay order/demand draft payable at New Delhi and in favour of Recovery Officer-I, DRT-II, Delhi before the start of bidding and identity proofs, address proofs etc. The said deposit shall be adjusted in the case of successful bidders; and in the case of unsuccessful bidders the same shall be refunded without interest, on the date of sale.

13. Successful highest bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the sale proceeds by way of pay order/demand draft favoring the Recovery Officer-I, DRT-II, Delhi, within 24 hours (next working day) by way of bank draft, after adjusting the EMD stated above, failing which the EMD shall be forfeited.

14. The purchaser shall deposit the balance 75% of the sale proceeds alongwith poundage fee @ 2% upto Rupees 1,000/- @ 1% of the sale price exceeding Rupees 1,000/- within 15 days from the date of auction. The Poundage fees shall be deposited through a demand draft payable in favor of the Registrar, DRT-II, Delhi.

15. In case of default, the amount earlier deposited by the bidder, if the undersigned considers fit, after defraying the expenses of the sale shall be forfeited and the property shall be resold, and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part thereof or of any part of the sum for which it may subsequently be sold.

16. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids if found unreasonable or postpone the auction at any time without assigning any reason.

**Schedule of Property**

No. of lots	Description of property to be sold with names of co-owners where the property belongs to the defaulter and any other persons is co-owners	Revenue assessed upon the property or any part thereof	Details of any encumbrances to which the property is liable	Claims, if any, which have been put forward to the property and other known particulars bearing on its nature and value.
1.	Hypothecated vehicle namely make "PAJERO/2 8 GL" having the registration No. UP-14DT-0022	No information	No information	No information

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal at New Delhi on this 05.08.2023.

(Uttam Negi)  
Recovery Officer-I  
DRT-II, Delhi

## Algae posing serious threat to Lonar Crater Lake: IISc

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spreading and growing rapidly, an invasive algae is posing a serious threat to Lonar Crater Lake — believed to be the third biggest crater in the world formed due to meteoritic impact several decades ago in Buldana district, Maharashtra.

Scientists including a well-known meteorologist from Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have called for urgent intervention of the government to stem degradation of the crater which is still being visited by the international scientific community for studying geology. However, over the years, increasing human activities and unregulated farming around the lake

coupled with the ignorance by the authorities are taking toll on this eco-fragile site surrounded with rich flora and fauna.

SK Sathesh, professor at the reputed Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences of the IISc noted that it is a unique site full of microbial life of rare types of bacteria and algae among others. It is now becoming home to the invasive algae with its water level going down, he said.

Sathesh who also holds the chair of the Divecha Centre for Climate Change, a centre undertaking research on climate variability, climate change at the IISc further noted that "the lake surface is shrinking without any noticeable change in the region's rainfall levels.

The reasons behind this worrying event have been attributed to various factors, including the drying up of local percolation dams, the closure of streams that feed the lake, and borewells situated in the vicinity of the lake."

In a recent editorial in Current Science, the meteorologist added, "..... the water quality of Lonar Lake has also undergone severe degradation. The lake's salinity and pH levels have been steadily declining due to rampant sewage dumping, while the use of pesticides and fertilizers in farmland near the lake serves as another source of pollution." The subsequent increase in levels of nitrogen and phosphorus has triggered the growth of invasive

algae species, which is a matter of great concern," added Sathesh citing various reports.

These findings warrant immediate attention and action to ensure the preservation of Lonar Lake and its ecosystem, he said while noting that recent investigations by the Centre for Citizen Science in Pune too have revealed that the lake's perimeter has shifted inward by 100 metres within three years, he said.

This group has been studying the lake since 2003 in collaboration with researchers from the IMD, the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics, and the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, said Sathesh. Scientists Tandale MR from

Department of Zoology, Shri Vyankatesh Arts, Commerce and Science College, Maharashtra and DS Talwankar, Principal, G S Commerce, Arts and Science College, Khamgaon, Maharashtra too have raised similar concerns about the degradation of the lake due to rapid multiplication of the invasive algae.

"Due to excessive development of the algae causes algal blooms on the water surface, this prevent light from penetration hence the other microorganisms cannot survive after all they settle down at bottom, they said in the study 'Lonar Crater: A case Study' published in journal Acta Scientific Microbiology.

## 5th Commanders' level meeting held between India, Bangladesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The fifth Regional and Zonal Commanders' level meeting between Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) was held on Monday through video conferencing and the two sides reviewed the entire gamut of their ties, Coast Guard officials said here on Wednesday.

Giving details, they said the meeting was conducted under the provisions of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) signed between the Coast Guards of two neighbouring countries in 2015 and 2017

respectively. The meeting was co-chaired by Inspector General Iqbal Singh Chauhan, Commander Coast Guard Region (North East) and Captain Mohammad Kibria Haq, Zonal Commander, West Zone, Bangladesh Coast Guard.

During the meeting, common maritime issues like sensitization of fishermen on cross border fishing, information sharing and capability building were discussed.

The meeting was significant in providing added impetus to the already existing field level operational exchanged between the Coast Guard Region (North-East) of ICG and West Zone of BCG.

## 'Lighters emit more black carbon than all biomass fuels'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Firelighters which are used to light open fires and stoves in the home—even if used in small quantities and for a short period of time—emit more black carbon than all biomass fuels put together, leading to alarmingly high levels of toxic air, an international team of researchers from Ireland, China and India has said.

The research is published in the journal Climate and Atmospheric Science. Professor Jurgita Ovadnevaite, deputy director of Ryan Institute Centre for Climate and Air Pollution Studies at University of Galway and coordinating

scientist of the international research project, said, "Black carbon is one of the main pollutants that affect air quality, acting as a climate forcer or driver, second only to carbon dioxide. While the effect was revealed in Ireland, the impact of it is relevant to other European countries, the UK, and worldwide, especially now with a rebound in use of solid fuel stoves due to energy crisis."

The research team described the impact of firelighter use in home heating and the release of black carbon as a significant and previously overlooked source of air pollution. Firelighters are kerosene-based and contain

hydrocarbon alkane. They noted that there are an estimated 70 million wood burning stoves, open fires and other solid fuel heating appliances in homes across Europe alone, while an EPA report from 2022 indicates an increase in the number of households switching to solid fuel fires, rather than a decline—a trend which may become more acute in midst of the energy cost crisis.

Professor Jurgita Ovadnevaite added, "The potentially toxic particulate air pollutants, like black carbon, not only affect people's health but play a significant role in climate change and uncertainty of climate predictions.

# Lack of platelets not cause of death in dengue cases: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that lack of platelets may not be the cause of death in dengue patients. Addressing a virtual meeting with private doctors and nursing home operators on Tuesday, the CMO discussed the subject in detail with them. He said that according to international standards, a patient does not require platelet transfusion unless the platelets count is less than 10,000 and there is no active bleeding.

"Platelets transfusion is not the primary treatment for dengue. In fact, platelets transfusion does more harm than good to the patient if it is used in a patient whose platelet count is more than 10,000," he said, adding that the primary cause of death in patients suffering from dengue is capillary leakage, which causes blood loss in the intravascular compartment and results in multi-organ failure.

"In the case of plasma leak-



CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary

age from the intravascular compartment to the extravascular compartment, the patient should be transfused with fluids at a rate of 20 ml per kg body weight per hour. This should be continued until the difference between the upper and lower blood pressure is greater than 40 mmHg, or until the patient passes a sufficient amount of urine. This is all that is needed to treat the patient, and transfusion of unnecessary platelets can make the health condition of a patient

worse," the CMO said.

According to him, while treating dengue patients, physicians should remember the "Formula of 20" that is rise in pulse rate of more than 20, fall of BP of more than 20, difference between lower and upper BP of less than 20 and the presence of multiple hemorrhagic spots on the arm after the tourniquet test suggests a high-risk condition, and the person needs immediate medical attention.

Dr Chaudhary said that dengue fever is a painful mosquito borne disease. It is caused by any one of the four types of dengue virus, which is transmitted through the bite of an infected female Aedes aegypti mosquito. "Common symptoms of dengue include high fever, runny nose, mild skin rash, cough, and pain behind the eyes and in the joints. However, some people may develop a red and white patchy rash followed by loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting etc," he said, adding that the patients suffering from dengue should

seek medical advice, rest and drink plenty of fluids. "Paracetamol can be taken to reduce fever and reduce joint pain. However, aspirin or ibuprofen should not be taken, as they can increase the risk of bleeding," he advised.

According to him, less than one percent of dengue cases are at risk of complications, if the public knew the warning signs, all dengue deaths could be avoided. "Dengue NS-1 is the best test for dengue. NS-1 is ideally a positive reading on day one to seven. It does not give false positive reading. If negative on the first day, repeat it the next day. Always ask for an ELISA based NS-1 test as card tests are misleading," he said.

District Malaria Officer Sharat Chand Pandey said that dengue has been confirmed in 41 patients against the total of 769 ELISA tests conducted so far in the two sentinel labs of the district located at IMS BHU and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (DDU) Hospital.

# Hapur incident: Allahabad HC lawyers boycott work in protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The lawyers of the Allahabad High Court remained on strike boycotting judicial work here on Wednesday in protest against the lathicharge by the Hapur police on lawyers there. The lawyers protested by raising slogans at different gates of the High Court. Angry over the incident in Hapur, the lawyers also burnt an effigy outside Gate No 3 of the High Court.

The lawyers have demanded registration of FIR and stringent action against the 'guilty' police personnel. Seeing the anger of the advocates, a large number of police forces were deployed around the High Court here.

Panchu Ram Maurya, former president of the Uttar Pradesh Bar Council, said the government should take the incident in Hapur seriously and strict action should be taken against the guilty policemen. The lawyers said that incidents of assault on lawyers by the police are coming to the fore. No action is taken against

the policemen. This is the reason why such incidents are happening again and again.

To prevent such incidents from happening again, the lawyers also demanded the Advocates Protection Act. The lawyers of Lucknow Bench also abstained from judicial work on Wednesday. The lawyers of many districts also boycotted work. Due to the lawyers' strike, the hearing of all the cases has been postponed due to which the litigants had to face a lot of trouble.

**CGL EXAM:** Over 50 per cent (pc) candidates, who had registered for the Combined Graduate Level (CGL) Exam-2023 did not appear for the exam, revealed a recent Right to Information (RTI) response from the Staff Selection Commission (SSC). The exam is held for filling positions like tax assistant in the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), auditors in the Controller General of Defence Accounts, inspectors (central excise) in the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, assistant

section officers in the Ministry of External Affairs, sub-inspector (S-I) in CBI, senior administrative assistant in the Military Engineering Services, Ministry of Defence, and S-I/ junior intelligence officer in the Narcotics Control Bureau among others.

As per the information furnished by the SSC, out of the 24,74,030 candidates, only 12,36,202 (49.97 pc) participated in the computer-based tier-I examination held on July 27. The remaining 12,37,828 (50.03 pc) skipped the exam.

This also implied that a sum of around Rs 6 crore was deposited by the candidates—fee at a rate of Rs 100 per form. SSC charges Rs 100 from each candidate while women, SC/ST and ex-servicemen are exempted. Among the total candidates, maximum 9,47,864 belonged to the OBC category. Additionally, 5,83,421 were from unreserved category along with 5,34,968 from SC, 2,18,875 from ST and 1,88,902 from economically weaker section (EWS), according to SSC

data. Eliminating SC/ST candidates from the count, around 17,20 lakh applicants (69.51 pc) had submitted the required fee. Assuming that 50 pc of these fee-paying candidates were absent on the exam day, the number exceeds 8.5 lakh.

Although the exact count of female and ex-servicemen candidates remains undisclosed, assuming their numbers to be around 25 pc, which totals around 2 lakh, it implies that the remaining 6.5 lakh, who paid the fee at a rate of Rs 100 per candidate, resulted in a fee collection exceeding Rs 6 crore but did not appear for the recruitment exam. The SSC data reveals that the Combined Higher Secondary Level (CHSL) Exam-2023, held on August 17, also saw a significant number of candidates skipping the examination. Out of the total 32,35,474 candidates, who had registered, 12,63,090 (approximately 39 pc) appeared for the examination while 19,72,384 (around 61 pc) skipped the exam.

# Cong protests against Hapur lathicharge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the leadership of district president of Congress (Law Cell) Lokesh Singh, on the call of state vice-president to the cell Ashok Kumar Singh, submitted a memorandum to the ADM (City) here on Wednesday for forwarding the same to the Governor in protest against the police lathicharge on advocates in Hapur. In their four-point memorandum, the Congress demanded that the police lathicharge should be investigated by a currently serving judge of the High Court. They also demanded that legal action should be ensured by registering an FIR against the police personnel involved in the lathicharge incident.

Besides, they demanded financial assistance of Rs 50,000 to the injured advocates while providing them proper medical treatment and implementation of Advocate Protection Act in



Congress delegation submitting a memorandum to ADM (City) in Varanasi on Wednesday.

the state. State vice-president Ashok Kumar Singh warned that if the demands are not met soon, then Congress (Law Cell) will hold a massive protest in the entire UP for which Yogi government will be responsible.

Among others who were also present in the delegation were Sanjay Singh, Krishnanand Singh, Sanjay Mishra, Chegvebar Raghuvanshi, Ritesh Bahadur Singh, Vijay Bahadur Singh,

Umeshchandra Singh, Mahajan Yadav, Abhay Kumar Singh, Rajesh Kumar Rai, Ramshankar Gupta, Kaushal Sharma, Chandan Singh, Ashok Kumar and Virendra Kumar Pandit.

# Sub-Inspector's son shot in UP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The son of a police sub-inspector (S-I) was shot dead in the trans-Ganga area of Tharvai here on Wednesday. The incident took place in a private medical clinic near kiosk number 40. The doctor was seen running away in a huff after the gun shot was heard. The police have not been able to find out the reason behind the murder. The locals said Pankaj Yadav (27), son of Badri Prasad Yadav, was constructing a house near the above clinic and he had some altercation with people a few days ago.

On Wednesday he visited the clinic and after a few minutes a gun shot was heard there and the doctor, Rohit Sharma was seen running out wearing only one slipper. He

immediately started his bike and disappeared. One slipper of the doctor was seen lying near the body of Pankaj Yadav.

Pankaj of Hasanpur Korari, Sarai Chandi, Tharvai, was residing in Teliyerganj and visited Tharvai frequently in connection with the construction of a house in Nai Basti.

Father of Pankaj is a police sub-inspector and posted at Lanka police station of Varanasi. The doctor who runs the above clinic is reportedly a government medical officer and is posted in Prayagraj. It is still not clear that who fired the shot to kill Pankaj.

**RESEARCH:** Research by a team of scientists from various countries, including an alumnus of Allahabad University (AU), has found a compound derived from tobacco leaves that might possess the

potential to combat multiple forms of cancer. The findings offer a striking contrast because tobacco usage, according to WHO, is accountable for a quarter of all cancer-related fatalities worldwide and remains the primary cause of lung cancer. The remarkable discovery by AU alumnus Amit Dubey, along with Indian scientist Aisha Tufail and Malaysian researchers Miah Roney and Prof AKM Moyoenuel Hug, has been published in the "Journal of Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics", a publication of Taylor & Francis Ltd in the UK.

According to the study's findings, a singular anti-cancer compound termed "4-[3-Hydroxyanilino]-6,7-Dimethoxyquinazoline" can be extracted from tobacco leaves, exhibiting no discernible side

effects. Amit explained: "The proliferation, survival, adhesion, migration and differentiation of cancer cells are all significantly influenced by the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR). The walls of tumour cells contain EGFR. They require this protein to survive and develop."

The research team used a collaborative approach to screen drug bank compounds targeting the EGFR protein. This was facilitated through the drug bank, a comprehensive, free-access online database maintained by the University of Alberta and the Metabolomics Innovation Centre in Alberta, Canada, from which the team sourced the compound found in tobacco leaves for their study. Amit is a senior scientist at Quanta Calculus Pvt Ltd in Greater Noida.

# POs receive 1.76 lakh rakhis

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

More than 1.15 lakh rakhis were sent from the post offices (POs) of Varanasi Region to the different parts of the country and abroad, while 1.76 lakh rakhi received and distributed by the postmen in the recent days as the Department of Posts has made special arrangements for mail delivery for Raksha Bandhan festival. Giving this information, Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Krishna Kumar Yadav said even on Wednesday along, about 23,000 Rakhi Dakhs (posts) were distributed to the people by the post offices of the region. "In the hi-tech society, the importance of silk threads of Rakhi is still intact amidst the virtual relationships. The Postal department also made all the preparations for this festival. While the Postal department made arrangements for waterproof designer envelopes for sending rakhis, the postmen continued to distribute rakhis till late evening so that no brother's wrist was left desolate," said the PMG.

