

**OPINION 6**  
CHURN AMONG THE  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**WORLD 9**  
DRONE HITS RESIDENTIAL  
BUILDING IN RUSSIA

**MONEY 10**  
GDP GROWTH ON FIRM FOOTING,  
REVEALS SBI STUDY

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY JUNE 10, 2023; PAGES 12-13



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## Manipur erupts again, ultras in cop garb kill 3

CBI files six FIRs, forms SIT to probe conspiracies behind ethnic clashes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fresh violence claimed three lives in Manipur on Friday even as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered six First Information Reports (FIRs) and established a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe potential conspiracies behind the recent clashes.

According to officials, violence erupted in a village situated on the border of Kangpokpi and Imphal West districts. A group of insurgents, disguised as security personnel, lured villagers out of their homes under the pretext of a combing operation and opened fire on them.

The attackers, believed to be from the Meitei community, quickly fled the area after shooting down three villagers. Security forces, on a routine patrol, responded to the sound of gunfire and intervened.

The CBI has responded to the escalating violence by setting up a 10-member SIT, led by a DIG-rank officer, to investigate the six cases connected to the recent clashes.

These cases were referred to the CBI by the State



Security personnel during a combing operation in sensitive areas of Manipur. PTI

Government. Joint Director Ghanshyam Upadhyay was dispatched by the CBI to liaise with State officials, and upon his return, the SIT was officially formed.

The agency has re-registered the six cases, and the investigation will be overseen by the Special Crime Branch in Kolkata, as announced by officials on Friday.

The formation of the SIT aims to uncover any potential conspiracies behind the recent surge in violence in Manipur. As the situation remains volatile, law enforcement agencies continue their efforts to restore peace and security in the region.

The decision to initiate a CBI probe was announced by Home Minister Amit Shah during his visit to Manipur.

The violence erupted in the northeastern State following a "Tribal Solidarity March" organised in the hill districts on May 3 to protest against the demand of the Meitei community for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

The clashes have resulted in the loss of nearly 100 lives and left over 300 people injured over the past month.

The escalation of violence was preceded by tensions arising from the eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had sparked a

series of smaller protests.

The Meiteis, constituting about 53 per cent of Manipur's population, predominantly reside in the Imphal Valley, while the Nagas and Kukis, collectively accounting for 40 per cent of the population, inhabit the hill districts. To restore peace, approximately 10,000 Army and Assam Rifles personnel

Manipur is geographically divided into hill and valley areas, with the hills covering 90 per cent of the State's total area and predominantly inhabited by Naga and Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes. The valley areas are predominantly occupied by the Meiteis.

## Xiaomi slapped with ED notice for ₹5,551 cr FEMA violation

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has issued show-cause notices to the Indian arm of Chinese mobile phone manufacturer Xiaomi, its chief financial officer and director Sameer B Rao, former managing director Manu Kumar Jain and three foreign banks for alleged violations of the foreign exchange law to the tune of more than ₹5,551 crore.

A show-cause notice is issued after the completion of a FEMA probe and once it is settled, the accused may have to pay a penalty that could be three times the amount contravened. See Page 2

## Trump indicted in classified papers case, a historic first for ex-POTUS

AP ■ MIAMI

Donald Trump has been indicted on felony charges of mishandling classified documents at his Florida estate, a remarkable development that makes him the first former president in US history to face criminal charges by the federal government that he once oversaw.

Trump's indictment carries unmistakably grave legal consequences, including the possibility of prison if he's convicted.

Detailed report on P8

## Woman wrestler taken to Brij office to recreate crime scene

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has intensified its probe into the sexual harassment allegations against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the chief of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). Taking a significant step forward in the investigation, the police accompanied a woman wrestler to Singh's office to recreate the sequence of events related to the alleged crime. Singh's official residence serves as the office for the Wrestling Federation of India.

The Delhi Police, accompanied by women police personnel, took the wrestler to the WFI office at 1:30 pm. During the visit, she was asked to recreate the scene and recall the places where she experienced harassment, providing crucial evidence for the ongoing investigation.

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur had assured the protesting wrestlers that a charge-sheet would be filed in the case by June 15, prompting the wrestlers to temporarily suspend their protest.

Shortly after the police left the premises, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, one of the leaders of the protest, expressed disappointment on Twitter regarding media reports that suggested the wrestlers had visited the WFI office for a compromise.

Phogat voiced her concerns, stating that Brij Bhushan was using his power to harass women wrestlers and emphasizing the necessity of his arrest for justice. Bajrang Punia,



another protesting wrestler, echoed similar sentiments through his own tweets.

The Delhi Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT), assigned to probe the sexual harassment allegations against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, is expected to submit its investigation report to the court next

week. Two cases have been registered against Singh, who is currently the outgoing WFI president and a BJP MP. As part of the investigation, the SIT has already interrogated over 180 individuals, gathering crucial information and statements related to the incidents.

## No offence of hate speech against wrestlers: Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Friday informed the court that no hate speech offence had been committed by the wrestlers who were protesting at Jantar Mantar, demanding action against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

This information was provided in an Action Taken Report (ATR) submitted to Additional Chief Metropolitan



Magistrate Anamika, who was presiding over an application seeking the registration of an FIR against the wrestlers.

## Mumbai butcher married victim, but claims she was like daughter

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Contrary to a claim by him to police earlier that since he was a HIV positive person, he had no physical relations with the victim woman and that he treated her like a "daughter", the investigators probing the macabre murder have established that the Mira Road "butcher" Manoj Sane had indeed married Saraswati Vaidya at a temple several years ago, but they hid their marriage because of their age difference.

A day after the heinous murder of 36-year-old Saraswati allegedly at the hands of 56-year-old Sane — who cut, chopped, minced, boiled and roasted her body parts — the victim woman's three elder sisters from Ahmednagar in western Maharashtra who were in regular touch with her joined the investigations on Friday. In



Manoj Sane, accused of killing his live-in partner Saraswati Vaidya, being escorted by the police outside the Mira Road Police Station, in Thane on Friday. Vaidya's body parts were found pressure-cooked and roasted inside a flat where she stayed with Sane. PTI

their statements recorded by the police, the three sisters said Sane and Saraswati had entered into a wedlock at a ceremony held at a temple several

years ago but had hidden their marriage from society because of their age difference.

Continued on Page 2

## 3 dead, many trapped in illegal coal mine collapse in Dhanbad

PNS ■ DHANBAD

An illegally operated mine collapsed in Jharkhand's Bhowra colliery area on Friday, killing at least three people and trapping several people on Friday around 10.30 am.

Bhowra Colliery Area of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCCL) is 21 km from Dhanbad.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Sindri, Abhishek Kumar, said the exact number of people killed and feared trapped or injured would be known after rescuers are able to locate the victims.

An eyewitness said many local villagers were engaged in illegal mining when a portion of the mine caved in.

"With the help of locals, three persons were brought out from the debris and taken to a hospital where doctors



Rescue operation underway after an illegally operated coal mine collapsed in Jharkhand's Bhowra colliery area, near Dhanbad on Friday. PTI

declared them dead," the eyewitness said. Bhowra police station Inspector Binod Oraon said rescue operations were on. BCCCL's Bhowra Colliery General Manager SS Das, who

reached the spot, is monitoring the rescue operations.

Five persons were killed in an abandoned mine of Eastern Coalfields in Gopinathpur area of Dhanbad in February 2022.