He said that the department has received a lot of



A postman delivering a Rakhi envelope to a customer in Varanasi on Wednesday.

appreciation from the people who expressed their happiness

by thanking the Postal department. "The importance of

Raksha Bandhan was seen not only in India but also in foreign countries. 1,125 rakhis were sent by speed posts and registered letters from post offices of Varanasi Region to countries like USA, UK, Singapore, UAE, Germany, Saudi Arabia, France, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Oman etc," said Yadav, adding that at the same time, sisters living abroad also send rakhis to their brothers through the Postal department, which were delivered immediately through postmen.

According to the PMG, along with booking Rakhi mails, special arrangements have been made by the Postal department for special sorting and their quick delivery from post offices to Railway Mail Service (RMS) and sorting hubs. "Even today, post is the easiest and most accessible medium to send one's message, in such a situation, most of the rakhis on Raksha Bandhan are sent by post," he said and added that the Department of Posts, which has been spreading happiness through letters, has also given a new dimension to this festival of relationships.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad (IIIT-A) will organise a two day Global Alumni Meet at Jhalwa campus from September 2. Prof Anupam Agrawal, Dean, Alumni Affairs, IIIT-A, said on Wednesday that the alumni get-together and felicitation programme will be organised on September 2 at IIIT Jhalwa, Allahabad, especially for alumni in Prayagraj and nearby places and Global Virtual Alumni Meet (GVAM), on September 3 for alumni all over the globe in online mode. "These events are an opportunity for us to come together and celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni as well as to foster closer ties within our alumni community," he added. The alumni affairs office has now planned to reach out to all the alumni located all over the globe by organising its second "IIIT-A Global Virtual Alumni Meet 2023" on September 3.

Prof Mukul S Sutaone, Director, IIIT-A and patron,

will inaugurate the first day programme on September 2 at 10 am. Anand Deshpande, Chairman Board of Governors, IIIT-A will be the chief guest at the virtual meet on September 3. Three IIIT-A alumni Kunal Srivastava, Director (IES), Ministry of Communication, Delhi, Vishwa Nath Pratap Singh, Senior Computer Scientist, Adobe, Bangalore and Vineet Sagar, Cofounder and Managing Partner, Venture Garage, Delhi will be honoured on the first day programme. "Based on the suggestions received from the Executive Committee members of the 6 Chapters (four in India and two abroad), an event schedule has been prepared and valuable suggestions from the director are also included in the schedule. During this meet the alumni will recreate memories of their college days, connect with old friends and other alumni from different parts of the world, reconnect with their professors, rekindle long-forgotten tales, discuss new ideas, resolutions and visions for the college with professors. There are opportu-

nities for tons of interaction with present students and other alumni through break-out sessions", said Prof Agrawal. A series of cultural programme will be held in the Jhalwa campus on Saturday evening.

**PROPOSAL:** Rail passengers from Sangam city and Mumbai could soon be able to avail of the facility of Duronto express between both cities daily. Likewise, those bound for Ahmedabad too may get a direct train that runs more frequently. A proposal in this regard has been sent to the Railway Board by Phulpur MP, Keshari Devi Patel.

Presently, Duronto Express runs between Prayagraj Junction and Lokmanya Tilak Terminal (LTT) twice a week (Saturday and Tuesday), departing from Prayagraj on Monday and on Friday from Lokmanya Tilak. The train, which takes around 19 hours to complete the journey, is popular because it is available from Prayagraj Junction and also for its timing. Since most trains leaving for Mumbai are from Prayagraj Cheeki station, this train becomes the first choice

of the passengers.

But since the frequency of the train is limited to twice a week, there has been a long-standing demand for increasing its frequency.

Following the proposal sent by the Allahabad MP, who is also member of the standing committee for Railways, the Prayagraj-Lokmanya Tilak Terminus Duronto Express will run daily, before Mahakumbh-2025.

Those travelling to Ahmedabad too will get relief if the proposed train begins as, presently, the train connectivity for this major city of Gujarat is limited and the only train from Prayagraj for Ahmedabad is once a week (Friday). The MP has requested to increase the frequency of this superfast express too, from once to weekly to thrice a week. "On my request, a proposal to raise the frequency of Mumbai Duronto and Prayagraj Ahmedabad Superfast Express has been sent to the Railway Board by the Railways and it is expected that the request will get approved before Mahakumbh", said Keshari Devi Patel.

# Kajari Mahotsav to be organised on Sept 2

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

As part of the initiative to protect our heritage, Kajari Mahotsav is being organised on the grounds of BLJ Inter College on September 2 evening. Such announcement was made by District Magistrate Divya Mittal while interacting with the media at the Collectorate on Tuesday. The DM said the State Cultural department had for the programme made available the fund to protect our heritage and promote tourism in the district. She said a Kajari memorial had been constructed with the people's contribution at Ram Chandra Shukla Park which was one of the entry points of the town and it will be dedicated to the public by Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel at 6 pm. After

the dedicating the memorial the minister will inaugurate the Kajari Mahotsav, the DM added. The DM said at the memorial place the Kajari artists will be honoured by the union minister and at BLJ grounds renowned folk artists will perform Kajari. During the press meet Additional District Magistrate (Finance and Revenue) Shiv Pratap Shukla, deputy collector Siddharth Yadav and Assistant Tourism Officer Rajesh Bharteyya were also present.

Meanwhile after inaugurating the potable water project under Jal Jeevan Mission on Tuesday DM Divya Mittal said it is a matter of contentment that the most problematic village, Devahat of Lahuriyadah area, started getting potable water from the tap. Overwhelmed by the success of the project she said she was

aware of the fact that neither any potable water scheme nor any handpump was successful in the area and in summer water tankers were the only way to meet the potable water needs of the people of the area. She assured that the village will have a school soon.

Amidst the chanting of the Vedic shlokas the district magistrate inaugurated the project and congratulated the villagers that it was for the first time that they were getting potable water through the taps at their doorstep. She thanked sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Bharat Lal Saroj, experts from BHU and others associated with the scheme who worked hard to fulfil the dream of the government 'Har Ghar Nal Se Jal' in the most challenging village of the district.

**MEETING:** Chairman Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP)

Shyam Sundar Keshari while holding the meeting of tax collectors on Tuesday directed the officials concerned with the tax to intensify recovery. He asked the officers posted in Tax department to inspect the demand register and remove those demands which are bogus. He directed the authorities to review collection regularly, identify big tax defaulters and collect dues by formulating a strategy. He said action will be taken against those tax collectors who are not found serious about their duty. He directed to collect dues running into crores and impose commercial rates on those buildings which were being used for commercial purposes. He directed the officials to collect dues from the government departments by launching a drive and regular review.

# Shravani Upakarma organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Veda department of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU) on Wednesday organised Shravani Upakarma on the occasion of purnima of shukla paksha of the auspicious month of Shravan. In the context of Sanskrit-sanskar and culture, Guru (teachers) teach students the lesson to do good deeds and teachers should also become the best Gurus and produce the best students, the Vice-Chancellor of SSU Prof Bihari Lal Sharma said while presiding over the programme and added that when there will be the best students then only

the best India will be built and they will establish India on global platform. As the chief guest of the function, Prof. Rampujan Pandey said that this festival is also known as twin birth and added that man is born once from his mother's body, not only human birth, animals and birds are also born in this way, but humans being is different from all of them and added that a human being is given admission in Gurukul for the study as a disciple under the best Gurus, Gurukul, the Guru teaches his disciples about good character, morality, nationalism, values, culture and kindness towards the nation, society and family,

he said, adding that the disciples devote their entire time to the Guru through their feelings and respect.

The Sanskrit Day and Raksha Bandhan festival also fall on this day and it is observed to atone for sins through worship. The puja was performed on the occasion under the guidance of Prof Mahendra Pandey and Dr Vijay Kumar Sharma and coordination of Dr Sateyendra Kumar Yadav. Prof Sadanand Shukla, Prof Sudhakar Mishra, Shyam Sunder Tiwari, Santosh Dubey and others were present on the occasion.

**INAUGURATED:** UP Minister of State for Stamp,

Court Fee and Registration Ravindra Jaiswal inaugurated two roads/interlocking works approved under rapid economic development plan year (2022-2023).

At a programme on Tuesday, the Minister inaugurated the road from Brahm Baba place to the house of Dilip Singh via slum locality in Om Sai Ram Colony. Meerapur Badshin in Sarsauli Ward which was constructed with a cost of Rs 46.72 lakh.

At another programme, Jaiswal inaugurated the road and interlocking work completed with a cost of Rs 30.90 lakh in Indira Nagar Colony, Khajuri in Khajuri Ward.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Unity in expediency

The Opposition conclave in Mumbai will decide the future of the alliance itself

The third meeting of the Opposition alliance, scheduled to begin today in Mumbai, has already generated much curiosity in political circles. The 26-party Opposition alliance will discuss strategy for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and deliberate on, among other things, organisational set-up and the parties' respective responsibilities. For dealing with various aspects of elections, the alliance plans to set up a coordination committee and several smaller committees to handle various aspects of their functioning. They also intend to hold at least three more such conclaves before the elections. As per indications, the Opposition leaders aim to campaign on issues such as unemployment, price rise, assault on the nation's federal structure and use of investigating agencies against Opposition leaders. The coalition is also likely to unveil its logo at the meeting but, more importantly, it would be the first time the 26-party coalition would brainstorm strategic issues including seat-sharing which could make or mar the alliance itself. Besides, the grapevine has it that more political parties would be joining the Opposition alliance which would strengthen its position vis-à-vis NDA, which is 38-party strong. However, the alliance has inherent contradictions which need to be addressed before preparing a strategy. Many leaders are in the alliance as they have only one thing in common, which is the desire to defeat NDA. All such alliances, and we have a long history of such alliances including the Janata Party which wilted after taking on Indira Gandhi, are fragile by their very nature.



The biggest drawback with this alliance is that no one stands tall enough to provide unchallenged leadership. Most leaders – including Mamata Banerjee, Sharad Pawar, Akhilesh Yadav and so on – do not have pan-India appeal, though they all are earnestly indulging in upmanship within the alliance to upstage the claims of the others without seem to be trying too hard for it. Congress, which could have provided the leadership and cohesion, is still grappling with internal bickering while Rahul Gandhi is yet to assume the stature of an established leader. Nitish Kumar, the convener and organiser, suffers from two drawbacks – one, the base of his party JD(U) has eroded and; two, his credibility as a dependable unwavering leader is suspect. His eagerness to project himself as the uncrowned leader of the alliance suffered a setback when he recently had to backtrack and clarify that he would rather be happy to remain just the glue that holds the coalition together. The first meeting to foster the Opposition unity was held in Patna in June, while the second one took place in Bengaluru in mid-July. It was in the Bengaluru conclave that the name of the coalition was chosen as the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, abbreviated as INDIA. Though most of the alliance leaders hide behind the veneer of high-sounding claims that they have no desire to lead it and they are happy to be just part of the coalition, it will be tested only in and after the elections.

### PICTALK



People during the 'poonal' (sacred thread) changing ceremony on the occasion of 'Avani Avittam', in Coimbatore

## Resolving the water crisis in Tamil Nadu



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

The perennial water scarcity issue in Tamil Nadu can be resolved only if the politicians have the will to do so. But does it suit their interests?

*Marudveidhe maanya jala pravahe  
Kaverakanye namataam sharanye  
Maanye vidhe mani suputri  
soumye  
Kaaveri Kaaveri mama prasiida*

*(Your copious flow swelled by cloud bearing Maruts Daughter of Kaveri, I bow at your feet Divine mind-born daughter of the creator O Kaveri, shower your blessings on me)*

This is from the hymn *Kaveri Ashotakam* sung in praise of river Kaveri, that reverberates from the banks along "Ganga of the South", as Kaveri is addressed in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The 805-km-long river originates from Brahmagiri Hills (known as Thalakaveri) and meanders through Karnataka and Tamil Nadu before joining her husband Sagara Raja (Hind Mahasagar), irrigates and makes prosper the 72,000 sq km basin that falls in her path. The picturesque landscape along its route and the serene and peaceful atmosphere felt on both banks are visual splendours.

But not any more! The mention of Kaveri makes the Dravidian politicians see red. The river, flowing peacefully till 1967, has become a bone of contention between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Despite being an inter-state river, the political leadership of both States had displayed statesmanship and maturity in resolving the issues that had cropped up during drought years caused by deficient rainfall.

Old-timers like the late N Kalyanasundaram, the chronicler of Tamil Nadu's political history, used to tell how K Kamaraj, the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu, rang up his Karnataka counterpart and requested for more water whenever the farmers complained to him of water shortage. The other side obliged and that too with a sense of pride. Gone are those good old days. MK Stalin and Siddaramaiah are brothers-in-arms fighting together to establish socialism, secularism and communal harmony across India. But they do not see



eye to eye on the Kaveri issue.

Though there were issues between the States of Karnataka (then Mysore) and Tamil Nadu (previously Madras) long back, the agreements made in 1892 and 1924 to share the waters had resolved the dispute to a great extent. Over the years, the South Monsoon that feeds Kaveri's catchment area became erratic due to the destruction of forests in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The farmers of Tamil Nadu under the banner of Kaveri Delta Farmers Welfare Association had filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court seeking a directive to the Centre to refer the dispute relating to the utilization of Kaveri Water to the Inter-State Water Dispute Act, 1956. Subsequently, the Kaveri River Water Dispute Tribunal was set up for an amicable settlement.

The Tribunal's award was that Karnataka should release 177.25 Thousand Million Cubic feet (TMC ft) of water to Tamil Nadu in a normal-water year (June–May). Of this, 123.14 TMC ft is to be released from June to September when farming operations are at their peak. But when rains fail, Tamil Nadu politicians get cold and start sneezing. The Tribunal



**TAMIL NADU SHOULD HAVE BUILT A SERIES OF DESALINATION PLANTS ALONG ITS 1076-KM COASTLINE AND CREATED TUNNELS TO FACILITATE THE FLOW OF SURPLUS WATER**

has also fixed the quantity of water to be released by Karnataka every month.

Tamil Nadu claims that Kaveri is the lifeline of its five districts, which are known as the Delta Districts and the Rice Bowl. The Dravidian politicians blame Karnataka for its failure to release the monthly quota. Many times, the States have seen riots breaking out in Tamil Nadu against the people of Karnataka, and those in Karnataka return the compliment. Karnataka's plan to build Mekadatu reservoir across the Kaveri to meet the drinking water requirements of Bangalore has met with strong resistance from the Dravidians because they fear that it is an attempt by Karnataka to rob Tamil Nadu of its due.

Tamil Nadu's woe is that it does not have any major river and is fully dependent on Karnataka and Kerala (Mullaperiyar dam). However, the State has done nothing to resolve the issue with the help of modern technology. Surplus water from Kaveri is wasted into the Arabian Sea every year. All the engineers need to do is to divert a portion of the west-flowing surplus water to the Godavari/Krishna rivers through a network of canals. Tamil Nadu Government, which built the Chennai Metro

through tunnels, can deploy boring machines to construct a series of tunnels to facilitate the flow of surplus water from Kaveri to Mettur dam.

"The UPA government will make a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of linking the nation's rivers. The UPA will take all steps to ensure that long-pending inter-state disputes on rivers and water-sharing like the Cauvery waters dispute are settled amicably at the earliest," said its Common Minimum Programme before it came to power in 2004. Now, there is no CMP or UPA!

Tamil Nadu should have built a series of desalination plants along its 1076-km coastline. Though there are two Central institutions in Chennai (Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, and National Institute of Ocean Technology) with expertise in setting up desalination plants, no one from the State has made any attempt to bring these organizations into the loop. For politicians in Tamil Nadu, water should remain a burning issue for their survival. May God save the Dravidians and Tamil Nadu!

*(The writer is a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### EDUCATION AS A BUSINESS

Sir — Education has increasingly transformed into a profit-driven enterprise for private institutions, deviating from its core purpose of knowledge dissemination. Many private institutions prioritize financial gains over genuine educational value, often disguising their subpar quality with sophisticated branding. As a result, students pursuing fields like medicine are compelled to seek education in distant countries, such as Ukraine, due to the excessive fees charged by domestic medical colleges. The rapid proliferation of private institutions has solidified the perception that the education sector is primarily focused on generating profits. This is especially concerning in a country where education remains inaccessible to many, despite significant demand. Private universities have witnessed substantial growth in recent years, surpassing other types of institutions. It's important to recognize that services like education and healthcare should not be treated as profit-oriented ventures. Instead, they should be provided with a focus on public welfare and accessibility.

**Md Imdadullah | Muzaffarpur**

#### INDIA PROTESTS CHINA'S MAP

Sir — India has lodged a strong protest against China. On Tuesday, India rejected the claims made by Beijing in the so-called "standard map" and stated that they have no basis to claim India's territory. The Ministry of External Affairs pointed out that such actions from the Chinese side would only complicate the resolution of the boundary question. The Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Arindam Bagchi, stated: "Today, we lodged a strong protest through diplomatic channels with the Chinese side regarding the 2023 'standard map' of China, which asserts claims over India's territory." The map, released on August 28 by Beijing, shows Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as South Tibet, and Aksai Chin, occupied by China in the 1962 war, as part of its territory.

The map also lays claim to Taiwan and

#### India's 'Triple Role Record'



It was India's "triple role record" in World Athletics Championships finals (2023) where, for the first time, three Indians secured spots within the top 8. Congratulations to the 3 Indian finalists: Number one (Goldie) Neeraj Chopra (88.17m), 5th ranker Kishore Jena (84.77m) and 6th ranker DP Manu (84.14m). The qualification distance for the Paris Olympics 2024 was 85.50m, a mark that only (Goldie) Neeraj surpassed. We are all aware that luck also plays a role in sports on any given day. The hearts of 1.4 billion Indians echo the same question: Will Neeraj secure his second Olympic gold in Paris 2024?

**PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad**

the disputed South China Sea. Moreover, the map incorporates China's claims over the nine-dash line, asserting control over a significant portion of the South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei all have claims over different parts of the South China Sea. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra mentioned that during a conversation with President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Modi highlighted India's concerns about unresolved issues along the Line of Actual Control. "The Prime Minister emphasized that maintaining peace and tranquility in the border areas and respecting the LAC are essential for normalizing the India-China relationship."

**Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai**

#### CELEBRATING ONAM

Sir — The victory of God over the demons is the central theme of almost all festivals, be it Diwali, Dussehra, Krishna Janmashtami, etc. However, rarely do we celebrate the exploits of asuras or demons, which are seen as embodiments of evil. Onam is one such festival celebrated with gaiety and fervour in the month of

Chingam (either in August or September) to welcome the homecoming of asura Mahabali in the Malayalam-speaking belt of Kerala. Although an Asura by birth, due to his hard work, noble deeds and generosity, he became the ruler of both earth and heaven. Legend has it that when Vishnu's fifth avatar, Vamana, requested three steps of land from Mahabali, the former grew in physique, covering the sky and earth in his first two steps. When asked where to place his third step, the generous Asura king offered his head to the Almighty. Vamana sent him to Patala Lok.

However, impressed by his sacrifice and generous nature, Vishnu blessed him with a boon allowing him to visit his people once a year to bless them with prosperity and happiness. Since then, people revere and pay homage to the legendary king Mahabali's homecoming. They lay floral carpets in front of their houses and buildings to welcome the illustrious king. The 10-day festival also marks the beginning of the harvest season and the end of the rainy season. Marked by sports, music and games, it fosters a sense of unity.

**Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital**

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## How to unlock the growth potential of working capital

Working capital is like a magic tool for business. It has an important role in driving the innovation and expansion of a company



PARRY SINGH

Working capital is the lifeline of a business, representing the funds available to cover day-to-day operations and short-term financial obligations. In financial terms, it is calculated by subtracting current liabilities from current assets.

The importance of working capital lies in its ability to ensure the smooth functioning of a company's operational and financial activities. **INNOVATE, EXPAND**

To thrive in today's competitive business landscape, organizations must embrace innovative working capital solutions. By leveraging fintech advancements, businesses can optimize working capital, improve cash flow management, and drive innovation and expansion. Businesses must explore alternative financing options, adopt digital payment solutions, integrate financial systems and leverage data analytics.

As the fintech industry evolves, businesses must stay updated on the latest trends and technologies. By partnering with fintech companies and financial institutions, businesses can unlock the full potential of their working



capital, seize growth opportunities and navigate the challenges of an unpredictable economic environment.

#### Increasing Creativity

Research and development is essential for any business that wants to stay ahead of the competition. However, R&D projects can be costly. Working capital allows companies to obtain the funds they need to conduct research and development activities such as hiring research teams, purchasing equipment and technology, and conducting market research. By investing in research and development, companies can create new products and solutions that distinguish themselves from their competitors and attract new customers.

#### Marketing and Sales

Innovation and expansion go hand in hand with effective marketing and sales strategies. Companies must

invest in marketing and sales to promote new products, enter new markets, and reach customers. Working capital provides the funds necessary to start the business and sales, such as advertising, product development, attending trade shows and hiring salespeople. By promoting their products and services well, companies can generate new leads, increase sales, and drive innovation and expansion.

#### Collaborate With Others

In some cases, innovation and expansion can be achieved through cooperation. Working capital can be used to finance these projects, allowing companies to merge with other businesses with new technologies, products or services. Businesses can leverage their collective resources, expertise and customers to drive innovation and expand. This can create synergies, increase market share and accelerate development.

#### Working Capital Needs

Working capital financing is required to support day-to-day operations and manage cash flow. By providing short-term financing, it allows companies to pay suppliers, cover operating costs and manage

cash flow shortfalls. This financial stability allows businesses to focus on innovation and expansion without being hindered by short-term financial constraints.

#### GETTING THE CAPITAL

Businesses can obtain working capital from the following methods – Line of Credit, Term Loan, Invoice Financing/Bill Discounting, Factoring, Cash Credit/Bank Overdraft from Banks, NBFCs (Non-Banking Financial Companies) and other financial institutions.

#### CHALLENGES THEREIN

Businesses in India often face challenges when it comes to obtaining working capital. Traditional banking institutions may have stringent requirements, lengthy approval processes, and limited flexibility in terms of collateral. These factors can make it difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and startups to access the necessary funds. This is where NBFCs can come into the picture and help MSMEs raise the required funds.

*(The writer is the founder and CEO of Red Fort Capital)*



## FIRST COLUMN

## SUFFERINGS IN LIFE ARE INEVITABLE

Nobody can escape hardships, but we can overcome these with God's help



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

For a long, I have wondered about verse #18.36 of the Bhagavad-Geeta, which goes like this, "O Arjuna, now hear from Me about the three types of happiness, by practicing them one enjoys, and achieves the end of miseries." Then, how is this possible in this 'duhkhalaya' (a place of misery)? Lord Krishna has left no one in doubt where we are when He stated, "Those great souls, achievers of the supreme perfection, having achieved Me, do not take rebirth in this impermanent place of miseries. (8.15) In the verse # 14.20, the Lord has further said, "By transcending these three modes caused by the body, an embodied soul enjoys nectar, freed from birth, death, old age, etc. related miseries. In verse #13.8, Lord Krishna has warned us about the miseries and faults of birth, death, old age and sickness.

But there are ways to reduce and transcend dukkha. First, how do we reduce our suffering? Lord Krishna guides, "One whose eating and recreation are appropriate; one who strives appropriately in activities; one who sleeps and stays awake as required suffers less. (6.17) Then, there are ways to transcend the feeling of dukkha.

Unfortunately, most of us are neither yogis nor the ones who are perfect in eating, recreation, effort-making and sleep. Therefore, tolerance is a must, stated very clearly by Lord Krishna in verse # 2.14, "The contact between senses and their objects are givers of cold, heat, pleasure and misery, being temporary they come and go; tolerate them." Even a yogi gets dukkha but is not disturbed. Therefore, we must be mentally prepared to tolerate our share of suffering. Shouldn't we find out how to go about it? The Bhagavad-Geeta has the answers.



Hardly anyone is seeking answers from this book of eternal wisdom. If anything, none of us are prepared to accept any suffering at all; we must be exempt from all pains and troubles. It is no wonder that one begins to get frustrated, lament and blame luck as if this luck belongs to someone else. It is evident from the verse quoted that tolerance is necessary. If it wasn't, the Lord would not have asked us to tolerate it. And God has also given us a good tolerance capacity, otherwise, it would have been very unfair. How does one tap this latent Shakti that all of us have? The answer is God. Not only God can make our pains tolerable but assure us that we will be able to continue without losing our equanimity.

What is my experience? Like everyone, I also didn't like any suffering. To avoid it, I disciplined myself greatly. Still, suffering came. Having exhausted all possible options, I turned to God for help. Over a long period, the realisation came that suffering is inevitable in this material world. Therefore, the focus must be on somehow making it tolerable such that one does not lose mental peace of one's mind. This God has promised in verse #18.62 when He stated, "In all respects take My shelter. By My mercy, you will achieve supreme peace." And this has started to become possible; my suffering has become tolerable. What more can I ask for?

(The writer is a spiritual teacher)

## Accordinging dignity to entrepreneurs at work



AS MITTAL

After the Jan Vishwas law comes into force, businessmen will be able to act without fear of imprisonment for minor, technical or procedural lapses



On August 12, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu gave assent to Jan Vishwas Bill 2023, to become a law, which was passed in Parliament on August 2. The purpose of this law is to promote the ease of doing business by decriminalising several offences into penalties and eliminating imprisonment for many offences but on its own, the number of provisions this law addresses is statistically insignificant. And yet, this is one of the most awaited reforms and a possible game-changer for India's entrepreneurs.

Since the British era in India, 69,233 compliances regulate doing business under 26,134 imprisonment clauses across the Centre and State governments to put an entrepreneur in jail as a penalty for non-compliance. It plagues India's business compliance regulation framework, and has been haunting entrepreneurs since pre-independence! The compliances criminalization hasn't created honesty but has painful consequences like breeding corruption, sabotaging job creation, and diluting justice. In 76 years of independence, can an entrepreneur hope that The Jan Vishwas Law could envisage redefining the regulatory landscape of the country under the Ease of Doing Business Reforms?

## A significant level of decriminalisation missing

The Jan Vishwas law decriminalises only 113 clauses out of 26,134 total (less than half per cent) imprisonment clauses dealing with the regulation of economic activities and business at an aggregate. According to the Observer Research Foundation's report, "There are 534 imprisonment clauses in Union labour laws, which will change once the Labour Codes are notified, leaving 4,705



FOR ALL OF 76 YEARS SINCE INDEPENDENCE, WE HAVE HEARD THE EXPRESSION 'INSPECTOR RAJ'. OUR JOB CREATORS AND JOB SEEKERS DESERVE BETTER

(The author is Vice-Chairman Sonalika Group, Vice-Chairman (Cabinet minister rank) of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council)

imprisonment clauses awaiting rationalisation".

The compliances related to 42 central acts administered by 19 Ministries/Departments in major ten categories- labour and employment, power, chemical and fertilisers, secretarial, environmental health, and safety, finance, and taxation, industry-specific, commercial and general and regulators such as RBI, SEBI and CBIC resulted in 105 recommendations, of which only six have been accepted; and the balance 98 being specific provisions. Of the hundreds of business laws with imprisonment clauses that could be compoundable, excluded in the Jan Vishwas law-2023, very few of these are mentioned here.

Industrial Disputes Act, 1947: Under section 29, any person who commits a breach of any term of any settlement or award, which is binding on him under this Act, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with a fine of Rs 1000 or with both. Labour Laws: Section 54 -b of The Code on Wages specifies penalties for offences committed by an employer, such as paying less than the due wages or contravening any provision of the Code. A maximum penalty is imprisonment for three months along with a fine of up to Rs one lakh or both.

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961: Under section 6, the violation shall be punishable with imprisonment of three months but may extend to one year and with a fine.

Employee State Insurance Corporation Act, 1948: Section 85 is prescribed for different types of offences in terms of imprisonment of up to one year and a fine of up to Rs 5000. Section 85-A prescribed 3 years imprisonment and not less than 6 months, where an employer deducts contributions from the wages of his employees but does not pay the same to the corporation which amounts to a criminal breach of trust. Goods and Services Tax Act of 2017: Under section 132, where the amount of input tax credit wrongly availed or utilised or the amount of refund wrongly taken exceeds imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years. Companies Act, 2013: Section 447 prescribes punishment for a false entry in any document concerning the company or body corporate, furnishing false statements, mutilation, and destruction of documents, and section 449 for false evidence. The jail terms range from three months to as high as 10 years.

The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981: Under section 39D, Offences for failure to comply and for failure to pay a penalty are to be punishable with imprisonment for a term of two years but which may extend to seven years and with a fine. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986: Under section 15F, where any person fails to pay the penalty or additional penalty within ninety days of such imposition, he shall be liable for imprisonment that may extend to three years or with a fine which may extend to

twice the amount of the penalty or with both.

The Trade Marks Act, 1999: Under section 112 A, Where the person fails to comply with the order made within a period of ninety days from the date of the receipt of the order, shall be punishable with a fine of Rs one lakh or imprisonment for a term may extend to one year or with both. Hence, there is a pressing need to decriminalise numerous penal offences, such as sedition (Section 124A of the IPC), offences under the UAPA and the NDPS Act, anti-conversion laws, and more. It is crucial to assess these and similar offences based on principles and evaluate the need for decriminalization. As a result, the law cannot achieve a significant level of decriminalisation. It is important because decriminalising frivolous compliances is an important policy action of reducing, if not ending.

## The Way Forward

For 76 years since Independence, we have heard the expression 'Inspector Raj'. Our job creators and job seekers deserve better. Imagine a US\$10 trillion GDP aspiration, our law-makers need to up the entrepreneurs' aspirations. Hopefully, the Jan Vishwas Law will speed up to accomplish and simplify business operations throughout the nation to ensure that businesses can operate without fear of imprisonment for minor, technical or procedural lapses by bringing all business reforms under this single overarching legislation, infusing dignity to an entrepreneur.

## Villages along river banks endure frequent floods in Bihar

Flooding is a recurring phenomenon in the State but the losses can be mitigated by a slew of measures like linking rivers

The Diara region, situated approximately 60 kilometres south of Muzaffarpur in Bihar, experiences annual flooding. The recurring floods are primarily attributed to the fertile land alongside the Burhi Gandak River, a tributary of the Ganges. Every year, thousands of hectares of cultivable land in this vicinity are affected by these floods, impacting not only Muzaffarpur but also the broader Burhi Gandak region, which encompasses districts like Western and Eastern Champaran, Siwan, and Gopalganj.

Shivchandra Rai, hailing from the Diara region, highlights that people, mostly men, migrate to other states for employment opportuni-



PHOOLDEV PATEL

ties in the aftermath of floods but do return to their villages just before the floods to ensure the safety of their families. These individuals often construct makeshift dwellings on embankments. In the year 2022, the unprecedented scale of destruction caused by the floods was so overwhelming that, driven by fear, people were unable to return to their homes for an entire year.

While some families do relocate to the city during or after floods, not everyone has the means to do so. Take the case of Baban Singh, a 30-year-old resident of the village of Sohansa in Muzaffarpur. He says, "I cannot abandon my residence and farmland which is near

the riverbank during the flood." Given his situation, he majorly becomes reliant on government assistance.

When we look at the figures of devastation due to floods in Muzaffarpur district, there are around 10 villages in Sahebganj block that are situated along the river. Among them, Hussepur Ratti is one where approximately 3000-4000 residents face a lot of difficulties after the occurrence of floods. In these villages, a significant population lives near the river and depends on the fertile land and livestock for their livelihood. According to Kamlesh Rai, the head of Hussepur Ratti, floods severely disrupt transportation and hinder the provision of essential services such as children's

education, meals, clean drinking water, and sanitation facilities. This inadequacy in basic amenities contributes to the surge in various diseases.

The local elders from these regions recount that in the past, the floods caused by the river were considered blessings for the hundreds of villages situated along its banks. These floods brought fertile silt to the fields, preventing them from becoming waterlogged. After a few days, the floodwaters would recede from the lakes, ponds, and canals, leaving behind enriched soil. As soon as the waters receded, the summer crops of the farmers would thrive. However, the situation has completely reversed today.