## Criticising India abroad harms our nation: EAM

'Arguments in democracy welcome, but inviting external interference has negative implications'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday reiterated his concerns about leaders criticising India abroad and inviting external interference, emphasising the potential negative implications for the country. His remarks came a day after he accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of having a "habit" of criticising India on international platforms.

Addressing a gathering at Aryabhata College, Jaishankar acknowledged that arguments and differences of opinion are inherent in a democracy but cautioned against taking these



disagreements outside of India and involving foreign entities. He expressed his belief that such actions could have significant repercussions.

"In any democracy, there will be differences. There will be diversity and opinions. And it should be there, there is nothing wrong with it. The problem happens when you take it outside. What is a bigger problem is that you take it out and then invite people from outside to come and interfere," stated Jaishankar during his speech.

Continued on Page 2

## Yogendra Yadav, Palshikar request their name removal from NCERT books

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Political scientists Suhas Palshikar and Yogendra Yadav have requested the NCERT to remove their names as chief advisers from all political science textbooks. They claim the recent rationalisation exercise has "mutilated" the books beyond recognition and rendered them "academically dysfunctional".

Palshikar and Yadav expressed their embarrassment at being associated with the textbooks and wrote a letter to the NCERT stating that the cuts made in the books were arbitrary and irrational.

## India strong democracy: Israel's President, PM

Both laud Indian Jewish community

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/NEVATIM (ISRAEL)

Israel's President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have commended the Indian Jewish community for their contributions to the country, emphasizing India's status as a "strong and influential democracy."

The leaders expressed their appreciation during the foundation stone ceremony of a cultural center that recognises the role of Jewish communities from India who immigrated to Israel.



Hundreds of Indian Jewish community members from across the country gathered at Nevatim on Thursday evening to witness the foundation stone laying ceremony for the Heritage and Cultural Centre of the Indian Jews.

The center aims to preserve the heritage and rich culture of all Jewish communities that have immigrated from India, while also serving as a base for the India-Israel trading center. The multi-million dollar project, spanning three acres of land, will include a museum, a conference and events hall,

and an Indian tropical garden. The initial phase of construction will focus on building a 300-seat multipurpose hall.

In a recorded video message to the community, President Herzog praised their contribution to Israeli society, describing them as an integral part of the Israeli mosaic. He recalled his father's address to the Cochin community in the same Moshav in 1984, stating that what the community has built is a matter of pride that continues to bring honor to Israel.

Continued on Page 2

## 7 tigers dead in 9 days

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The recent spike in tiger deaths across the country has sent shockwaves among wildlife enthusiasts. Within just nine days in June, at least seven tigers have lost their lives, with Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh each reporting two deaths, and Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh recording one each.

This marks the highest number of tiger fatalities in the past three years, despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of the fifth cycle of India's Tiger Census figures on April 9.

Data analysis conducted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) as of June 9 reveals that this year has been unfavourable for tigers overall. So far, a total of 83 big cats have succumbed nationwide, with Madhya Pradesh reporting the highest casualties at 45. Among the deceased, 30 tigresses and 11 cubs have been recorded.

Taking cognisance of the casualties at Dudhwa Tiger



Reserve, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the Forest Minister, additional chief secretary, forest and other senior forest officials to visit the National Park and carry out a thorough probe, a senior official in UP said.

Just a week ago, The Pioneer reported that the country had witnessed the deaths of 76 tigers in the past five months alone, equating to one tiger dying every other day.

Comparatively, during the same period last year, a total of 64 felines had lost their lives, as indicated by statistics provided by the NTCA under the

Union Environment Ministry. The data for 2023 reveals that a majority of deaths, at least 45, were reported from tiger reserves. The escalating territorial fights among the predators are contributing to the surge in mortalities, with senior officials from the Ministry highlighting the insufficiency of habitat to accommodate the growing tiger population. As a result, tigers are venturing into human habitats, posing risks to both their own lives and those of humans.

In the first nine days of this month alone, five tiger deaths occurred within the predators'

own territories, further highlighting the severity of the situation.

Experts attribute the rise in deaths to territorial conflicts among the tigers themselves. Normally, a tiger demarcates 10-12 square kilometers as its territory, not allowing rivals to enter. When a rival does enter, a fight for dominance ensues, with the stronger tiger retaining the region and the weaker one pushed to the periphery.

Life is far from easy even for those who manage to survive and move to the periphery. They often become victims of poaching or fall prey to human-animal conflicts when they venture outside their territories, as has been evident in recent days.

For instance, in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, a cub succumbed to the cold and rain after its mother was killed in a territorial fight back in February. Ranthambore reserve is considered the third-most congested habitat in India, following Uttarakhand's Corbett National Park and Assam's Kaziranga National Park.

# India world diabetes capital with 101 mn patients: ICMR

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

It is disturbingly official now. With 101 million diabetics, India is the diabetes capital of the world. Goa tops the list while Uttar Pradesh has the lowest prevalence, said the largest study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research-India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB).

Published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology journal, it said that the number of diabetic cases has increased by 44 per cent in four years from 70 million affected people in 2019. The survey was conducted on diabetes and other metabolic non-communicable diseases in India.

In Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Chandigarh, there are fewer pre-diabetes cases compared to diabetes cases. The study said that 15.3 per cent of the population (at least 136 million people) is pre-



diabetic - an individual who has higher-than-normal blood sugar levels but is not high enough to be considered a diabetic. A pre-diabetic is said to fall in the high-risk group of developing diabetes.

Conducted between October 18, 2008, and December 17, 2020, the researchers analysed data of 1,13,043 individuals, out of which more than 75,000 people were from rural areas.

Besides diabetes, lifestyle

diseases like hypertension and obesity also showed a northward spiral. The study found that around 35.5 per cent of the people had hypertension or high blood pressure, and about 39.5 per cent and 28.6 per cent suffered from abdominal obesity and overall obesity, respectively. Around 24 per cent of the surveyed population suffered from hypercholesterolemia or high bad cholesterol levels (LDL).

Researchers studied the

prevalence of major metabolic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity and pre-diabetes from 31 states and union territories of the country. These conditions can significantly increase the risk of stroke, cardiac arrest and kidney disease.

Goa showed the highest prevalence (26.4 per cent) of type 1 and type 2 diabetes cases, Puducherry was a close second with 26.3 per cent and Kerala took the third position with 25.5 per cent of cases.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh has recorded the lowest number (4.8 per cent) of diabetic prevalence but had around 18 per cent pre-diabetics compared to the national average of 15.3 per cent. The study found that states like UP, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Arunachal Pradesh which showed lower prevalence had higher chances of diabetes explosion over the next few years.

# ED slaps ₹5,551 cr FEMA violations notices on Xiaomi, 2 senior executives

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has issued show-cause notices to the Indian arm of Chinese mobile phone manufacturer Xiaomi, its chief financial officer and director Sameer B Rao, former managing director Manu Kumar Jain and three foreign banks for alleged violations of the foreign exchange law to the tune of more than Rs 5,551 crore.

The Adjudicating Authority (of the Foreign Exchange Management Act) has issued the notices to Xiaomi Technology India Private Limited, the two executives, the CITIbank, the HSBC bank and the Deutsche Bank AG under section 16 of the FEMA, the federal agency said in a statement.

A show-cause notice is issued after the completion of a FEMA probe and once it is settled, the accused may have to pay a penalty that could be three times the amount con-



travened.

The notices have been issued to the firm, along with Jain and Rao, the ED said.

The Adjudicating Authority has also issued show-cause notices to three banks - Citibank, HSBC Bank and Deutsche Bank AG -- for contravention of sections 10(4) and 10(5) of the FEMA and directions issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as they allowed foreign outward remittances in the name of royalty through the banks, "without" conducting due diligence and "without" obtaining any underlying technical collaboration agreement from the company,

it said.