The inhabitants of this region confront a range of challenges in their quest for survival, spanning from the constant fear of their homes being swept away by floods to the dearth of local employment opportunities exacerbated by the recurring floods.

Reflecting on the Government's aid, Surendra Rai, the District Councillor points out that the government's aid to flood-affected individuals is short-term and lacks a solid plan for a permanent solution. Conversely, Gudiya Kumari, former head of Chand Kuari Panchayat in Paroo block proposes a solution. She suggests that the government should utilise the funds from the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to offer lasting shelter to those whose

homes face yearly flood damage. These residences would be constructed in elevated areas, safeguarding them from recurring floods.

As of this year, the water levels of several rivers have risen, prompting the government to be on alert. Currently, as per a recent report, the rivers in north Bihar including the Sone, Gandak, Punpun, Bagmati and Ganga, were either flowing above their danger levels or were nearing the danger mark. While the Gandak River is already flowing 0.35 cm above the danger mark near Sidhwalia in Gopalganj, the rising water level of the Bgmati River has already flooded many villages in Muzaffarpur. At least 16 panchayat areas have been cut

off from the district headquarters as the temporary bridge in Katra has been shut due to overflowing of water.

Flood damage in Bihar remains a recurring event every year, putting numerous lives at risk. According to several experts, preventing flood damages demands a rather comprehensive approach. This includes enhancing floodwater drainage systems, fortifying preparedness, managing watersheds, conserving soil, dredging rivers, and maintaining embankments. River-linking projects are also crucial. These measures collectively will empower governments to substantially curtail flood-related losses in both life and property.

# Soldiers seize power in Gabon

PRESIDENT UNDER HOUSE ARREST

AP ■ LIBREVILLE

Mutinuous soldiers claimed to have seized power in Gabon on Wednesday and put the president under house arrest, hours after he was declared the winner in an election extending his family's 55-year rule in the oil-rich Central African nation.

In a video apparently from detention in his residence, President Ali Bongo Ondimba called on people to "make noise" to support him. But crowds instead took to the streets of the capital and sang the national anthem to celebrate the coup attempt against a dynasty accused of getting rich on the country's resource wealth while many of its citizens struggle to scrape by.

"Thank you, army. Finally, we've been waiting a long time for this moment," said Yollande Okomo, standing in front of soldiers from Gabon's elite republican guard, one of the units that staged the takeover.

Bongo, 64, has served two terms since coming to power in 2009 after the death of his father, who ruled the country for 41 years, and there has been widespread discontent with their reign for years. Another group of mutinous soldiers attempted a coup in 2019 but was quickly overpowered.

The former French colony is a member of OPEC, but its oil wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few — and nearly 40% of Gabonese aged 15 to 24 were out of work in 2020, according to the World Bank. Several members of the Bongo family, meanwhile, are under investigation in France, and some face preliminary charges of embezzlement, money laundering and other forms of corruption, according to French media reports.

A spokesman for the soldiers who claimed power Wednesday said that Bongo's "unpredictable, irresponsible governance" risked leading the country into chaos. In a later statement, the coup leaders said people around the president had been arrested for "high betrayal of state institu-

tions, massive embezzlement of public funds (and) international financial embezzlement".

The coup attempt came about one month after mutinous soldiers in Niger seized power from the democratically elected government, and is the latest in a series of coups across West and Central Africa in recent years. The impunity those putschists enjoyed may have inspired the soldiers in Gabon, said Maja Bovcon, senior analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a risk assessment firm. While the move reflects divisions among the ruling elite, it's not clear it would change the status quo. Celebrating soldiers hoisted the head of the republican guard — who is a relative of Bongo — into the air. It's unclear if the military intends to name him as their new leader.

Foreign leaders and analysts warned that the takeover risked bringing instability and only worsening the lives of many Gabonese.

In weekend elections, Bongo faced an opposition coalition led by Albert Ondo

Ossa, an economics professor and former education minister whose surprise nomination came a week before the vote. Every election held in Gabon since the country's return to a multiparty system in 1990 has ended in violence, and there were fears this one would as well. The vote was criticized by international observers, but a relative calm prevailed until the early hours of Wednesday, when Bongo was declared the winner. Minutes later, gunfire was heard in the centre of the capital, Libreville. Later, a dozen uniformed soldiers appeared on state television and announced that they had seized power.

Soon after, crowds poured into the streets. Shopkeeper Viviane Mbou offered the soldiers juice.

"Long live our army," said Jordy Dikaba, a young man walking with his friends on a street lined with armoured policemen.

Libreville is a stronghold of support for the opposition, but it was unclear how the coup attempt was seen in the countryside, where more people

traditionally back Bongo.

The president pleaded for support in a video showing him sat in a chair with a bookshelf behind him. He said he was detained in his residence and his wife and son were elsewhere.

"I'm calling you to make noise, to make noise, to make noise really," he said. The video was shared with The Associated Press by BTP Advisers, a communications firm that helped the president with polling for the election.

The coup leaders have said the president was under house arrest, surrounded by family and doctors.

Ossa told The AP he wasn't ready to comment and was waiting for the situation to evolve.

"Gabon was in a midst of another electoral coup, so a coup chased another coup, and the latest one has more chances of being popular, but let's remain cautious," said Thomas Borrel, a spokesperson for the Paris-based human rights group Survie, which advocates against France's interventionist policies in Africa.

# Indian-origin Tharman in Singapore presidential race

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

People in Singapore will vote on Friday to elect the country's ninth president, with former minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam hoping to be the next Indian-origin Singaporean head of the state in a three-way contest.

Shanmugaratnam, 66, an Indian-origin Singapore-born economist, formally launched his presidential campaign last month with a pledge to evolve the country's culture to keep it a "shining spot" in the world.

He is one of the three candidates chosen under strict criteria. Singapore has a stringent qualification process for candidates vying for the presidency.

This will be Singapore's first contested presidential election in years. On August 11, Singapore said it will hold the presidential election on September 1 if more than one person qualifies to run for the highest office.

If only one candidate had become eligible for the post, he

or she would have been declared president on nomination day on August 22.

This year, candidates from all races can vie for the post but they cannot be affiliated to any political party on the date of nomination.

Therman, who joined politics in 2001, has served in the public sector and ministerial positions with the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) for over two decades. Chinese-origin Singaporeans Ng Kok Song and Tan Kin Lian are the other two contenders.

Ng, 75, is a former chief investment officer with the Government of Singapore Investment Corp (GIC) and former NTUC Income chief.

Tan, 75, is the former chief of the NTUC Income, also a state-owned union-based insurance group.

"The role (of President) is an elected one, it pertains to state resources, the symbolism of the state, and responsibilities, even if the presidency has curtailed discretion," said Associate Professor of Political Science Chong Ja Ian at the National

University of Singapore (NUS). "These qualities make the position political by nature, even if the people running for office and who hold office do not have a formal political party membership," he said.

Tharman supports his qualification to be the next president of the prosperous state by citing his international experience across various fields including pandemic preparedness and human development.

He also has experience in the government and with the city state's foreign reserves, estimated to be over Singapore dollars 2 trillion.

"Put quite simply, I know the whole system of safeguarding and using the reserves inside out. No one can fool me," The Straits Times newspaper quoted him as saying. Ng offered his three qualifications — competence and experience from his time at GIC and the Monetary Authority of Singapore, the de facto central bank, his non-partisan status, and his being a person of trust and responsibility.

# Millions more to get overtime after Biden's proposed rule

AP ■ NEW YORK

The Biden administration will propose a new rule Tuesday that would make 3.6 million more US workers eligible for overtime pay, reviving an Obama-era policy effort that was ultimately scuttled in court.

The new rule, shared with The Associated Press ahead of the announcement, would require employers to pay overtime to so-called white collar workers who make less than \$55,000 a year.

That's up from the current threshold of \$35,568, which has been in place since 2019 when Trump administration raised it from \$23,660. In another significant change, the rule proposes automatic increases to the salary level each year.

Labour advocates and liberal lawmakers have long pushed a strong expansion of overtime protections, which

have sharply eroded over the past decades due to wage stagnation and inflation. The new rule, which is subject to a publicly commentary period and wouldn't take effect for months, would have the biggest impact on retail, food, hospitality, manufacturing and other industries where many managerial employees meet the new threshold.

"I've heard from workers again and again about working long hours, for no extra pay, all while earning low salaries that don't come anywhere close to compensating them for their sacrifices," Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su said in a statement.

The new rule could face pushback from business groups that mounted a successful legal challenge against similar regulation that Biden announced as vice president during the Obama administration, when he sought to raise the thresh-



old to more than \$47,000. But it also falls short of the demands by some liberal lawmakers and unions for an even higher salary threshold than the proposed \$55,000.

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, almost all US hourly workers are entitled to overtime pay after 40 hours a

week, at no less than time-and-half their regular rates. But salaried workers who perform executive, administrative or professional roles are exempt from that requirement unless they earn below a certain level.

The left-leaning Economic Policy Institute has estimated that about 15% of full-time

salaried workers are entitled to overtime pay under the Trump-era policy. That's compared to more than 60% in the 1970s. Under the new rule, 27% of salaried workers would be entitled to overtime pay because they make less than the threshold, according to the Labour Department.

Business leaders argue that setting the salary requirement too high will exacerbate staffing challenges for small businesses, and could force many companies to convert salaried workers to hourly ones to track working time. Business who challenged the Obama-era rule had praised the Trump administration policy as balanced, while progressive groups said it left behind millions of workers.

A group of Democratic lawmakers had urged the Labour Department to raise the salary threshold to \$82,732 by 2026, in line with the 55th percentile of earnings of full-time

salaried workers.

A senior Labour Department official said new rule would bring threshold in line with the 35th percentile of earnings by full-time salaried workers. That's above the 20th percentile in the current rule but less than the 40th percentile in the scuttled Obama-era policy.

The National Association of Manufacturers last year warned last year that it may challenge any expansion of overtime coverage, saying such changes would be disruptive at time of lingering supply chain and labour supply difficulties.

Under the new rule, some 300,000 more manufacturing workers would be entitled to overtime pay, according to the Labour Department. A similar number of retail workers would be eligible, along with 180,000 hospitality and leisure workers, and 600,000 in the health care and social services sector.

# UK air traffic control chaos caused by 'incorrect' data



PTI ■ LONDON

The UK's air traffic control chief has said that "incorrect" flight data was the cause of the massive disruption that affected thousands of passengers stuck in planes and at airports as hundreds of flights to and from the country were cancelled, with knock-on effects continuing on Wednesday.

Martin Rolfe, the chief executive of National Air Traffic Services (NATS) which had faced the "technical issue" that triggered the chaos on Monday, said an initial investigation had found the failure was caused by flight data which its system could not interpret.

He also reiterated the government's previous statement that it was not caused by a cyber-attack.

"Initial investigations into the problem show it relates to some of the flight data we received," said Rolfe. "Our systems, both primary and the back-ups, responded by suspending automatic processing to ensure that no incorrect safety-related information could be presented to an air traffic controller or impact the rest of the air traffic system. There are no indications that this was a cyber-attack," he said.

The air traffic chief reassured passengers that since Monday afternoon all NATS systems have been running "normally" but acknowledged that the "knock-on effects" continue to be felt at a particularly busy travel time of the year over the summer holidays.

Some reports have suggested the chaos may have been caused after a French airline misfiled its flight plan. Without confirming or denying

the reports, Rolfe told broadcasters in interviews that the issue could be related to a single flight plan. "We know it is something in the flight data and we will get to the bottom of it and understand why. We are conducting an investigation, we will conduct it incredibly thoroughly," he added.

NATS — which is in charge of handling 2 million flights a year to and from the UK — said it has identified the issue around the way the system and "several levels of backups" reacted to the incorrect data, which should prevent similar delays in future. It is, meanwhile, working with the UK's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on the investigation and said the conclusions of that report will be made public.

As a result of the incorrect data, flight plans had to be uploaded to systems manually, slowing or cancelling air traffic across the UK. Thousands of passengers were affected, with many forced to spend the night at airports around the world and several still waiting for rescheduled flights.

Analysis of flight data found around 281 flights, including departures and arrivals, were cancelled on Tuesday at the UK's six busiest airports — 75 at Gatwick, 74 at Heathrow, 63 at Manchester, 28 at Stansted, 23 at Luton and 18 at Edinburgh.

The UK's Department of Transport said it had approved night flying, usually restricted, to all UK airports it regulates to help clear the backlog.

The system failure is estimated to cost airlines GBP 100 million, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

# UK Foreign Minister in China to 'manage' relations

RAISE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

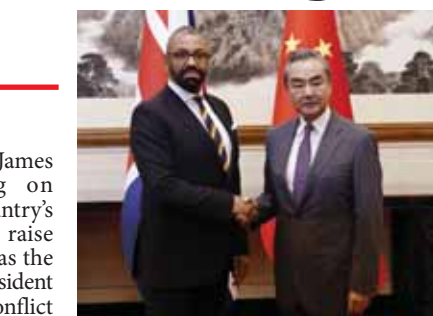
PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, is in Beijing on Wednesday to "manage" the country's relationship with China and raise human rights concerns as well as the country's support for Russian President Vladimir Putin's actions in the conflict with Ukraine.

The first high-level visit in over five years comes amid strained UK-China relations but the British government stressed that the visit aligns its goals of cooperation with allies in the Indo-Pacific and that global issues of concern such as climate change cannot be tackled without engaging with Beijing.

Cleverly is scheduled for bilateral meetings with China's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director of the Office of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission Wang Yi, and Vice President Han Zheng.

"It is important we manage our relationship with China across a range



British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, left, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi shake hands before a meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on Wednesday

of issues," said Cleverly.

"No significant global problem — from climate change to pandemic prevention, from economic instability to nuclear proliferation — can be solved without China. China's size, history and global significance means they cannot be ignored, but that comes with a responsibility on the global stage. That responsibility means China fulfilling its international commitments and obligations," he said.

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said Cleverly's trip to Beijing is aimed at strengthening channels of communication to further and protect British interests.

"The Foreign Secretary will say that China's global significance comes with a responsibility on international security — helping to end Putin's invasion of Ukraine, diffusing tensions in the South China Sea and ceasing malign activity in cyberspace," FCDO said.

"During his visit, the Foreign Secretary will raise Beijing's human rights obligations, including in relation to communities in Xinjiang and Tibet. He will also challenge China on the erosion of autonomy, rights and freedoms in Hong Kong under the Beijing-imposed National Security Law, as well as other UK interests including the sanctions placed on UK MPs," it said.

Speaking to the BBC in Beijing, Cleverly said his visit was an opportunity to speak "directly and unambiguously" on areas of disagreement and "work together where it is in our mutual interest to do so".

# London's plan to charge drivers of polluting cars sparks protests

AP ■ LONDON

London's traffic cameras are under attack. Police say hundreds of license plate-reading cameras have been damaged, disconnected or stolen by opponents of an anti-pollution charge on older vehicles that came into force across the metropolis on Tuesday.

The vandalism by vigilantes calling themselves the Blade Runners shows that emotions are running high over the city's Ultra Low Emission Zone. London's mayor says the measure will cut air pollution that is linked to about 4,000 deaths a year in the British capital. Critics say it's a cash grab that will penalize suburban residents who depend on their cars for work and essential travel.

"The cameras are going to keep coming down," predicted Nick Arlett, who has organized protests against the clean-air charge and says he neither condones nor condemns the sabotage "People are angry."

Moves in the UK to cut air pollution and reduce car use have become a political flashpoint. Supporters say cynical politicians

and conspiracy theorists are exploiting opposition to the plans. The Conservative government has attacked London's vehicle levy, leading to allegations it is backing down on green pledges.

London's plan, known as the ULEZ, levies a 12.50 pound (about \$16) daily charge on most gas cars and vans built before 2006 and on pre-2015 diesel vehicles. Introduced in central London in 2019, it was expanded in 2021 to the city's inner suburbs. From Tuesday it covers all of Greater London, including the sprawling outer suburbs where more than half the city's 9 million people live.

Mayor Sadiq Khan says the expansion means "5 million more Londoners being able to breathe cleaner air."

"It was a difficult decision, but it's a vital one and a right one," he said Tuesday.

But some suburbanites say it will be an unbearable new expense, amid a cost-of-living squeeze that saw inflation top 11% late last year. Outer London has higher levels of car ownership and less public transit than the city centre.