The ED had earlier seized funds worth Rs 5,551.27 crore of Xiaomi Technology India Private Limited lying in its bank accounts under the FEMA for the "unauthorised" remittance of this amount in guise of royalty abroad by the company.

"The competent authority, appointed under section 37A of the FEMA, has confirmed the said seizure order. The authority, while confirming the seizure, held that the ED is right in holding that foreign exchange equivalent to Rs 5,551.27 crore has been transferred out of India by Xiaomi

India in an unauthorised manner and is held outside India on behalf of the group entity in contravention of section 4 of the FEMA, 1999 and the same is liable to be seized in terms of provisions of section 37A of the FEMA," it said.

The agency said the competent authority also observed that the payment of royalty was nothing but a tool for transferring the foreign exchange out of India and the same was in "blatant" violation of the FEMA provisions.

The ED said its investigation, launched last year, has found that the company had remitted foreign currency equivalent to Rs 5,551.27 crore to three foreign-based entities, including a Xiaomi group entity, in the guise of royalty.

"Under the cover of various unrelated documentary façade created amongst the group entities, the company remitted this amount in the guise of royalty abroad, which constitutes violation of section 4 of the FEMA," it said.

# 1 more held in JNU molestation, attempted kidnapping case

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

One more person was arrested in connection with the alleged molestation and attempted kidnap of two female students inside the Jawaharlal Nehru University campus, an officer said on Friday.

Police have identified this person as Mahavir, a resident of RK Puram. This is the second arrest in the case. Earlier, police had arrested Abhishek (22). According to police, the accused has claimed that he studies at an open university. They said they were taking a stroll in the area before heading to the campus. The facts are being verified and further investigation is underway, they said, adding that efforts are on to nab the remaining two accused.

The JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) had on Wednesday



alleged that some inebriated men in a car had come to the campus on Tuesday night and attempted to kidnap two students. They also got into a fight on the premises. Abhishek was driving the car when the alleged incident took place. "Two complaints - one regarding physical assault and another on molestation, attempt to kidnap - have been received from JNU students and cases have been registered.

"In both cases, the accused

and the vehicle, which are the same, have been identified," Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Manoj C had said on Wednesday.

The cases were registered for allegedly attempting to abduct two women students and assaulting a male student. Hours after the incident, the security department of JNU announced that the entry of outside vehicles into the campus will be restricted from 10 pm to 6 am.

# Yogendra Yadav...

**From Page 1**

"We find that the text has been mutilated beyond recognition. There are innumerable and irrational cuts and large deletions without any attempts to fill the gaps created. We were never consulted or even informed of these changes. If NCERT did consult other experts for deciding on these cuts and deletions, we explicitly state that we fully disagree with them in this regard," according to the letter sent to NCERT Director Dinesh Saklani.

Palshtkar, an academican and political scientist, and Yadav, political scientist and Swaraj India leader, were chief advisors for the Political Science books for classes 9 to 12 originally published in 2006-07 based on the 2005 version of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Their names are mentioned in a "letter to students" and the list of textbook development team at the beginning of each book.

# Criticising India abroad...

**From Page 1**

Highlighting the potential consequences, Jaishankar further warned, "If you say India has problems and great concerns and the world must do something about it, this has big implications and that is not good for the country."

He made these comments apparently in response to Rahul's recent criticisms of the Modi Government during his visit to the United States.

During his US trip, among other things Rahul remarked that India was being governed by individuals who believed they knew everything, even going as far as jokingly suggesting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would explain the workings of the universe to God if given the chance. Gandhi criticised the Government for what he perceived as mediocrity and an unwillingness to listen to differing perspectives.

# Jeeva's murder: 2 police teams formed, security tightened on UP court premises

**PTI ■ LUCKNOW**

Two police teams have been constituted to investigate the murder of gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari's aide Sanjeev Maheshwari Jeeva here, while steps have been taken to tighten security at court premises in the wake of the incident, a senior police officer said on Friday.

Jeeva (48) was shot dead on the premises of a Lucknow court on Wednesday, police said. A policeman and a two-year-old girl were injured in the incident. "Two teams with four policemen each have been formed for prompt and successful disposal of the investigation of the case registered at the Wazirganj police station here," Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Upendra Aggarwal told reporters.



Wazirganj police station in-charge Manoj Kumar Mishra will head the investigation, he said.

"The second team constituted for technical assistance includes Rajdev Prajapati, in-charge of the surveillance cell, western zone with three others," Aggarwal said.

Apart from this, Inspector Ramphal Prajapati has been assigned the task of making adequate security arrangements at the old premises of District Court and High Court

Lucknow Bench, the officer said. He said an application will be moved in court on Saturday over the police custody of the accused.

The senior police officer said a meeting was also held with lawyer organisations on Friday and a consensus was reached on several points regarding security on court premises. There will be separate entry gates for officers and advocates besides other elaborate security arrangements, he said.

# Israel's PM, President laud...

**From Page 1**

Prime Minister Netanyahu, in a recorded message, referred to the Indian Jewish community as a "living bridge between the two most ancient civilizations." He recalled the large community event during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Israel in 2017 and emphasized the growing importance and strengthening of the relationship between the two countries.

Abe and Mariam Sofaer, a couple from the Baghdadi Indian Jewish community residing in the United States, flew in specifically for the ceremony. Mariam expressed deep gratitude towards India for its tolerance, acceptance, and embrace of the Jews who thrived there. She highlighted the absence of anti-Semitism in India and

emphasized the importance of sharing this knowledge with others.

The ceremony was attended by India's Ambassador to Israel Sanjeev Singla, Head of the Regional Council of Bnei Shimon Nir Zamir, Chairman of the Indian Jewish Heritage Centre (IJHC) Isaac Avner, Chairman of the Cochini Heritage Centre (CHC) Nehemya Shachaf, and other community leaders. A cultural programme representing all four Indian Jewish communities - Bene Israel, Cochini Jews, Bnei Menashe, and Baghdadis - accompanied the ceremony.

Singla commended the tremendous community effort and expressed excitement for the completion of the auditorium by the end of 2024, which will showcase the his-

tory and culture of the Indian Jewish community and their contributions to Israeli society.

Organizers highlighted that Prime Minister Modi, during his visit to Israel, called for the establishment of a heritage and cultural center for the Indian Jewish community. Community leaders leading the effort for the past six years expressed their persistence in fulfilling this promise, leading to the foundation stone laying ceremony with the support of several financiers.

The IJHC, led by Isaac Avner, organized over 100 virtual meetings, particularly during the pandemic, to bring together the Indian Jewish community from around the world and garner their support for the project. Avner described the effort as preserving a thousand-year-old

tradition, a glorious legacy that has survived against all odds and is now fading.

Nehemya Shachaf highlighted that besides serving as a "cultural and financial hub," the center will contribute to the vision of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, to make the Negev desert bloom.

During the ceremony, important backers of the project signed a declaration parchment, which was then rolled, placed in a scroll, and buried. Two additional copies of the declaration parchment will be framed.

The occasion was celebrated with a lively cultural program and traditional Indian delicacies representing all four Indian Jewish communities, delighting the hundreds of Indian Jews in attendance.

# ED arrests M3M director RK Bansal in money laundering case linked to IREO

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Roop Kumar Bansal, a director of Gurugram-based realty company M3M, has been arrested in a money laundering case linked to real estate firm IREO, the Enforcement Directorate said on Friday.