# Muslim call to prayer allowed for public broadcast in NYC without permit

AP ■ NEW YORK

The Muslim call to prayer will ring out more freely in New York City under guidelines announced Tuesday by Mayor Eric Adams, which he said should foster a spirit of inclusivity.

Under the new rules, Adams said, mosques will not need a special permit to publicly broadcast the Islamic call to prayer, or adhan, on Fridays and at sundown during the holy month of Ramadan. Friday is the traditional Islamic holy day, and Muslims break their fast at sunset during Ramadan.

The police department's community affairs bureau will work with mosques to communicate the new guidelines and ensure that devices used to broadcast the adhan are set to

appropriate decibel levels, Adams said.

"For too long, there has been a feeling that our communities were not allowed to amplify their calls to prayer," Adams said.

"Today, we are cutting red tape and saying clearly that mosques and houses of worship are free to amplify their call to prayer on Fridays and during Ramadan without a permit necessary."

Flanked by Muslim leaders at a City Hall news conference, Adams said Muslim New Yorkers "will not live in the shadows of the American dream while I am the mayor of the city of New York."

The adhan is a familiar sound in majority-Muslim countries but is heard less frequently in the United States.

Officials in Minneapolis

made news last year when they moved to allow mosques to broadcast the adhan publicly.

The adhan declares that God is great and proclaims the Prophet Muhammad as his messenger. It exhorts men — women are not required — to go to the closest mosque five times a day for prayer, which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Somaia Ferozi, principal of the Ideal Islamic School in Queens, said New York City's new rules send a positive message to her students.

"Our children are reminded of who they are when they hear the adhan," said Ferozi, who attended Adams' news conference. "Having that echo in a New York City neighbourhood will make them feel part of a community that acknowledges them."

# Hurricane Idalia makes landfall on Florida's west coast

AP ■ CEDAR KEY

Hurricane Idalia has made landfall on Florida's west coast as a dangerous Category 3 storm on Wednesday and was unleashing life-threatening storm surges and rainfall in an area not accustomed to such pummelling.

Idalia came ashore in the lightly populated Big Bend region, where the Florida Panhandle curves into the peninsula.

Florida residents living in vulnerable coastal areas were ordered to pack up and leave as Idalia gained strength in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. And those who didn't were warned to find a safe place while the storm moves through.

"Don't put your life at risk by doing anything dumb at this point," Gov. Ron DeSantis said at a news conference Wednesday morning. "This



thing's powerful. If you're inside, just hunker down until it gets past you."

Storm surge could rise as high as 15 feet (4.5 metres) in some places.

The National Weather Service in Tallahassee called Idalia "an unprecedented event" since no major hurricanes on record have ever

passed through the bay abutting the Big Bend.

The state, still dealing with lingering damage from last year's Hurricane Ian, feared disastrous results.

But not everyone was heeding the warning to leave.

Andy Bair, owner of the Island Hotel on Cedar Key, said he intended to "babysit" his

bed-and-breakfast, which predates the Civil War.

The building has not flooded in the almost 20 years he has owned it, not even when Hurricane Hermine flooded the city in 2016.

"Being a caretaker of the oldest building in Cedar Key, I just feel kind of like I need to be here," Bair said.

"We've proven time and again that we're not going to wash away. We may be a little uncomfortable for a couple of days, but we'll be OK eventually." Idalia had grown into a Category 2 system on Tuesday afternoon and became a Category 3 just hours earlier Wednesday before strengthening to a Category 4 and then weakening slightly to a high-end Category 3.

The National Weather Service in Tallahassee called Idalia "an unprecedented event" since no major hurricanes on record have ever passed through the bay abutting the Big Bend.

Hurricanes are measured on a five category scale, with a Category 5 being the strongest.

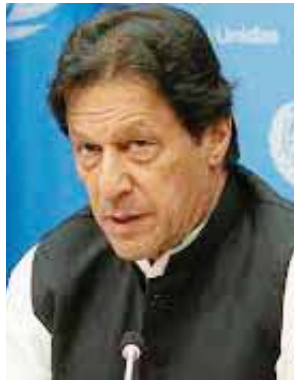
A Category 3 storm is the first on the scale considered a major hurricane and the National Hurricane Centre says a Category 4 storm brings "catastrophic damage."



Imran's judicial remand extended till Sept 13

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Aspecial court on Wednesday extended till September 13 the judicial remand of Imran Khan in a case related to the alleged disclosure of state secrets, dashing the beleaguered former Pakistan prime minister's hopes of quick release from jail.



his conviction in the Toshakhana corruption case.

Judge Abual Hasnat Zulqarnain, who arrived at Attock jail in the Punjab province to conduct the hearing, issued the order in the case of the missing cipher, a classified state document that Khan had waved during a political rally ahead of his ouster from office last year.

The hearing of the case took place at Attock District Jail following approval by the Law ministry amid security concerns expressed by the Interior ministry.

Authorities decided on Tuesday to hold the hearing of the case inside the Attock jail where 70-year-old Khan has been kept since August 5 after

Khan will remain in jail.

The same judge ordered Khan's one-day remand on Tuesday and ordered that he be presented for hearing on Wednesday.

Khan's five-member legal team — headed by Advocate Salman Safdar — attended the court hearing in the prison, the report said, adding that initially the team was denied access, but was later allowed to enter and meet Khan inside the jail.

Khan's party said only three lawyers were allowed to represent the former prime minister during the hearing. Earlier, PTI criticised the decision to conduct hearing in Attock jail.

"When Imran Khan requested technology be used for his daily hearings it was spun as if he was trying to avoid them. Now, the hearing is ordered from his jail cell. Why can't it be live on TV or at least in presence of his friends and family," PTI spokesperson Zulfikar Bukhari said in a statement.

physical remand, Qureshi was presented before the special court, recently established to hear cases filed under the Official Secrets Act, amid high security. Special prosecutors Zulfiqar Naqvi and Shah Khawar appeared before the court while Qureshi's legal team — comprising Advocate Babar Awan, Shoaib Shaheen and Umair Naizi — was present as well, the Dawn newspaper reported. During the hearing, prosecutor Naqvi urged the court to grant the FIA further physical remand of Qureshi. However, the court rejected the request and instead, sent the PTI leader back to the Adiala jail on a 14-day judicial remand. Qureshi, via his legal team, also filed a post-arrest bail petition in the cipher case earlier in the day. Subsequently, the special court issued notices to the respondents, including the FIA, seeking responses till Saturday, when it will hear the plea. PTI chief Khan, 70, has for long mentioned the missing cable as evidence of a "foreign conspiracy" to remove him as the prime minister in April last year.

Qureshi, 67, a close aide of jailed former prime minister Khan and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party's Vice Chairman, was arrested on August 19 under the Official Secrets Act for violating the secrecy of the official cable sent by the Pakistani embassy in the US to the foreign office when he was the foreign minister.

The two-time foreign minister was later remanded by the special court in Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) custody for four days till August 25. On Friday last, the court extended his remand by three days. On Monday, the court extended Qureshi's physical remand by two days.

In the afternoon, upon the completion of his two-day

Court sends Qureshi to 14-day judicial remand

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Aspecial court on Wednesday sent Pakistan's former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on a 14-day judicial remand in connection with the leakage of a confidential diplomatic cable that was allegedly misused for political purposes by the previous Imran Khan-led government.

Qureshi, 67, a close aide of jailed former prime minister Khan and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party's Vice Chairman, was arrested on August 19 under the Official Secrets Act for violating the secrecy of the official cable sent by the Pakistani embassy in the US to the foreign office when he was the foreign minister.

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US emphasises 'timely and fair' elections in Pakistan

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has underscored the significance of holding "timely" and "free and fair" elections in Pakistan, as the possibility of a delayed poll until the next year looms in the cash-strapped country.

The US State Department in a press statement on Tuesday said acting Deputy Secretary of State and Under Secretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland had a telephonic conversation with acting Pakistani Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani.

During the conversation held on Tuesday, Nuland congratulated Jilani on his appointment as the foreign minister and discussed broadening and deepening the US-Pakistan partnership on issues of mutual concern, it said.

They also discussed matters related to Pakistan's economic stability, prosperity, and continued engagement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), state department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

Nuland and Jilani also "discussed the importance of timely, free and fair elections" in Pakistan, Miller said.

General elections are scheduled to be held in Pakistan within 90 days after the dissolution of the National Assembly, which was prematurely dissolved on August 9.

However, the polls meant to be held within 90 days are likely to be delayed as the government has announced that the elections could take place only after a new census was completed and new constituency boundaries are drawn.

The exercise could take about four months to complete, meaning that polls may be delayed till next year.

The US has recently been quite active in commenting on the political developments in Pakistan.

Earlier this month, Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar assured the US of "a free and fair election process" in the country, in response to a congratulatory tweet by US Secretary of State Antony

Blinken. Congratulating Kakar for becoming Pakistan's interim prime minister, Blinken tweeted, "As Pakistan prepares for free and fair elections, in accordance with its constitution and the rights to freedom of speech and assembly, we will continue to advance our shared commitment to economic prosperity."

Previously also Blinken issued a statement after cash-strapped Pakistan managed to secure a standby agreement with the IMF.

"We stand by the Pakistani people during these hard times and welcome the International Monetary Fund's approval of a program to support Pakistan. We urge Pakistan to continue working with @IMFNews toward macroeconomic reforms and sustainable economic recovery," Blinken tweeted after the Washington-based global lender agreed to give a USD 3 billion bailout to Pakistan on June 29.

Jailed prime minister Imran Khan has been alleging the US of hatching a conspiracy to topple his government.

Russian rocket kills 2 in Kyiv after Moscow alleges biggest drone attack by Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Russia accused Ukraine of launching what appeared to be the biggest drone attack on Russian soil since Moscow invaded 18 months ago, followed by a Russian attack on Kyiv that Ukrainian officials said killed two people early Wednesday.

Drones hit an airport in Russia's western Pskov region near the border with Estonia and Latvia, and started a massive fire, the governor and local media reported. More drones were shot down over Oryol, Bryansk, Ryazan, Kaluga and the Moscow region surrounding the Russian capital, according to the Defence Ministry.

Pskov regional Gov Mikhail Vedernikov ordered all flights to and from the airport in the region's namesake capital cancelled Wednesday so the damage could be assessed during daylight.

The airport strike, which was first reported minutes before midnight, damaged four Il-76 transport aircraft, Russia's state news agency Tass reported, citing emergency officials.

Footage and images posted on



Local residents pass by debris in Kyiv on Wednesday that fell down from their damaged house after a Russian massive rocket attack

social media showed smoke billowing over the city of Pskov and a large blaze. Vedernikov said there were no casualties, and the fire has been contained. Unconfirmed media reports said between 10 and 20 drones could have attacked the airport.

In Kyiv, falling debris killed two people and injured another after Russia launched a "massive combined attack" on the Ukrainian capital using drones and missiles, head of the military administration Sergei Popko wrote on Telegram.

In what Popko said was the biggest

attack since spring, Russia launched Shahed drones at Kyiv from various directions and then targeted the capital with missiles from Tu-95MS strategic aircraft. He said more than 20 targets had been brought down by Ukraine's air defences. It was unclear how many had been launched.

The deaths and injury occurred when debris fell on a commercial building in the Shevchenkivskiy district, Popko said.

Explosions in Ukraine were also reported in the southern city of Odesa and the Cherkasy region.

'Deliberate wrongdoing' a possibility behind Prigozhin's plane crash: Kremlin

MOSCOW (AP): The Kremlin said Wednesday that "deliberate wrongdoing" is among the possible causes of the plane crash that killed mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin last week.

Speaking to reporters during his daily conference call, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov noted that "different versions" of what happened exist and "are being considered," including "let's put this way, deliberate wrongdoing."

He urged reporters to wait until the probe by the Russian Investigative Committee is concluded, and said there can't be an international investigation into it.

The committee said last week it has opened a criminal case on charges of flight safety violations, a standard charge used in plane crash investigations in Russia when there is no immediate reason to suspect foul play.

A business jet carrying Prigozhin, founder and leader of the private military force Wagner, and his top lieutenants crashed halfway between Moscow and St. Petersburg last Wednesday, killing all 10 people on board.

The crash occurred exactly two months after Prigozhin mounted a short-lived armed rebellion against Russia's military leadership, posing the biggest challenge to President Vladimir Putin's authority in his 23-year rule.

The Kremlin has denied involvement in the crash. Prigozhin was buried in St. Petersburg, his hometown, in a private ceremony that was shrouded in secrecy until Tuesday evening, when the mercenary leader's spokespeople revealed the location of his grave.

Wildfire in Greece uncontrollable despite firefighting efforts

AP ■ ATHENS

The European Union's largest wildfire since the bloc started keeping records more than two decades ago showed no signs of abating Wednesday in northeastern Greece despite the efforts of a multinational firefighting force on the ground and a fleet of water-dropping aircraft.

Now in its 12th day, the blaze that began near the port city of Alexandroupolis on August 19 joined with smaller fires to form an inferno that has decimated homes and vast tracts of land near the border with Turkey.

The blaze led to the evacuations of thousands of people and was blamed for 20 of Greece's 21 fire-related deaths last week.

The 475 firefighters on the ground, backed by 11 planes and five helicopters, were trying to tame the flames now concentrated deep in the forest of the Dadia National Park.

With around 81,000 hectares (200,000 acres) of land burned, according to the European Union's Copernicus Emergency Management Service, the blaze is the largest single wildfire any

member nation has experienced since the European Forest Fire Information System started keeping records in 2000.

Copernicus is the EU space program's Earth observation component and uses satellite imagery to provide mapping data.

Dozens of new wildfires have broken out each day in Greece in recent weeks, with the vast majority extinguished in their early stages. But several grew into major fires that have burned for days, triggering the precautionary evacuations of thousands of people.

Hundreds of firefighters from Romania, France, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Albania, Slovakia and Serbia have helped battle the blazes, along with 12 aircraft from Germany, Sweden, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France and Spain.

A major fire on the outskirts of Athens raged for at least a week on the slopes of Mount Parnitha but was limited Wednesday to occasional flare-ups inside a forest that is one of the last sizable green areas near the Greek capital, the fire department said.

US lawmakers, Indian-Americans congratulate India on Chandrayaan-3 success

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

An influential US lawmaker and eminent Indian-American on Tuesday congratulated India for a successful moon landing.

India on August 23 scripted history as ISRO's ambitious third Moon mission Chandrayaan-3's Lander Module touched down on the lunar surface, making it only the fourth country to accomplish the feat, and first to reach the uncharted south pole of Earth's only natural satellite.

"Congratulations to India for its successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the moon," said Congressman Brad Sherman, a senior Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Congressional India Caucus.

"India is the first country to ever land a craft on this part of the lunar surface," he said.

Chandrayaan-3's landing site is also closer to the moon's south pole than any other spacecraft in history has ventured. The south pole region is considered an area of key

scientific and strategic interest for spacefaring nations, as scientists believe the region to be home to water ice deposits.

Arun Kumar, managing partner, Celesta Capital, and a former Obama administration official, said the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 marks India's stride towards aerospace excellence.

The country's space economy is charting an impressive trajectory, underpinned by an ambitious vision and robust collaboration between the government and private sector.

This remarkable growth story finds its roots in several key factors from initiatives like the forthcoming human lunar mission to the integration of space tech in defense applications, he said.

"Adding to this momentum is a thriving ecosystem of the nation's space tech startups spanning diverse segments such as satellite applications, ground equipment, and launch vehicles. As investors increasingly direct their focus towards India's burgeoning deep

tech sectors, we envision multiple major enterprises emerging within India's space tech landscape," Kumar said.

The success of Chandrayaan-3 reflects not just a giant leap in India's space capabilities, but also reflects its evolving stature on the global stage, said Ronak D. Desai, a leading India practitioner at Paul Hastings LLP. This achievement secures India's position in this exclusive pantheon of nations who have transcended earth's boundaries into the frontiers of space, he said.

"India's voyage to the moon isn't merely about reaching space; it speaks of a nation's audacity to dream, its capacity to innovate, and its unwavering commitment to expanding the boundaries of human potential," Desai said.

"With its moon landing, India has elegantly combined the intricacies of hard technology with soft power, achieving something that is simultaneously deeply national yet profoundly universal in its resonance.

Six men killed in ambush in Mexico

AP ■ TAPACHULA

Prosecutors in southern Mexico said Tuesday that at least six men were killed in an apparent ambush in a township near the Guatemalan border that is known as a migrant smuggling route.

Prosecutors in the southern state of Chiapas said the killings occurred Tuesday along a rural road in the township of Siltepec, about 50 kilometers from the border with Guatemala. The victims all appear to have been riding in the same pickup truck when attackers opened fire on them from the roadside. According to videos posted on social media, most of the victims appeared to be wearing black T-shirts and jeans with short haircuts.

Officials did not identify the victims and did not disclose their nationalities and whether they were migrants. The area has long been known as a migrant smuggling route. But it has also become the scene recently of bloody turf battles between the Jalisco and Sinaloa cartels for control of the smuggling and extortion businesses.

Bodies of three US Marines killed in Australian aircraft crash retrieved

AP ■ CANBERRA

The bodies of three US Marines killed in a tiltrotor aircraft crash during a training exercise in Australia were retrieved from the crash scene while another Marine remained in critical condition, the Marine Corps said Tuesday.

Those killed were from Illinois, Virginia and Colorado.

The Marine V-22B Osprey with 23 Marines on board crashed Sunday in tropical forest on Melville Island while taking part in Exercise Predators Run, a drill that includes the militaries of Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and East Timor.

All 20 survivors were injured

and were flown by rescue aircraft 80 kilometers south to the city of Darwin within hours of the crash. Three of those Marines remained in Royal Darwin Hospital on Tuesday, one in critical condition and two stable, a Marines statement said.

The three casualties had been declared dead at the crash site and their bodies were returned to Darwin late Tuesday, a statement said.

Up to 2,500 US Marines have been based in Darwin for six months a year since 2012 as part of the US military pivot to Asia to counter China's growing influence in the region.

Col. Brendan Sullivan, com-

manding officer of the Marine Rotation Force-Darwin, said the Marines' focus was on supporting the recovery of wreckage and investigating the cause.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of three respected and beloved members of the MRF-D family," Sullivan said in a statement.

"Our thoughts and prayers remain with the families and with all involved," Sullivan added.

The three killed were Osprey pilot Capt. Eleanor V. Beau, 29, originally of Belleville, Illinois; Cpl. Spencer R. Collart, 21, from Arlington, Virginia; and Maj. Tobin J. Lewis, 37, from Jefferson, Colorado.

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that Mr. Ramshankar, Mohd. Gyaas Khan, Mohd. Sharaf Khan & Ram Dulara Sarin Memorial Public School Samli, and has been registered on 02/03/2023...

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (Established Under State Legislation Act No. 21 of 1969) "University with Potential with Excellence" & "Category-I University" recognized by UGC Expression of Interest (EOI)

Ramaswamy pitches for stronger US-India relationship

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian American Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has called for stronger relationships with India, South Korea and Japan to reduce US economic dependence on China and Taiwan.

Ramaswamy, 38, whose poll numbers have surged following the maiden Republican presidential primary debate last week, spelt out his plans and foreign policy views on Tuesday.

He attacked another Indian American Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley, who had slammed him for his inexperience on foreign policy issues.

"We will enter a stronger partnership with India that involves an Indian commitment to close the Malacca Strait in the event of a near-term conflict with Taiwan, and enter stronger partnerships with other allies including South Korea and Japan to reduce our economic dependence on China and



Taiwan," Ramaswamy said.

The entrepreneur-turned-politician said he favours strategic clarity and advocated that the US must defend Taiwan vigorously until America achieves semiconductor independence, then resume the posture of strategic ambiguity when the stakes are lower for the US.

"The American way of life depends on leading-edge semiconductors manufactured in Taiwan, and we can't risk China

gaining near-total leverage over the entire US economy," he said.

"By saying that we will defend Taiwan, the US can strongly deter China from blockading or invading the island in the near term. Meantime, Taiwan should more than double its own military expenditures to a more rational level of 4 to 5 per cent of its gross domestic product," he said.

He said the US should rapidly arm and train Taiwan with Anti-Access/Area Denial weapons while running at least one Destroyer warship through the Taiwan Strait each week.

The US should also fortify its own homeland defence, which is at present dangerously vulnerable to major conflicts with China, he said, adding this includes improving nuclear, super electromagnetic pulse, cyber and space defence capabilities.

His campaign said that Ramaswamy is the only US Presidential candidate to date who has clearly stated that the US will

defend Taiwan.

"I am the only Presidential candidate willing to state what is necessary: we will defend Taiwan. The US currently doesn't even recognise Taiwan as a nation. Democrats and Republicans both unquestioningly endorse the 'one China' policy and embrace "strategic ambiguity" toward the island," Ramaswamy said.

Hitting out at Haley, Ramaswamy's campaign in a statement said that in a desperate attempt to raise funds for her languishing establishment campaign, the former US ambassador to the UN was intentionally lying about Ramaswamy.

Haley has blasted Ramaswamy for not backing US allies.

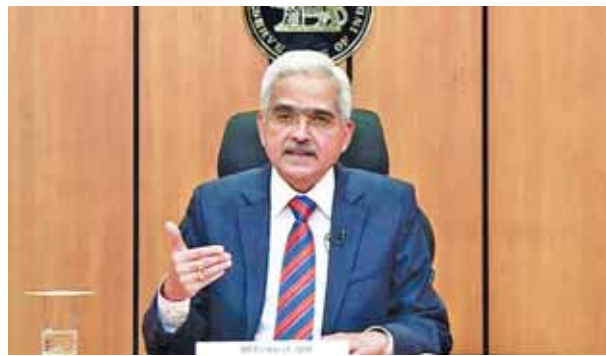
According to his campaign, Haley flatly lied on Fox News that "Ramaswamy said he would abandon Israel, those were his words" and that "he wants to go and stop funding Israel."

"This is false," his campaign asserted in a late-night statement.

Table with 9 columns: S.No., Particulars, Tender No., Opening Date, Closing Date, Bid Due Date, Bid Opening Date, Bid Opening Time, Bid Opening Place. Includes details for water purification and manhole covers.

# Follow-up rigorously to recover bad loans, RBI Guv tells UCBs

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday asked urban cooperative banks to go for rigorous follow-up of large NPA borrowers for effective recovery, and not to camouflage their actual financial position by innovative accounting practices. In a statement, the RBI said the Governor held a conference of directors on the boards of select large urban cooperative banks (UCBs) in Mumbai Zone. The Reserve Bank has started engaging with the directors of its regulated entities functioning in different segments of the financial system. Two separate conferences were held with directors on boards of public sector banks and private sector banks in May 2023. The governor reinforced the need for board's involvement in upholding rigorous credit

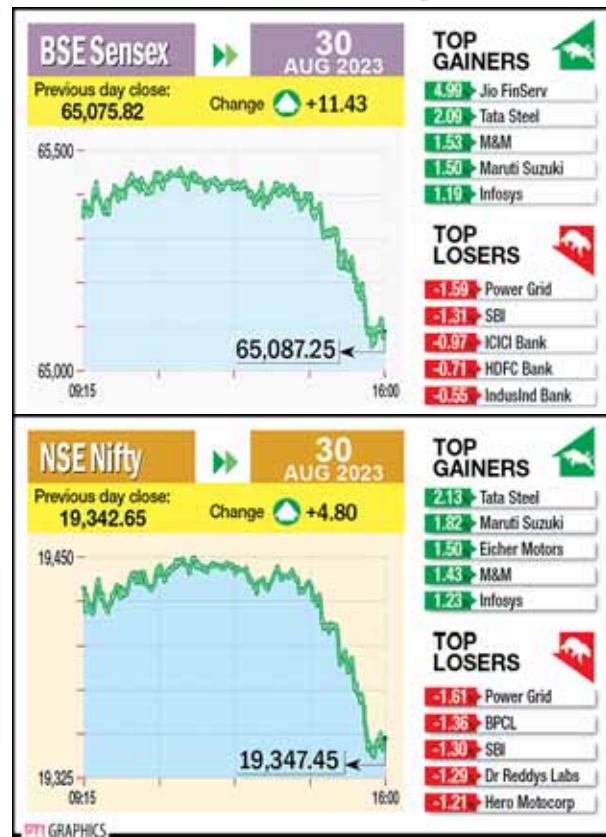


risk management including robust underwriting standards, effective post sanction monitoring, timely recognition and mitigation of incipient stress, rigorous follow-up of large NPA borrowers for effective recovery, and maintaining adequate provisioning. "He emphasised that the role of Directors is very significant in ensuring the integrity and transparency of financial

statements, and cautioned against use of innovative accounting practices to camouflage the actual financial position," the central bank said. Das urged the Boards to be more proactive in asset liability management and the necessity of managing liquidity risk in a more systematic manner. He also stressed that the Board's role is pivotal in establishing a robust IT and cyber security infrastructure and availability of requisite skills at the bank level. He emphasised the management of the UCBs should enjoy the required autonomy in their functioning. The RBI further said the governor stressed that the quality of governance was the most important aspect in ensuring stability of individual banks and urged the Directors of UCBs to further strengthen governance practices. Going forward, the Reserve Bank would be convening similar Conferences of Directors on Boards of other Urban Cooperative Banks in other regions of the country. Deputy governors M Rajeshwar Rao and Swaminathan J, along with executive directors representing the RBI's Departments of supervision, regulation and enforcement, and other senior officials, also participated in the Conference.

# Sensex, Nifty retreat from early highs to end flat; power, banking shares decline

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty retreated from early highs to close on a flat note on Wednesday due to fag-end selling in banking and power shares amid mixed global cues. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 0.02 per cent or 11.43 points higher at 65,087.25 points, marking its third straight day of gains. Similar trends were witnessed on the NSE where the broader 50-share Nifty inched up 0.02 per cent or 4.80 points to settle at 19,347.45 points. Most of the European stocks were trading in the negative territory while Asian shares ended the day on a mixed note. "European stocks fell after the latest round of price data suggested inflation may not yet be fully on the retreat in the euro region. Asian markets too gave up some of their morning gains," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities said. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said positive sentiment initially propelled domestic equities, buoyed by softer US labour market data that caused a retreat in US bond yields, alleviating concerns about rate hikes. "This positive outlook was reinforced by Chinese banks' move to reduce existing mortgage rates, favourably impacting Indian metal stocks. However, gains were tempered as the day progressed, primarily due to weakness in global markets



19,334.75 points. Jio Financial Services (4.99 per cent), Tata Steel (2.09 per cent), Maruti Suzuki (1.75 per cent), Eicher Motors (1.24 per cent) and M&M (1.19 per cent) were among the gainers in the broader index. "Markets traded volatile and ended almost unchanged amid mixed cues. After the gap-up start, the Nifty oscillated in a narrow band and selling pressure in the final hours trimmed all the gains," Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. A mixed trend continued on the sectoral front wherein metal and realty posted decent gains while energy and banking remained subdued. In the broader market, BSE Midcap index rose by 0.55 per cent while the smallcap index spurted by 0.83 per cent. In Asian markets, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 advanced 0.3 per cent, South Korea's Kospi rose 0.4 per cent and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled unchanged. The Shanghai Composite inched up 0.1 per cent. In Europe, France's CAC 40 fell 0.1 per cent in early trading while Germany's DAX slipped nearly 0.3 per cent. Britain's FTSE 100 was up added 0.1 per cent. Brent crude futures rose 0.55 per cent to USD 85.96 per barrel. On Tuesday, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) were the net buyers, purchasing shares worth Rs 61.51 crore, as per BSE data.

# Home textile industry to see 7-9% rise in revenues this fiscal: Report

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Home textile industry's revenues are expected to rise 7-9 per cent this fiscal as the sector regains global share following a correction in domestic cotton prices and restocking by big-box retailers in major overseas markets, says a report. In the last financial year, their revenues had declined 15 per cent. According to the Crisil Ratings report released on Wednesday, operating profitability of the industry will improve 150-200 basis points to 14-14.5 per cent this fiscal, due to lower raw material cost and better operating leverage, but will still hover below the pre-pandemic levels. Improved operating performance will also have the industry maintaining a stable credit outlook despite moderate capex, it noted. The report is based on an analysis of 40 companies, accounting for 40-45 per cent of the sectoral revenues. As much as 70-75 per cent of the industry-wide revenues are from exports, with the US, its biggest market, accounting for more than half of it. After strong headwinds in



exports last fiscal, the domestic home textile industry is on the road to recovery on the back of domestic cotton prices, which had risen past international prices and reached Rs 1 lakh per candy in May 2022. The same has reduced to Rs 55,000 per candy, helping the industry regain competitiveness. Moreover, orders from big-box retailers in the US will increase this fiscal as the inventory, piled up in the last financial year, depletes on easing global supply chain challenges, and the gradual sales recovery being seen over the past few months, the report said. Mohit Makhija, a senior director at the rating agency, said



that with domestic raw material prices gaining competitiveness now, restocking by big-box US retailers, and sustained China plus one policy of global buyers, revenue will rebound for export-oriented domestic home textile makers this fiscal. This is reflected in the recent increase in the country's share in home textile imports by the US to 47 per cent in the first half of 2023 after falling to 44 per cent in 2022 from 48 per cent in 2021. However, capacity utilisation will improve only slowly due to the recent large capacity addition amid moderate demand growth, which will have operating margins still printing in below the pre-pandemic levels, the report said.

**FM asks RRBs to remove duplication of PMJDY accounts**  
**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday asked Regional Rural Banks to make efforts to remove duplication of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts. During the review meeting with heads of RRBs, the finance minister emphasised the need to increase penetration under Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) and financial inclusion and stated that a roadmap has to be prepared for completing the designated activities in a timebound manner. The minister urged the RRBs to remove duplication of PMJDY accounts and facilitate storage facility for apple growers particularly in J&K and Himachal Pradesh, an official statement said. During the review meeting of Regional Rural Banks of Northern Region here, the Finance Minister emphasised on digital capability upgradation of RRBs and instructed MD and CEO Punjab National Bank (PNB) to ensure that all RRBs by the bank to acquire digital onboarding capability by November 1, 2023. The Centre has 50 per cent stake in RRBs while sponsor banks and state governments own 35 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively. The finance minister also asked banks to map RRBs with MSME clusters and put greater thrust on increasing network of rural branches in cluster areas identified by the MSME ministry. Along with Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi, Additional Secretary and senior officials of the ministry, representatives of Reserve Bank and Nabard and other senior government officials of states and bank representatives were present at the meeting.

# Govt likely to extend export benefits under RoDTEP scheme for pharma, steel, chemical sectors

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
The government is expected to extend export benefits under the RoDTEP scheme to iron and steel, chemicals and pharmaceutical sectors beyond September 30, according to a senior official. In December 2022, the government extended the benefits under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) Scheme to chemicals, pharmaceuticals and products of iron and steel till September 30 this year. "As exports are not doing good for the last few months, there is a demand to extend it for about six months till March 2024. It is under consideration. We may extend it," the official said. These three sectors were late entrants into the scheme that aims to refund duties, taxes and levies at the central, state and local level that gets added to the cost of products meant for exports. This scheme is a replacement for the



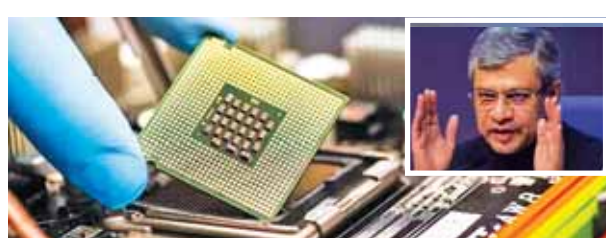
Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) which ended last year. At present, over 10,342 export items get the RoDTEP benefits. The incentive is paid in the form of transferable duty credit scrip which can be used to pay import duties or sold in the market by exporters. When the RoDTEP scheme was first announced in late 2020 and notified in August 2021, these sectors were not included because they were already performing well on the export front. From last year, the country's exports started facing global headwinds due to glob-

al uncertainties and disruption in supply chains due to Russia-Ukraine war. Drugs and pharmaceuticals accounted for 5.68 per cent of India's exports in 2022-23 at USD 23.5 billion. Exports of iron and steel products were at USD 9.7 billion last year or 2.17 per cent of the total merchandise exports. Share of chemicals in exports in the last fiscal was 3.33 per cent or USD 14.9 billion. During April-July this fiscal, exports of organic and inorganic chemical declined 15.17 per cent to USD 9.1 billion. Iron and steel exports rose 8.81 per cent to USD 9.9 billion while shipments of drugs and pharmaceuticals have shown a growth of 3.99 per cent to USD 8.71 billion. However, in July pharma exports had declined. In 2022-23 the RoDTEP supported USD 450 billion worth of exports at the cost of Rs 13,020 crore. While in 2021-22 the scheme aided USD 421 billion of exports and cost Rs 12,100 crore.