Bansal was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on Thursday and he was later produced in a special court in Panchkula in Haryana which sent him to seven-day ED custody, the agency said in a statement.

The arrest, it said, was made in connection with the investigation being done against IREO and M3M groups for "diverting, siphoning off



and misappropriating funds of investors and customers."

"The custody of Roop Kumar Bansal became necessary for investigation and he has been avoiding investigation and not responding to summons issued by ED on multiple occasions," it said.

On June 1, the ED carried out raids against the M3M group and its directors as well

as against IREO in Delhi and Gurugram.

It later alleged in a press statement that the owners, controllers and promoters of the M3M group - Basant Bansal, Roop Kumar Bansal, Pankaj Bansal - and other key persons deliberately avoided investigations during the raids.

M3M directors, including Bansal, had filed a petition in the Delhi High Court following the searches to quash the ED case and summons issued to them, saying they have not indulged in any wrongdoing, sources indicated.

The agency alleged "huge amount of money running into hundreds of crores were siphoned off through the M3M group" in this case.

In one of the transactions, the M3M group received about Rs 400 crore from IREO through several shell companies in multiple layers, it said.

"The transactions were shown in books of IREO as payments towards development rights. The land was owned by M3M group and the market value of the land was around Rs 4 crore."

"M3M group initially sold the development rights of the said land to five shell companies for a payment of Rs 10 crore and it was claimed that these companies are unrelated," it said.

However, it said, probe found that the five shell companies were operated by the M3M group.

# Mumbai butcher married victim, but claims...

**From Page 1**

Talking to media persons, Deputy Commissioner of Police Jayant Bajbale - who is heading the investigations - said, "The three elder sisters of the victim woman have identified her body. The process of handing over the slain woman's body is underway. We are getting the DNA samples of three sisters to match with that of Saraswati who is the youngest sister in their family."

Though the victim woman's family members are cooperating with the police in the investigations, Sane's two brothers - who are living in Mumbai - have refused to talk to the investigators by saying they had severed their relations with the accused several years ago and had absolutely no knowledge about his

recent activities.

The exact motive behind the gory murder has not been established yet. Informed police sources said the accused was giving evasive replies and was even trying to mislead them by making contradictory claims as to the circumstances leading to the murder.

During the course of his interrogation, Sane initially claimed that he had killed Saraswati, but she had committed suicide on June 3 (Saturday). He told the police that after her "suicide", he feared that he would be treated as a prime suspect in the circumstances leading to her death, he tried to dispose of her body parts. He also claimed that he wanted to commit suicide after the whole thing was over.

In another misleading claim, Sane told the investigators that as he had been diagnosed with HIV-positive nearly 15 years ago, he had no physical relations with her, that he treated her like a "daughter" than a "live-in" partner. However, the statements by the three elder sisters of Saraswati nailed Sane's lie as they told the police that their youngest sister had entered into a wedlock with the accused at a temple marriage ceremony several years ago.

On their part, the investigators have formed several teams to check on Sane's antecedents, his friends, acquaintances and business associates. "We expect to pool together all details about the accused and also the motive behind the murder in the next

few days," a senior police officer said. Saraswati's cold-blooded murder has sent shock waves through the country. The ghastly murder came to light on Wednesday night after the Naya Nagar police - acting on a complaint by one of Sane's neighbours - broke open the rented 7th floor flat (No. 704) of the accused in Akashganga building at Mira Road's Geeta Nagar locality on Thursday night.

To their utter shock, the investigators - upon their entering Sane's flat - first found a big plastic bag on his bed with a see-saw machine lying next to it. Inside the kitchen, the police found clumps of cut hair of a woman on the ground. Shockingly enough, they found a cooker with human flesh in it. The

investigators also found several vessels containing cooked human flesh.

In the kitchen wash basin and the area down under it, the police found half burnt bones and half burnt human flesh in a bucket and in the tubs. The investigators suspect that Sane might have disposed of some missing parts of Saraswati's body by flushing down the toilet drain or might have fed them to the stray dogs or thrown them in the nearby mangroves. Some local residents have told the police that they had seen Sane feeding the stray dogs in the neighbourhood. The police arrested Sane later on Thursday night. Sane was on Thursday produced before a Thane court which remanded him in police custody till June 16.

# Go First: CoC in place, approval for revival plan of airline likely soon

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Lenders of Go First, which is undergoing voluntary insolvency resolution process, have set up the Committee of Creditors (CoC) and a new resolution professional is likely to be appointed early next week, a source said on Friday. Cash-strapped Go First stopped flying from May 3 and now, with the CoC in place, the process for revival of the grounded airline is likely to gain speed.

The source said the deadline for constituting the CoC was June 9.

"The representatives from all four banks - Bank of Baroda, Central Bank of India,



IDBI and Deutsche Bank -- visited Go First office on Friday after a meeting, they set up the CoC.

"They discussed various aspects with Go First executives and the ways to proceed further," the source privy to the development told PTI.

According to the source, the new resolution professional is expected to be appointed on June 12, and the lenders

have suggested one name each from KPMG and EY.

"The CoC is now expected to take up the revival plan for Go First and once it is cleared, the same will be submitted to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)," the source said.

Earlier this month, the airline submitted a revival plan to the DGCA under which it has proposed to resume operations with a fleet of 26 aircraft -- 22 for active operations and 4 in reserve -- and 152 daily flights.

"We are hopeful of getting the DGCA approval as well after the CoC gives its go-ahead for the revival plan," the source said.

# Najafgarh drain work reviewed

Water quality improved after cleaning of Najafgarh Drain started since August 2022

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

There is consistent improvement of quality of water ever since work on cleaning of the Najafgarh Drain was started in August last year under the supervision of Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena after the constitution of the High Level Committee (HLC). The quality of water in river Yamuna also improved since then, the fifth meeting of the Committee noted on Friday.

On a month-on-month basis from January, 2023 to May, 2023, significantly noticeable and consistent improvement was noticed in the BOD levels in the water of the Najafgarh Drain and the River in comparison to the same

months in the year 2022. Carried out by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) as per standard protocol of testing water samples at different locations, the BOD levels in the Najafgarh Drain stood at 80 mg/l in January, 2022. The levels came down to 53 mg/l in January, 2023.

The figure for May, 2022 stood at 42 mg/l that came down to 48 mg/l in May, 2023. In case of Yamuna, at ISBT, where the Najafgarh Drain meets the river, BOD levels that stood at 42 mg/l in January, 2022, came down to 38 mg/l in January, 2023.

Similarly, in the Yamuna at the site after the Shahdara

Drain meets the river, BOD levels that stood at 60 mg/l in January, 2022, came down to 56 mg/l in January, 2023. The figure for May, 2022 stood at 80 mg/l and came down to 48 mg/l in May, 2023.

Reacting to a presentation made to this effect, Saxena expressed satisfaction over the fact that coordinated efforts being put in by various stakeholder departments had begun to bear fruits.

He however, cautioned the officers against complacency and reiterated that all timelines with regards to works outlined under various heads must be met and there should be seamless inter-departmental and agency coordination.

It came out during the meeting that as a result of this



enhanced coordination, critical projects that included setting up of STPs / DSTPs, that had been pending for years together due to land related issues had finally got an impetus, with the outstanding issues getting solved. In as many as 29 projects held up for years due to non-availability of land, 17 have been allotted land by DDA and revenue department during the past one month due to intervention by the LG. The remaining are also expected to be sorted expeditiously.

The HLC has been monitoring the rejuvenation of

Yamuna under eight specific verticals with specific targets, under which plan of action is formed and executed by the agencies concerned.