# KidZania celebrates 10 years in India, to add 7-8 new centres in next decade



**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
As it completes 10 years in India, global indoor theme park KidZania has set sights on further expansion in the country by adding 7-8 new centres during the next decade, a top company official said on Wednesday. Some of these centres might be smaller, KidZania India Founder and Promoter Paras Chandaria said, adding that if smaller formats become successful, these can be replicated in Tier-II cities going forward. "We see huge opportunities in India and expect to open 7-8 theme parks in the next 8-10 years," Chandaria told PTI. "Now, we are looking at five cities — Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Pune and Hyderabad — for the next phase of expansion with a capex of USD 50 million (about Rs 400 crore)," Chandaria said. "In the next 8-10 years, India will become the largest market for KidZania in the world, surpassing Mexico which has four centres. Similarly, we will also explore Tier-II markets with high children population for further expansion," Chandaria added. KidZania is headquartered in Cuajimalpa city of Mexico. Currently, there are two KidZania centres in India — one in Mumbai and another in New Delhi — and the total footfall has crossed 7 million in the last 10 years.



# 32 firms applied under PLI IT hardware scheme: Vaishnav

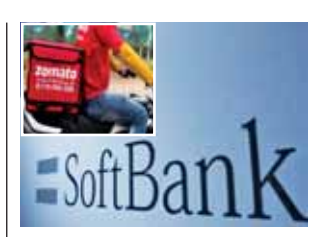
**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
As many as 32 companies, including global biggies like HP, Dell and Lenovo, have applied under the Production Linked Incentive scheme for IT hardware, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on Wednesday. The expected incremental production under the scheme is pegged at Rs 3.35 lakh crore, said Vaishnav, Minister for Electro-

ronics and IT. "India is emerging as a trusted supply chain partner and value added partner... Companies are happy to come to India for manufacturing and design," Vaishnav said at a media briefing. Overall, 32 applications have been received under PLI for IT hardware scheme so far, Vaishnav said describing it as a good response. The response is more than anticipated, he said.

# Rural demand vulnerable due to higher food inflation, lower income: Report

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
The country's rural demand is vulnerable and could be further impacted by the "dual blows" of lower income and high food inflation due to an erratic monsoon, according to a domestic rating agency. The upcoming festivities may lead to a rise in consumption demand but such an increase will depend on the extent of the skewed monsoon impact, CareEdge Ratings said in a report released on Tuesday. Consumption, including rural demand, is considered an important factor influencing

the overall GDP growth in the country. Some FMCG players have already flagged concerns on the rural demand front. "Rural demand remains vulnerable and can be hit by a dual blow of higher food inflation and lower income," the rating agency said. It said the risk to farm income remains high as uneven distribution of monsoon has affected the sowing of certain crops and can adversely affect yields. The cost of living is also rising due to high food inflation and expected hit to agriculture due to an erratic monsoon, it added. Monsoon has been deficient so far and there is no certainty if the situation will improve. The risk to rabi — the winter crop sowing — remains high as reservoir levels remain significantly below the 10-year average in eastern and southern India, the agency said. The government is wary of the troubles on the inflation front and is taking steps to limit price rise, the rating agency said, adding that withdrawal of pandemic-era revenue expenditure led by a steep reduction in subsidy bills will further squeeze rural consumers' wallets.



# Softbank sells 1.16% stake in Zomato for ₹947 crore

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Japanese conglomerate Softbank on Wednesday divested a 1.16 per cent stake in online food ordering company Zomato for Rs 947 crore through an open market transaction. Softbank through its affiliate SVF Growth (Singapore) Pte offloaded the shares of Zomato on the National Stock Exchange. Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund (MF), Axis MF, Franklin Templeton MF, Kotak Mahindra MF, Societe Generale, Morgan Stanley Asia Singapore, Nomura Singapore, Goldman Sachs and Ghisallo Master Fund LP were among the buyers of shares of Zomato. SVF Growth (Singapore) Pte disposed of 10,00,00,000 shares, amounting to a 1.16 per cent stake in Gurgaon-headquartered Zomato, as per the block deal data available with the NSE. The shares were sold at an average price of Rs 94.70 apiece, taking the aggregate transaction size to Rs 947 crore. Post the transaction, Softbank's shareholding has declined to 2.19 per cent from 3.35 per cent stake at the end of June quarter, shareholding data showed with the bourse. On Wednesday, shares of Zomato jumped 5.28 per cent to close at Rs 99.70 apiece on the NSE.

# US economic growth for last quarter is revised down to 2.1 pc annual rate

**AP ■ WASHINGTON**  
The US economy expanded at a 2.1 per cent annual pace from April through June, showing continued resilience in the face of higher borrowing costs for consumers and businesses, the government said Wednesday in a downgrade from its initial estimate. The government had previously estimated that the economy expanded at a 2.4 per cent annual rate last quarter. The Commerce Department's second estimate of growth last quarter marked a slight acceleration from a 2 per cent annual growth rate from January through March. Though the economy has been slowed by the Federal Reserve's strenuous drive to tame inflation with interest rate hikes, it has managed to keep expanding, with employers still hiring and consumers still spending. Wednesday's report on the nation's gross domestic product — the total out-

put of goods and services — showed that growth last quarter was driven by upticks in consumer spending and business investment. The American economy — the world's largest — has proved surprisingly durable in the midst of the Fed's aggressive campaign to stamp out a resurgence of inflation, which last year hit a four-decade high. Since March of last year, the Fed has raised its benchmark rate 11 times, making borrowing for everything from cars to homes to business expansions much more expensive and prompting widespread predictions of a coming recession. Since peaking at 9.1 per cent in June 2022, year-over-year inflation has fallen more or less steadily. Last month, it came in at 3.2 per cent — a significant improvement though still above the Fed's 2 per cent inflation target. Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core inflation in July



matched the smallest monthly rise in nearly two years. Since the Fed began raising rates, the economy has been bolstered by a consistently healthy job market. Employers have added a robust average of 258,000 jobs a month this year, though that average has slowed over the past three months to 218,000. On Tuesday, a report from the government added to evidence that the job market is gradually weakening: It showed that employers posted far fewer job openings in July and that the

number of people who quit their jobs tumbled for a second straight month. (When fewer people quit their jobs, it typically suggests that they aren't as confident in finding a new one.) Still, job openings remain well above their pre-pandemic levels. The nation's unemployment rate, at 3.5 per cent, is still barely above a half-decade low. And when the government issues the August jobs report on Friday, economists polled by the data firm FactSet think it will show that while hiring slowed, employers still added 170,000 jobs. The combination of tumbling inflation, continued economic growth and slower but steady hiring has raised hopes for a rare "soft landing." That's a scenario in which the Fed manages to conquer high inflation without causing a painful recession. Wednesday's government report, its second of three estimates of last quarter's growth, will be followed by a final calculation late next month.

# Alcaraz begins title defence with win



## JABEUR IN ROUND 2

Tunisia's Ons Jabeur overcame a medical scare to battle into the second round of the US Open with a straight sets defeat of Colombia's Camila Osorio.

Jabeur, chasing a first Grand Slam crown after three agonising defeats in finals since 2022, opened her US Open campaign with a 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) victory on the Louis Armstrong Stadium.

The 29-year-old looked to be struggling during a tense first set, complaining to the chair umpire that she was having difficulty breathing after Osorio fought back from 4-1 down to level at 4-4.

Jabeur needed treatment from medical staff after going 5-4 down in the first set, and appeared to have her blood pressure taken during a timeout.

Jabeur proved too strong for Osorio in the breaker, however, and will now face the Czech Republic's Linda Noskova in the second round.

## MURRAY ADVANCES

Andy Murray shrugged off a bungled attempt to use video review technology for the first time at the US Open before advancing to the second round with a straight sets defeat of France's Corentin Moutet.

The 36-year-old 2012 US Open champion delivered a composed performance to outlast Moutet 6-2, 7-5, 6-3 on the Grandstand Court.



# Venus bows out of 24th US Open

AP ■ NEW YORK

Venus Williams bowed out of her record-extending 24th US Open at the first hurdle on Tuesday, the seventh-time Grand Slam champion losing 6-1, 6-1 to Belgium's Greet Minnen.

The 43-year-old tennis icon was no match for her 26-year-old opponent, who was born just weeks before Williams played her first Grand Slam final at the US Open in 1997.

Williams, whose ranking has dipped to 410th in the world, was never in contention against Minnen who dominated all facets of the match for a comfortable win.

In recent years, Williams has tended not to play beyond the US Open at the end of each season.

However the American veteran said she might revise those plans after a season that was blown off course by injuries, notably a knee injury suffered at Wimbledon, where she also went out in the first round.

"I may reconsider that this year because my year didn't go the way, in any way, shape or form, that I thought it would go," Williams said.

"I was really getting good momentum into Wimbledon. That fall really kind of threw me for a loop for the summer."

Williams meanwhile refused to give any clue as to when she may decide to follow her younger sister Serena into retirement.

Asked what would be the decisive factor in determining her next career move, she replied: "I wouldn't tell you so I don't know why you're asking."

AP ■ NEW YORK

Carlos Alcaraz said retaining the US Open title was not on his mind as he began the defence of his crown on Tuesday with a swift win over injured German opponent Dominik Koepfer.

The world number one moved into the second round when the 75th-ranked Koepfer retired because of an ankle injury with the Spaniard leading 6-2, 3-2 under the lights on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"That's not the best way to get through into another round," said Alcaraz, "but I have to say on my side I was playing great."

"I started pretty well. Really focused. Honestly, I didn't expect to play such a great level the beginning, the first round, here in the US Open."

"I am very, very happy with the level, even if Domi had to retire. Have to see myself and hopefully to keep that level into the next round."

Alcaraz entered a Grand Slam as the defending champion for the first time, but the 20-year-old tried to downplay the significance of being the player to beat in New York.

"I was excited to play my first round here in US Open. I mean, it was great to step on court again in the Arthur Ashe after

such a great run last year. I was excited to come back," he said.

"I'm not thinking about the defending the title. I was not thinking about I was the champion last year. I just focus on playing my best level, to recover the level that I played last year, try to do same things that I did last year."

"That's the only thing that I'm thinking right now. I try to be apart about all the pressure people put of me about the defending champion."

Alcaraz will play big-serving South African Lloyd Harris for a place in the last 32.

He will surrender top spot to Djokovic after the US Open but admitted he was eager to reclaim the number one ranking before the end of the season.

"Well, right now it's a goal for me honestly. I said before that we are having a really good battle for the No. 1, Novak and I," said Alcaraz.

"I knew that he was going to recover the No. 1 after US Open. When the tournament is over, I will try to recover as soon as possible. That's my goal. I am working for that."

"The season has a lot of tournaments until the year is over. I'll try to recover it before the year ends."

# Wawrinka oldest man to win US Open match in 31 years

AP ■ NEW YORK

Former US Open champion Stan Wawrinka on Tuesday became the oldest man to win a match at the tournament since 40-year-old Jimmy Connors in 1992.

Wawrinka, 38, earned his first win in New York in four years as he beat Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, 6-4 in the opening round.

"I think I'm playing well. I'm not trying to compare from the past because it's never good idea to compare a few years ago what I was doing," said Wawrinka, who lifted the US Open trophy in 2016.

"But I'm happy with my level. I know where I am right now. I know I can beat some really good players. I can be really competitive. I'm moving well."



The Swiss goes on to play Argentine 30th seed Tomas Martin Etcheverry, who outlasted Finnish qualifier Otto Virtanen in a fifth-set tie-break.

Wawrinka has reached the quarter-

finals or better on six occasions at Flushing Meadows, but his win over Nishioka was his first at the event since he lost to Daniil Medvedev in the last eight in 2019.

"Last few months have been almost better every week with more win, with more confidence, with what I'm doing," he said.

"Hopefully I can keep pushing myself and get some big results before the end of the year."

Wawrinka, a former world number three, saw his ranking drop as low as 361 last year after a lengthy battle with injuries.

He returned to the top 100 in February and arrived at the US Open ranked 49th, nearing the final act of his career but unwilling to call time just yet.



# Raphinha replaces injured Vinicius in Brazil squad

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Barcelona winger Raphinha got a call-up from the Brazilian national team on Tuesday to replace injured Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior as Brazil launch their qualifying campaign for the 2026 World Cup, officials said on Tuesday.

Postecoglou had masterminded an encouraging start to his first season in charge of Tottenham, with successive Premier League wins against Manchester United and Bournemouth following a draw against Brentford.

But the former Celtic boss paid the price for making nine changes to his starting line-up at Craven Cottage.

Postecoglou handed a full debut to Manor Solomon, while Giovanni Lo Celso and Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg started despite speculation over their futures.

Fulham boss Marco Silva made six changes himself, but it was Tottenham's underdog who struggled.

Micky van de Ven's 19th-minute own goal gave Fulham the lead as the defender turned Tom Cairney's cross past keeper Fraser Forster.

Tottenham took advantage of a curious incident that left Fulham down to 10 men to equalise in the 56th minute.

But Tottenham were unable to find a winner and in the shoot-out Davinson Sanchez's effort was saved by Marek Rodak before Tete, now with boots on both feet, fired the decisive kick.

Currently enduring a trophy drought that stretches back to 2008, Tottenham already have one less competition in which to end that barren run

# Spurs crash out of League Cup

AP ■ LONDON

Ange Postecoglou defended his team's selection after suffering his first defeat as Tottenham boss after Fulham won 5-3 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in the League Cup second round on Tuesday.

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Postecoglou handed a full debut to Manor Solomon, while Giovanni Lo Celso and Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg started despite speculation over their futures.

Fulham boss Marco Silva made six changes himself, but it was Tottenham's underdog who struggled.

Micky van de Ven's 19th-minute own goal gave Fulham the lead as the defender turned Tom Cairney's cross past keeper Fraser Forster.

Tottenham took advantage of a curious incident that left Fulham down to 10 men to equalise in the 56th minute.

But Tottenham were unable to find a winner and in the shoot-out Davinson Sanchez's effort was saved by Marek Rodak before Tete, now with boots on both feet, fired the decisive kick.

Currently enduring a trophy drought that stretches back to 2008, Tottenham already have one less competition in which to end that barren run



this term. Fourth-tier Salford, co-owned by former Manchester United stars David Beckham, Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs and Paul Scholes, beat Leeds 9-8 on penalties after a 1-1 draw with the Championship club.

Luton beat fourth-tier Gillingham 3-2 at Kenilworth Road to win for the first time this season.

Bournemouth boss Andoni Iraola earned his first win in English football as Ryan Christie's last-gasp goal clinched a 3-2 victory at second-tier Swansea.

# Varane ruled out for 'a few weeks'

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Raphael Varane has been ruled out for "a few weeks" as Manchester United's injury issues pile up ahead of their Premier League trip to Arsenal.

Erik ten Hag's side head to north London on Sunday without several players for their final match before the international break.

Luke Shaw and Mason Mount are currently out of action, while new signing Rasmus Hojlund has yet to make his debut due to a back complaint.

Tyrell Malacia, Amad Diallo,

Kobbie Mainoo and Tom Heaton have missed the start of the campaign and now experienced French defender Varane faces a spell on the sidelines.

"Raphael Varane will be missing from the team when Manchester United face Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday due to injury," the club said in a statement on Wednesday.

"The France international came off at half-time in our 3-2 win against Nottingham Forest at Old Trafford on Saturday due to the complaint, which is expected to keep him out for a few weeks."



# Rapinoe to play final game for USA on September 24

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

Megan Rapinoe will play her final game for the United States in a September 24 friendly against South Africa in Chicago, USA Soccer said on Tuesday.

The federation said Rapinoe will be honored before the match, the second of a two-game series, and won't play in the first game in Cincinnati on September 21.

Rapinoe, 38, announced before the recently concluded World Cup that she would retire when the National Women's Soccer League season ends in November.

The 11-year NWSL veteran is scheduled to play her final regular-season match for the OL Reign at Seattle's Lumen Field on October 6 against the Washington Spirit.