These include (i) 100 per cent treatment of sewage, (ii) trapping of all drains, (iii) construction of sewerage networks in unauthorised colonies & JJ clusters, (iv) industrial effluent management through CETPs, (v) septage management, (vi) restoration and rejuvenation of Yamuna floodplains, (vii) utilisation of treated waste water; and (viii) environmental management plan of Najafgarh Jheel.

# 20 newborns rescued after fire breaks out in hospital

No NOC from fire department

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) rescued 20 newborns shifted to nearby medical facilities after a fire broke out at a hospital in west Delhi's Vaishali Colony in the early hours of Friday. The hospital did not have a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) from the fire department.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) M Harsha Vardhan said the fire broke out at Nest Newborn and Child Hospital. No casualties were reported in the incident, he said. The information about the blaze was received at 1:35 am following which nine fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The fire was doused by 2:25 am, according to the fire department.

Director of Delhi Fire Services Atul Garg said, "The fire started in the basement of the building, where some furniture and papers were stored. The building, which is spread over approximately 180 square yards, comprises the basement and ground plus three floors." "The hospital was located on the first floor.

Twenty newborns admitted there were safely rescued by our team," he said. Of these, 13 babies were shifted to Arya Hospital in Janakpuri, two to New Born and Child Hospital at Dwarka More, another two to J K Hospital in Janakpuri and three were discharged, he added.

The hospital did not have a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) from the fire department, Garg said. The area where the building was located has narrow lanes and it was difficult for the fire tenders to reach the building. Fortunately, the building is located close to the fire station and firefighters could reach there on time, he said.

Sharing details of the fire-fighting operation, Garg said, "Two teams were formed. One team of firefighters was involved in dousing the fire and it ensured that the fire did not spread to the upper floors. Since sufficient water had already been used, the fire was contained but the first floor was engulfed by smoke." "Meanwhile, the other team managed to rescue all the newborns from the first floor and immediately shifted them to a safe room. Later, they were admitted to other medical facilities, he said.

DCP Vardhan said a preliminary inquiry has revealed that the fire broke out due to a short circuit on the ground floor. No casualties were reported in the incident, he said. "We have registered a case under sections 285 (negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter) and 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Indian Penal Code against the building owner as well as the hospital owner," the officer said.

# Cong, AAP doing politics for power, lack ideology: Nadda

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

BJP national president JP Nadda laid the foundation stone for a new office building of the party's Delhi unit at DDU Marg on Friday, and accused Opposition parties, including the Congress and AAP, of doing politics for power and lacking ideology.

"The BJP is the only cadre and mass-based party having an ideology, while all other parties do not have any ideology and they are pursuing politics for power only," Nadda said after participating in an elaborate 'Bhumi Pujan' ceremony for construction of the building.

He hit out at the Congress accusing it of joining hands with its arch-rival Communists "just to oppose the BJP", and claimed that it was heading towards a phase of having no ideology ("Vaichariki Shunyata").

Slamming the AAP and its convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Nadda said, "It's a shame for Delhi that such people are leading us. The AAP has quite a journey beginning with Lokpal to being 'malamaal'".

Alleging "liquor scam" in the Kejriwal-led Delhi government, the BJP president said "there should not be such a government.

We will have to wage a democratic battle against it." Taking a dig at Kejriwal, Nadda said he touted himself to be "Kattar Imandar" (hard-core



BJP president JP Nadda with Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva and other leaders during the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Delhi BJP office, in New Delhi on Friday

honest) despite his former deputy chief minister being denied bail multiple times by the court. Nadda lauded the BJP saying under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the party not only changed the government in the country but also started a new culture of politics based on development and performance.

"The change from 'Vanshavad' (nepotism) to 'Vikasvad' (politics of development) has come due to Modi. The BJP has replaced the vote bank politics with 'report card' politics," he said. Citing scrapping of Article 370 and construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, Nadda said the BJP always strived to pursue and achieve its goals after deciding its ideology and programmes.

Nadda along with BJP organisation general secretary BL Santhosh and Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva performed the Bhumi Pujan ceremony prior to laying the foundation stone for Delhi BJP office building, saying it was a "historic moment" for the party. The four-storey building inspired by South Indian temple architecture is expected to be completed in the next 18 months, BJP leaders said.

Situated on a 825 square metre plot, the new building will have a built up area of 30,000 square feet, they said. It will have facilities like parking, canteen and an auditorium having a sitting capacity of 300 people, besides offices for Delhi BJP functionaries, the BJP leaders added. "Our party offices are

actually the 'Sanskaar Kendras' for our Karyakartas," Nadda said and added that Nadda said that BJP is the biggest party in the world and that is why it was decided to build 887 offices in which more than 500 offices have been built and dedicated, 166 offices are under construction and this is the 167th office is under construction.

It will be a 4-storey office with a large auditorium, separate hall for the press and arrangements for holding small and large conferences and will also be equipped with digital and electronic facilities.

He said that today all the parties are only for power but they are going towards zero in ideology.

These are not ideological parties. But what we said in 1952, even today we are continuously moving forward on the same ideology. Where other parties do vote bank politics, we work on report card politics and today even our opponents have to give their report card.

Nadda remembered party stalwarts from Delhi including Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj, Madan Lal Khurana, Sahib Singh Verma, Kedar Nath Sahni, saying they made significant contribution to BJP's growth and expansion.

BJP leader Ramveer Singh Bidhuri expressed gratitude to the central leadership for their cooperation in resolving the obstacles in the construction of all the district offices as well as the state office in Delhi.

# Vigilance writes to GAD over house allotment to CM's Pvt Secy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Vigilance (DoV) has written to Additional Chief Secretary, General Administration Department (GAD) regarding allotment of a bungalow to Bibhav Kumar, Private Secretary to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal though he is not on rolls of Delhi Jal Board (DJB). The Vigilance Department has sought detailed information on the appointment file indicating terms & conditions of Bibhav for perusal and examination of records.

This comes after a controversy erupted after a 15th-century monument and gateway located on DJB's property for immediate conservation had been demolished to make way for an official bungalow built on the orders of former DJB CEO Udit Prakash Rai. The demolished Mahal, which dates back to 1480, is an important part of India's history. The vigilance department on Wednesday issued a show-cause notice to Rai.

"It is also informed that the said DJB house was allotted on the basis of Interpool Exchange with Public Works Department (PWD). Interpool Exchange between departments is allowed only to a regular employee working in the allotment department.

# DDA carries very special responsibility: Jaishankar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) carries a very special responsibility and the change they bring is not just for the Capital city, it is an impression of India. He also thanked it as his parents also lived in a DDA flat.

Interacting with the officers and employees of DDA, Jaishankar said any change that is brought in Delhi, also has a model impact on the rest of the country.

"Sushma Swaraj and I used to discuss that our Minister-Secretary combination was the best one as we have carried out many important responsibilities together. DDA carries a very special responsibility, the change that they bring is not just for the capital city, it is an impression of India. Any change brought in Delhi, also has a model impact on the rest of the country and today, the world is



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during 'Dialogue with Students' event at the Aryabhata College of Delhi University, in New Delhi on Friday

looking at us with a great deal of respect," he said. "My parents also lived in DDA flats. I always wanted to thank all of you for the work that you have done," he added.

"I have seen governments over the past 40 years, and this government is completely different. It has a sense of commitment and a sense of responsibility," he said. Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi was also a part

of the event. The external affairs minister has been holding meetings and events as part of BJP's outreach campaign on nine years of the Modi government. Jaishankar, along with former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani, has been deputed by the BJP to oversee a month-long campaign across seven Lok Sabha constituencies of Delhi to highlight the achievements of Narendra Modi Government in its nine years at Centre.

# DU's EC discusses varsity strategic plan for 25 years

New Delhi: The 1266th meeting of the Executive Council (EC) of the Delhi University (DU) was held on Friday where the strategic plan of the university for the next 25 years (2022-2047) was discussed.

Along with this, many important issues were also discussed and passed in the meeting. Regarding the strategic plan of the university, Vice Chancellor Prof. Yogesh Singh said that the next 25 years are very important for the country. "When the country will be celebrating the centenary of its independence, we will be



among the developed nations. Therefore, the University of Delhi has also started preparing for its contribution to make India a developed nation in the next 25 years," he said. "At the beginning of the meeting of the Executive Council, the Vice-Chancellor presented detailed information about the activities of University. After that various issues were discussed in

Open House Zero Hour. Under the agenda of the meeting, the recommendations made in the meeting of the Academic Council of the University held on May 26 were considered.

Under this, after discussion on various draft amendments, they were accepted," the varsity said in a statement. It further said that approval was given to revise schemes of examinations of existing CBCS/LOCF based courses as per Undergraduate Curriculum Framework-2022 as recommended by Academic Council. SR

# AAP reviews preparations for maha-rally against ordinance

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party's Delhi State Convener and Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai on Friday reviewed the preparations for the party's 'Maha-Rally', which is scheduled for June 11 at Ramlila Maidan, against the Centre's ordinance on control of services in the national capital.

AAP Delhi state vice-presidents, including MLAs Dilip Pandey, Jarnail Singh, Gulab Singh, Rajesh Gupta, Rituraj Jha, Kuldeep Kumar and AAP leader Jitender Tomar were also present on the occasion. After taking stock of the preparations, Rai said, "The people of



Delhi have given a chance, not once or twice but thrice to have the government formed and run under the able leadership of Arvind Kejriwal. But the Modi government at the Centre have

not been able to tolerate this," Rai alleged that for the last eight years, "every conspiracy has been hatched to stop the work being done in Delhi, obstructions have been placed at every

step", but the Kejriwal government has never given up.

Speaking about the ordinance, he said, "The Delhi government went to the Supreme Court to protest against the manner in which the work was being stalled and stopped, and a five-member Bench along with the Supreme Court's Chief Justice decided that Delhi is a part of the country, so Delhiites cannot be discriminated against. "But the Supreme Court was undermined through the Ordinance by the Central Government of BJP and the Prime Minister of the country, through subterfuge. The rights of the people of Delhi have

been hijacked. The people of Delhi are truly shocked and saddened by this," Rai added. The ordinance issued by the Centre on May 19 set up a National Capital Civil Service Authority, bringing back the executive control over matters related to services to its domain.

It was issued close on the heels of a Supreme Court verdict on May 11, through which the Delhi government was given the executive control over service-related matters, including the transfers and postings of Delhi government officers but excluding those related to police, public order and land.

# Courier firm dupes woman of ₹5 lakh in cyber fraud

New Delhi: A 60-year-old woman from southwest Delhi was allegedly duped of around Rs five lakh by a group of cyber fraudsters who accused her of having links with Khalistani terrorist outfits and drug peddlers.

According to an FIR registered in the case on May 29, the victim received a phone call from a man, who claimed to belong to a top courier company. He told her that she had booked a courier to Canada which had some problems.

"I told him that I had not booked any courier because I do not know anyone in Canada. Then he said there must be some terrorist conspiracy behind it. He specifically used

the word Khalistani," the victim said in her complaint. "He asked me to immediately lodge an FIR and also offered to connect me to someone in Amboli police station (in Mumbai)," she added.

The woman agreed to take the caller's help and he connected her to a person named Sibb Shejol. Shejol made a video call to her and assured her that he has lodged an FIR and sent the matter to the crime branch. The FIR said Shejol then connected the woman through a conference call to his senior who asked Shejol to arrest the woman immediately, accusing her of being part of a terror plot. SR

# 3 bikers killed, 1 hurt after SUV rams into motorcycle

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three people died and one was injured after an SUV ramed into their motorcycle in southwest Delhi's Dwarka area, police said on Friday. Police received information about the accident near NLU red light on Thursday.

The injured were taken to the Indira Gandhi Hospital. The motorcycle and the SUV were found at the scene of the crash, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) M Harsha Vardhan said. The victims were going towards Sector 17 from Bharat Vihar when the SUV coming from Sector 13 side hit

them. The accident took place near the NLU traffic signal on Thursday night when Lakkan (37) was on the way to drop home his sister, her husband and their daughter.

Upon reaching the hospital, police found Maate (32) and Diksha (10), residents of Spine Enclave in Dwarka Sector-17, undergoing treatment. Both were referred to Safdarjung Hospital after first aid, they said. Foola (30) and Lakkan (37) were declared dead, the DCP said, adding that injured Deeksha also died in hospital. All four victims, hailing from Madhya Pradesh's Tikamgarh district, were on the

same motorcycle. They worked as labourers in Delhi, police said. Foola was the wife of Maate and Lakkan was his brother-in-law, they said.

According to police, hours before Lakkan was killed after an SUV ramed into their motorbike in southwest Delhi's Dwarka area, he had celebrated the birthday of his son with his sister's family at his house. During the inquiry, the statement of the Maate was recorded who stated that he was going towards Sector 17 on a motorcycle from Bharat Vihar with his family when the SUV coming from Sector 13 side hit them, the DCP said.

# Bhojpuri singer held for raping 13-yr-old girl, posting her photo

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram police has nabbed a Bhojpuri singer identified as Abhishek aka Babul Bihari for allegedly raping a minor girl in Gurugram and posting her photo on social media.

According to the police, 21-year-old Babul Bihari lived in the Rajiv Nagar area of Gurugram two years ago. He had befriended a 13-year-old girl there. The accused had reportedly taken the minor to a hotel where he allegedly raped her. The accused had also



clicked an objectionable photo of the minor. However, the victim did not disclose the incident to anyone but a few days ago the accused shared the

objectionable pictures of the girl on social media. The pictures went viral after which the victim's parents came to know about the incident and only after this the girl spilled the whole truth.

Thereafter, the victim's family approached the police and an FIR was lodged at the Sector 14 police station under relevant sections of the POCSO and IT Act.

"We have arrested the accused. He was produced before a local court and sent to jail," Krishan Kant, station house officer of Sector-14 police station.

# Time to use tech-driven methods of voting: CEC

## Rajiv Kumar bats for ETBPS to allow overseas Indians to vote in elections here

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Friday, the time has come to use technology-driven methods such as e-postal ballot to allow eligible overseas Indian voters to participate in elections.

He also said that the timely and continued delivery of credible electoral outcomes since 1952 was an important ingredient of worldwide acknowledgement of India's comprehensive national power, especially in an era of "democratic backsliding".

Kumar made these



remarks while addressing the 2022-batch Indian Foreign Service officer-trainees on the theme "India-the Mother of Democracies and Role of ECI" at the Nirvachan Sadan here.

Speaking on the common challenges being faced by election management bodies in the conduct of free and fair elections, the chief election commissioner referred to the rising threat from fake news and deepfakes on social media derailing the election narratives. According to sources, when asked about voting by overseas voters, Kumar said that the time has come when the fifth largest economy of the

world invoked technology-driven methodology to facilitate eligible overseas Indian voters to participate in elections through electronically transmitted postal ballot system (ETBPS).