The 38-year-old will end her international career with 203 caps. She has scored 63 goals.

# Kolo Muani skips Frankfurt training to force PSG move

AP ■ BERLIN

French international forward Randal Kolo Muani skipped training with Eintracht Frankfurt on Wednesday morning, as he continues to try to force a move to Paris Saint-Germain.

The German club on Wednesday confirmed Kolo Muani, 24, had chosen to miss the training session due to "his desire to be transferred to another club before the transfer window ends on Friday evening."

The club confirmed Kolo Muani would not play in Thursday's Europa Conference League qualifier at home to Levski Sofia. The away tie in Bulgaria finished 1-1, with Kolo Muani scoring Frankfurt's goal.

Frankfurt sporting director Markus Kroesche said in a statement "we know Randal differently and know his real character," saying "the behaviour has no influence on transfer activities."

The forward's contract in Frankfurt runs until 2027.



Frankfurt are reportedly holding out for a bid of 100 million euros (\$108 million) from PSG for the forward.

Kolo Muani moved to Germany from Ligue 1 side Nantes on a free transfer in 2022 and had a breakout season in Frankfurt, scoring 23 goals and making 17 assists in 46 games.

The forward, who played in France's World Cup final defeat to Argentina in December, told Sky Germany on Tuesday: "I would like to switch to Paris and I have told those responsible."

# Van Dijk charged by FA over red card reaction

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk has been charged with acting in an improper manner after he was sent off at Newcastle on Sunday.

Van Dijk was shown a red card following his foul on Newcastle's Alexander Isak in the first half of Liverpool's 2-1 victory at St James' Park.

The Netherlands centre-back was furious with the decision and initially refused to leave the pitch as he argued with referee John Brooks.



Van Dijk currently has a one-match ban, ruling him out of this weekend's game against Aston Villa.

But the suspension could be

increased after his charge by the Football Association on Tuesday for using abusive or insulting language towards the official.

"Virgil van Dijk has been charged with a breach of FA Rule E3.1 following Liverpool's Premier League game against Newcastle United on Sunday, 27 August," an FA statement said.

"It's alleged that the defender acted in an improper manner and/or used abusive and/or insulting words towards a match official."

Van Dijk has until Friday to respond to the charge.

# Haaland wins PFA Player of the Year award

AP ■ LONDON

Manchester City striker Erling Haaland scooped the PFA Players' Player of the Year award on Tuesday after his stellar first season with the treble winners.

England and Aston Villa star Rachel Daly won the women's prize, voted for by fellow players.

Organised by the Professional Footballers' Association, the awards salute the best male and female players in English football in 2023.

Haaland enjoyed a stun-

ning debut season for City, hitting 52 goals in all competitions as Pep Guardiola's men won the Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League.

The 23-year-old saw off competition from team-mates John Stones and Kevin De Bruyne, as well as from Arsenal pair Bukayo Saka and Martin Odegaard and former Tottenham striker Harry Kane, now at Bayern Munich.

"It's an honour to win this prestigious award. To be recognised by your competitors is a great feeling and I would like to thank everyone who voted for me," Haaland



said. "It was an unforgettable season for the team and for me personally. Winning the treble was something I never imagined, so to achieve that with such a special group of players was an amazing feeling."

"We created some incredible memories last season, but now we want to do the same again this year. We have started the season well and we need to keep going."

Saka was voted the men's Young Player of the Year while Chelsea's Lauren James picked up the women's award.

# Babar, Iftikhar power Pak to 342/6



## Can't have control over injuries: Shanaka

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Sri Lanka have been hit by injuries to key players in the run up to the ongoing Asia Cup, and captain Dasun Shanaka on Wednesday said they don't have control over such a crisis but are confident of others standing up for the absence in the continental tournament.

Six-time champions Sri Lanka will open their Asia Cup campaign against Bangladesh here on Thursday, but they will be without four main players in Wanindu Hasaranga, Dushmantha Chameera, Lahiru Kumara and Dilshan Madhushanka.

"We can't have control over injuries. You know the players who unfortunately missed out -- Hasaranga, Chameera... they are big players, experienced players.

"But we have a young side and this will be a good experience for them and we are looking forward to the tournament," said Shanaka here during the pre-match press meet.

Shanaka said they have enough quality players in the side to make an impression in the Asia Cup.

"Last time (in the 2022 Asia Cup) also we went in

as underdogs and lost our first game against Afghanistan. But we still managed to finish with the trophy," he said.

"There is no question about where we are sitting at the moment and about the team's balance, so we are looking forward to the tournament."

Sri Lanka will be travelling to Pakistan after Thursday's match for their fixture against Afghanistan in Lahore.

Shanaka did not read too much about the hectic travel.

"We were in the same situation during last year's (T20) World Cup. That's how, I think international cricket is played and we are used to it. It can be a worry but we are still managing it," he said.

Shanaka said it is important for Sri Lanka to play competitive cricket ahead of the ICC ODI World Cup to be played in India from October 5 to November 19.

"We know the dominance of India and Pakistan in Asia. But Sri Lanka have a good history of playing well in World Cups and Asia Cup. So, it is important for Sri Lanka to play good, competitive cricket going into the World Cup," he said.

the crease by wicket-keeper batter Rizwan and the duo stabilised Pakistan's innings.

While Babar played the role of an anchor, Rizwan showed his attacking instincts during the 86-run stand for the third wicket which came off 111 balls.

But the start of their partnership was far from rosy as the duo struggled to keep the scoreboard ticking initially with Pakistan reaching 50 in the 12th over.

The Pakistani duo kept the scoreboard ticking with ones and twos thereafter and hit the bad balls to the boundary to bring up the team's 100 in the 22nd over.

Just when he was looking threatening, Rizwan fell to a direct hit at the non-striker's end by Dipendra Singh Airee in search of a quick single. Rizwan paid the price for not grounding his bat, something not acceptable at the highest level.

While Babar kept one end steady, Salman Agha (5) failed to trouble the scorers much, falling prey to Sandeep Lamichhane.

Babar brought up his fifty with a double in the 29th over. But Iftikhar's arrival gave the much-needed boost to Pakistan's innings as he played aggressively from the onset.

Iftikhar's approach seemed to have inspired Babar as well as he too opened up his arms thereafter and found the boundaries at will.

Babar brought up his ton off 109 balls in the 42nd over.

The duo, especially Iftikhar, toyed with the Nepalese bowlers as it rained fours and sixes at will from there on. Iftikhar brought up his maiden ton off just 67 balls.

Babar fell just seven runs short of his personal best score.



PTI ■ MULTAN

Skipper Babar Azam hit a delightful 151 while Iftikhar Ahmed smashed his maiden ODI century to power Pakistan to 342 for six against Nepal in the Asia Cup opener here on Wednesday.

Babar (151 off 130) was involved in two crucial partnerships after a sedate start -- first stitching 86 runs with Mohammad Rizwan (44 off 50) and then sharing a whirlwind 214 runs for the fifth wicket with Iftikhar (109 not out off 71 balls) to take Pakistan to an

imposing total. Babar decorated his knock with 14 fours and four sixes, while Iftikhar, who was at his destructive best, struck 11 boundaries and four hits over the fence.

This was after Pakistan made an unimpressive start to

their innings as they lost both the openers early. While Fakhar Zaman (14) showed intent initially, he failed to carry on as he was brilliantly caught by a diving Nepal wicketkeeper Asif Sheikh off the bowling of Karan KC in the sixth over.

Pakistan suffered yet another blow soon when Imam-ul-Haq was found short of the crease while attempting a single that was not for the taking. A direct throw from Nepal captain Rohit Paudel ended his innings.

Babar was then joined at



## Extraordinary Pakistan team to beat in Asia Cup: Ashwin

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Premier India spinner R Ashwin feels Pakistan will be the side to beat in the Asia Cup and consistent performances from Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan will make them even more dangerous in the continental event.

Terming both Pakistan and India as favourites for the Asian title, Ashwin said on his YouTube channel, "If Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan consistently dish out performances with the bat, Pakistan will be one hell of a team heading into this Asia Cup and the World Cup."

"It will take some beating since Pakistan is an extraordinary team."

Pakistan will take on India in the much-awaited clash on September 2.

The Men in Blue have won the last three meetings against Pakistan in ODIs.

Ashwin feels the depth in Pakistan's squad makes them serious contenders for the Asia Cup and subsequent World Cup.

"It is all down to their

(Pakistan's) squad depth. Pakistan has invariably developed exceptional cricketers.

"Thanks to their tape-ball cricket, they have always produced an incredible series of pacers. Also, their batting has been superior during the late 90s and 2000s.

In tape ball cricket, electrical tape is wrapped on the tennis ball to make it smooth since it helps bowlers generate greater pace due to its light weight and smoothness of the surface.

In some cases, the tape is applied only on one side of the ball in order to generate swing.

Ashwin also said the Pakistan Super League and other T20 leagues around the world have helped Pakistan cricketers.

"But, the exposure they have got to various (T20) leagues has been the primary reason for their re-emergence in the previous five or six years. They also have the PSL (Pakistan Super League). Additionally, in the recent BBL (Big Bash League) drafts, there were at least 60-70 Pakistan players," the off-spinner noted.

# Absence of senior players a big miss: Shakib

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan on Wednesday rued the absence of experienced players like Liton Das, but said they have enough quality in their ranks to paper over their unavailability in the Asia Cup.

Bangladesh will face six-time and defending champion Sri Lanka here on Thursday.

But they will be without veterans like Das, Tamim Iqbal and Ebadot Hosain, all ruled out due to different reasons. While Das could not recover in time from viral fever, Iqbal and Hosain are injured.



"Of course, it (absence of veteran players) is a big miss. If you talk about Liton, he has been part of the team for the last four or five years, and he was doing consistently well for Bangladesh.

"But having said that this will give an opportunity to someone else and I hope they make full use of this opportunity," Shakib said here during the pre-match press conference.

Shakib hoped that young players like Towhit Hridoy, who was a part of Bangladesh's U-19 World Cup winning side in 2020, will put their hands up in the Asia Cup.

"As far as Towhit is concerned he is really playing well for us this year. He has done well in the recent LPL (Lanka Premier League) and that should give him a lot of confidence going into the Asia Cup. He is going to play for Bangladesh for a long time," said Shakib.

## Liton Das ruled out of Asia Cup due to illness

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batter Liton Das was on Wednesday ruled out of the Asia Cup cricket tournament due to illness, dealing a blow to the side ahead of their campaign opener against hosts Sri Lanka in Pallekele.

Das could not recover from a viral fever, and he did not travel to Sri Lanka whom Bangladesh face in their opening match on Thursday.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has named 30-year-old wicketkeeper-batter Anamul Haque Bijoy as Das' replacement.

Bijoy will join the squad in Sri Lanka later on Wednesday.

Anamul Haque has played 44 ODIs and has scored 1254 runs which include three hundreds. His last ODI appearance for Bangladesh was in December 2022 against India.

Over the years, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have constructed a heated rivalry between them, and instances like 'Nagin Dance' added colour to it.

In 2018, Bangladesh bowler Nazmul Islam celebrated the Lankan wickets with 'Nagin Dance' and later it became a flash point between the two teams and the fans.

However, Shakib was focusing more on the match and giving a good account of themselves in the Asia Cup.

"It is important to have a calm dressing room. I don't think of it as a rivalry. But whenever these two teams are playing, we play very good cricket, which is good for fans and the broadcaster.

## England's women cricketers awarded match fee parity with men

AP ■ LONDON

England's women cricketers will be paid the same match fees as their male counterparts, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Wednesday.

The pay increase, which follows similar moves in New Zealand and India, will take effect immediately, beginning with the T20 series against Sri Lanka, which starts on Thursday.

The change was recommended by the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket report in June, which said "women receive an embarrassingly small amount compared to men."



The report said match fees for the England women's team were a quarter of those paid to the men's team for white-ball games while the figure was just 15 percent for Tests.

ECB chief executive officer Richard Gould said the recent

"thrilling" Ashes series against Australia, watched by record-breaking crowds, showed the growing popularity of the women's game.

England captain Heather Knight described the equalising of match fees as "fantastic to see".

## Maninder scores 4 goals in India's 15-1 win

PTI ■ SALALAH

Maninder Singh and Mohammed Raheel scored four and three goals respectively as the Indian men's hockey team hammered Bangladesh 15-1 in their Asian Hockey 5s World Cup Qualifier campaign opener here.

Maninder struck in the 10th, 18th, 28th and 30th minutes while Raheel found the target in the 2nd, 15th and 24th minutes.

Sukhvinder (13th, 22nd), Gurjot Singh (13th, 23rd), Pawan Rajbhar (19th, 26th) scored twice each while Mandeep Mor (8th) and Dipsan Tirkey (9th) struck



once each as the Indians scored goals almost at will.

For Bangladesh, Sawon Sarowar (2nd minute) scored the lone goal on Tuesday.



## Praggnanandhaa arrives to hero's welcome

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Indian prodigy R Praggnanandhaa, who made history by clinching the silver medal in the 2023 FIDE World Cup, and entered the FIDE Candidates tournament, was accorded a rousing reception upon his arrival at the airport here on Wednesday.

The officials from the state sports department received him at the airport. His fans eagerly waited at the exit gate and presented him a crown of flowers, a shawl and bouquets. Flowers were strewn on his path as he stepped out and artists performed Karagattam and Oyilattam, folk dances of Tamil Nadu, on the occasion. The teenager took his time watching the media persons swarm on either side of the vehicle into which he got into, and reacted "I am very happy over the reception."

He accepted the national tricolour offered to him and waved it. His mother Nagalakshmi too expressed glee over the grand reception accorded to her 18-year-old son. Indian Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa's dream run in the FIDE World Cup ended at the hands of Norwegian Magnus Carlsen, who beat him 1.5-0.5 in the tie-break at Baku, Azerbaijan, on August 24 after the classical games ended in a stalemate.

# Neeraj looks to maintain Diamond League unbeaten streak in Zurich

PTI ■ ZURICH

Newly-crowned world champion Neeraj Chopra will look to maintain his unbeaten streak in the prestigious Diamond League meet when he competes in a star-studded men's javelin throw field here on Thursday.

Chopra on Sunday clinched his maiden World Championships title in Budapest with a throw of 88.17m. He had won a silver medal in the 2022 edition.

The Indian superstar also became only the third javelin thrower in history to hold both the Olympic and World

Championships titles after world record holder Jan Zelezny of the Czech Republic and Andreas Thorkildsen of Norway.

Zelezny clinched the Olympics gold in 1992, 1996 and 2000 while winning the World Championships title in 1993, 1995 and 2001. Thorkildsen won the gold medal in the 2008 Olympics and the 2009 World Championships.

The 25-year-old Chopra has been unbeaten this season, having won two Diamond League meetings in Doha (May 5) and Lausanne (June 30) before his World Championships triumph.



In Zurich, where he is competing four days after being crowned world champion, Chopra will be up against famil-

iar rivals like Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch, bronze winner in Budapest with 86.67m, Julian Weber of Germany and two-

time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada.

Only Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, silver medallist in Budapest, will not be there in Zurich.

Chopra, who won the Diamond League final trophy last year, sits third with 16 points from two events. Vadlejch (21 points from three events) and Weber (19 from three events), who finished fourth in Budapest with 85.79m, are on top and at second place respectively.

Peters, who has been struggling this season and failed to qualify for the final round in the World Championships, is at

fourth spot with 15 points from three events.

The Zurich leg is the last one in the Diamond League series where men's javelin throw event is on the roster before the season finale in Eugene, USA on September 16-17 where the Diamond League champion will be crowned.

Only the top six in the points table will compete in Eugene. Chopra won the title in the 2022 finale held in Zurich.

Long jumper Murali Sreeshankar will also be in action and he would be looking to redeem himself after failing to qualify for the final round at the World Championships.

Sreeshankar, who has a season's and personal best of 8.41m, jumped a below-par 7.74m to finish 22nd overall in the qualification round. He is currently third in the long jump standings of this Diamond League season, with 10 points from two events.

Olympic and world champion Miltiadis Tentoglou (Greece), Tajay Gayle and Carey McLeod (both Jamaica) will also be action. Gayle had won silver in Budapest with a jump of 8.27m.

Tentoglou, who won gold in the World Championships with 8.52m, is leading the Diamond League standings with 21 points from three events.