The EC proposal to facilitate ETBPS for overseas Indian voters is under discussions with the Ministry of External Affairs to "iron out" logistical challenges involved in its implementation, the government told Rajya Sabha in March this year. The total number of overseas electors as on January 1 this year stood at over 1.15 lakh.

Kumar also said that in the growing worldwide concern of democratic recession, the EC's continued delivery of credible electoral outcomes showcases the strength and resilience of its democratic institutions. The CEC also gave an overview of the complexity of numbers and sophistication of process for conducting elections in the world's largest democracy.

# Kejriwal seeks review of Gujarat HC order on PM Modi's degree

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has filed a review plea with the Gujarat High Court, requesting a reconsideration of the court's March 31st order that set aside the 2016 order of the Central Information Commission (CIC).

The CIC had directed the Gujarat University to disclose information regarding degrees in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In his review petition, Kejriwal argues that the Court's order, based on the submissions made by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta representing Gujarat University, inaccurately claimed that PM Modi's MA degree is available on the university's website.

According to Kejriwal's plea, the available document on the website is an Office Register (OR), which is distinct from the original degree. Solicitor

General Mehta had informed the High Court earlier that PM Modi's degree could be verified on the Gujarat University's website. However, Kejriwal's review petition challenges this assertion, claiming that the judgment is based on an error that is evident on the face of the record.

Furthermore, the review plea contests the imposition of a Rs. 25,000 fine on Kejriwal. The petition argues that the proceedings were initiated suo moto by the then CIC, Professor M. Sridhar Acharyulu, indicating that he did not pursue the matter further, as the High Court had specified in its judgment.

The Bench of Justice Biren Vaishnav has issued notices to Gujarat University, the Chief Information Commissioner, Professor M. Sridhar Acharyulu, and the Union of India. The court has scheduled the hearing on June 30th to deliberate on the matter.

# Antibiotic resistance killing babies with sepsis in poor countries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A global observational study, involving over 3,200 newborn babies diagnosed with sepsis, has highlighted the growing ineffectiveness of antibiotics used for treatment, leading to a significant rise in mortality rates among infants.

The study, published in PLOS Medicine and co-authored by a team of more than 80 researchers, sheds light on the critical issue of antibiotic resistance in at least ten countries, including India. Sepsis, a life-threatening bloodstream infection, affects millions of infants worldwide, with an estimated 3 million cases reported annually. Tragically, 214,000 newborn babies succumb to sepsis every year, primarily in low- and middle-income countries, where the infection has developed resistance to antibiotics.

Conducted from 2018 to 2020, the study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the infections affecting newborns in hospitals, the causative pathogens, the treatment

strategies employed, and the underlying factors contributing to increased mortality rates.

The findings were alarming, highlighting not only the high mortality rate among infants with culture-positive sepsis (nearly 1 in 5 across the hospital sites) but also the significant burden of antibiotic resistance. Manica Balasegaram, Executive Director of the Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership, emphasized the importance of the study in unraveling the complexities surrounding newborn infections and escalating mortality rates.

Newborns are particularly vulnerable to severe infections due to their underdeveloped immune systems. Nishad Plakkal, Additional Professor of Neonatology and Associate Dean (Research) at JIPMER, Puducherry, highlighted the study's striking finding of the disparity in sepsis-related deaths based on geographical location. Plakkal drew attention to the challenges faced in units where nurses are often overwhelmed with caring for multiple critically

ill babies simultaneously, creating an environment conducive to the spread of infections.

The study revealed significant variation in mortality rates among the 19 participating hospitals, ranging from 1.6% to 27.3%. Notably, rates were considerably higher in LMICs, further exposing the harsh reality of antibiotic-resistant infections prevalent in these healthcare settings. Sithembiso Velaphi, Head of Paediatrics at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa, emphasized the urgent need for change, pointing out the high risk of infections and the limited effectiveness of antibiotics in saving lives.

The study shed light on the practice of frequently switching antibiotics due to the high levels of resistance observed in treatments. Hospitals employed over 200 different antibiotic combinations, and physicians were often compelled to resort to carbapenems, classified as "Watch" antibiotics by the WHO, due to the escalating resistance to recommended treatments.

# Shah reviews Amarnath yatra preparation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah conducted a comprehensive review on Friday of the arrangements being made for the smooth conduct of the upcoming Amarnath pilgrimage in Jammu and Kashmir. The annual pilgrimage, which spans 62 days, is scheduled to commence on July 1 and conclude on August 31.

The pilgrimage takes devotees to the cave shrine of Amarnath, situated at an altitude of 3,880 meters in the South Kashmir Himalayas.

The meeting was attended by prominent officials, including Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha of Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi of the Army's Northern Command, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, and Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka. The Home Minister,



along with senior officials from the central government, the Army, and the Jammu and Kashmir administration, reviewed the preparations for the Amarnath pilgrimage.

During the meeting, Shah also assessed the plans being formulated to ensure foolproof security for the pilgrimage. There have been intelligence inputs suggesting that terrorist groups based in Pakistan may attempt to disrupt the pil-

grimage. All stakeholders involved in the pilgrimage were part of the meeting, where various issues related to the arrangements were discussed.

Officials stated that last year, 3.45 lakh people visited the holy cave, and this year, the number could increase to 5 lakh. To prevent incidents similar to last year's flash flood that claimed 16 lives near the shrine, the National Disaster Response Force has begun identifying suitable locations for setting up pilgrim camps, taking into account the possibility of unforeseen natural disasters.

Indian Air Force helicopters are expected to be deployed for aerial sorties in the higher regions around the holy cave to monitor glacial events and the formation of lakes that could trigger flash floods downstream.

Unlike last year when such sorties were conducted only

after the flash floods occurred in June, this year's exercise will be conducted before the commencement of the pilgrimage and at regular intervals throughout the two-month yatra.

The aerial surveys will be carried out by a team with expertise in remote sensing, satellite technology, hydrology, and disaster response. Contingency measures will be promptly implemented upon the identification of potential water build-up, particularly in areas near the cave shrine, along the entire pilgrimage route.

Officials also reported that significant amounts of snow have been observed along both tracks - Baltal and Pahalgam - leading to the holy cave. Therefore, the Border Roads Organisation has been tasked with clearing the snow by June 15th to ensure safe passage for the pilgrims.

# IAF SU-30s hold long sortie over IOR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force (IAF) recently carried out an eight-hour long non-stop extensive sortie over the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to test the operational capabilities and readiness of its SU-30 MKI frontline fighter jets, the IAF announced on Friday.

With China's increased presence in the IOR posing a challenge to India, these sorties demonstrate India's commitment to safeguarding its strategic interests in the region. This sortie marks the second exercise of its kind in the Indian Ocean in the past few days.

The first mission, involving four Rafale jets, lasted over six hours and had a strategic objective. "Another outing into the Indian Ocean Region! This time, with IAF Su-30s flying nearly eight hours, on a different axis. Both Seaboards cov-



ered," read a tweet from the official IAF handle on Friday. The sortie covered both the eastern and western seaboard of the country.

The SU-30 MKIs possess the capability to fly for extended durations and can undertake missions within China if required. Currently, India has nearly 260 SU-30s, which were initially manufactured in Russia, with their induction into the IAF beginning in 2002. These jets are equipped with various weapon systems, including the indigenously designed and manufactured BrahMos supersonic missile.

In a separate effort to enhance the combat readiness

of its Rafale jet fleet, the IAF conducted a "strategic" mission lasting over six hours in the Indian Ocean Region. The mission, which involved various manoeuvres and simulated operations, demonstrated the long-range combat capabilities of the Rafale jets. Providing further details, sources revealed that the Rafale jets took off from the Hasimara Air Force station in the eastern sector on May 31.

After completing the mission and achieving the desired results, the jets returned to base. Although specific details of the mission were not disclosed, it showcased the operational capabilities and readiness of the Rafale jets in dealing with challenging situations.

The IAF tweeted about the mission, stating, "Four IAF Rafales flew a long-range mission for over six hours into the IOR. The aircraft 'fought' their way through a large force engagement en route to their

Weapon Release Point. Pickle on time, weapon on target—the IAF way!" However, the exact date of the operation was not revealed. The Rafale jets, the first major acquisition of fighter planes by India in 23 years since the import of Sukhoi jets from Russia, are manufactured by France and boast a wide range of potent weapons.

Currently, the IAF possesses 36 Rafale jets, with one squadron based in Ambala, responsible for the western sector encompassing China and Pakistan, and another squadron in Hasimara, West Bengal, covering the entire eastern sector facing China.

The induction process of the Rafale jets commenced in 2020 and concluded last year. In 2016, India and France signed a government-to-government deal worth over 7 billion Euros for the acquisition of 36 Rafale jets from Dassault, the manufacturer.

# KCR hikes pension for divyangs in T

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Friday announced a hike of Rs 1000 per month in the physically challenged person pensions. Announcing at Mancherla public meeting, the chief minister said the physically challenged persons would now get Rs 4116 per month after the increase.

Speaking on the occasion the chief minister said the BRS government is for welfare and it was aiming to expand the Singareni coal mining activity in all the mineral reserves in the State. Speaking about the Singareni coal mines KCR said the Congress and BJP were trying to trim the collieries for their vested interests. On the controversial comments of Congress leaders about the dumping of

Dharani portal in Bay of Bengal the chief minister made a clarification call to the public to dump those leaders in Bay of Bengal if they continue to mince similar kind of statements.

The chief minister spoke in length about the welfare programmes such as Dalit Bandhu, BC welfare programme for artisans, sheep rearing scheme second phase during his speech and cautioned the people not to fall prey to the gimmicks and false promises of parties that got no face value among the public. Ministers Vemula Prashant Reddy, Indrakaran Reddy, Koppula Eeshwar, Gangula Kamalakara, whip Balka Suman, MP Santhosh Rao, MLAs, MLA Divakar Rao and other state level corporation chair persons attended public meeting.

# Minister slams K'taka Govt over nixing lesson on RSS founder from textbooks

New Delhi: Union Minister Rajeev Chandrashekar has criticised the Government in Karnataka for reportedly removing a lesson on RSS founder KB Hedgewar from school textbooks. Chandrashekar accused the Congress party of having a limited view of history that revolves around the Nehru-Gandhi family.

He also took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi's recent "Mohabbat ki dukaan" remark, describing the previous UPA government as a "corruption ki dukaan" (shop of corruption) and a "lost decade." During a press conference, Chandrashekar highlighted the transformation that has taken place in the country over the past nine years under



the Modi government. He emphasized the progress made in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI), job creation, and the export of telecom gadgets.

Chandrashekar praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for leading India into the most exciting times in the digital economy and mentioned the success of Direct Bank Transfers (DBTs). Regarding the Karnataka government's reported plan to revise school

textbooks, including the removal of a lesson on the RSS founder, Chandrashekar dismissed it as mere antics by the Congress to gain attention.

He accused the Congress of rewriting the country's history to exclude individuals who do not belong to a "dynasty." Karnataka's Primary and Secondary Education Minister, Madhu Bangarappa, had earlier stated that textbook revisions would be undertaken this year, but did not provide further details. Chandrashekar condemned the move to remove the lesson on Hedgewar, describing it as a "crime against the youth of India" and predicting that people would respond to the Congress for depriving students of the truth about India. PNS

# New chief for Air Force Station, Faridabad

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Group Captain Kapil Sharma took over command of Air Force Station Faridabad from Group Captain KS Ganesh on June five, the IAF said here on Friday. Air Force Station Faridabad is an important logistics hub for Western Air Command. It provides valuable logistics support to various units of IAF.

Sharma was commissioned in the Logistics branch of Indian Air Force in December 1997. He has held various appointments in operational bases and base repair depots during his service career.

He has undergone Strategic Management and Defence Acquisition Management courses.

# Raise baler capacity in stubble burning areas, says Agri Min official



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Agriculture Ministry official KAP Sinha on Friday suggested increasing baler capacity, deploying more machinery in high stubble burning areas and involving cooperative societies in Delhi and surrounding states.

Addressing a workshop 'Paddy straw management and action plans' organised in Ludhiana, Sinha acknowledged the desire to eliminate the practice of paddy straw burning but identified obstacles hindering progress.

"Further, he proposed increasing baler capacity, deploying more machinery in high-burning areas, involving cooperative societies to support SC beneficiaries, and replicating successful initiatives," an official statement quoted Sinha as saying at the workshop.

Sinha, who is an additional secretary in the Union Agriculture Ministry, expressed hope that there will be no stubble-burning incidents next year. The workshop was organised along with Punjab Agriculture University (PAU) and the state government.

PAU Vice-Chancellor Satbir Singh Gosal cautioned that stubble burning emits toxic pollutants, which disperse in the surroundings and eventually affect the air quality and people's health as well as soil health. He advocated the concept of conservation agriculture which up-cycles paddy straw without pro-

ducing any waste. He called for synergy among the Department of Agriculture, NGOs, academia, industry and farmers to tackle the menace of paddy straw burning.

S Rukhmani, Joint Secretary in the Union Agriculture Ministry, said there is a reduction of 30-40 per cent in paddy straw burning since last year and emphasised the workshop's goal of creating a value-chain plan to utilise paddy straw as a resource and minimise losses for farmers. She also briefed about a central scheme that is in place to support crop residue management.

The scheme provides financial assistance of 50 per cent for farmers to purchase designated machinery and 80 per cent for Cooperative Societies, Farmers' Producers Organizations (FPOs) and Panchayats to establish Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs).

Senior officers from the Centre and state agriculture department, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, stakeholders in the central government, state governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCR of Delhi were present in the workshop.

Representatives of State Pollution Control Boards, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, various stakeholder agencies, social groups and NGOs, agricultural machinery manufacturing industries and biomass industry associations and more than 300 farmers participated in the workshop.

# SenzHb gives haemoglobin test result in just 30 seconds: CSIR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Soon, in just Rs 10 and within 30 seconds, one will be able to get the results of their haemoglobin test. Thanks to the scientists of the CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR) who have indigenously developed a rapid haemoglobin detection test kit called 'SenzHb', a paper-based kit that gives results in just 30 seconds.

The IITR scientists said, "As compared to testing facilities available in the market, SenzHb is economical and easy to use." They said the traditional methods for getting haemoglobin checked involve sophisticated instruments and clinical laboratory settings that are often unavailable in remote/rural areas. "This paper-based, colorimetric strip-type sensor of SenzHb addresses these challenges by providing a rapid and reliable haemoglobin assay," IITR director Bhaskar Narain said.

All one needs to do is prick with the help of a needle that comes with the strip, drop blood on the strip and as soon the strip colour changes, match it with the 'changed colour guidelines' given along with the kit. Similar kits available in the market are not just high priced, but do not offer accurate results and are not 'made in India'.



"Also, this kit incorporates a QR code that provides detailed instructions for conducting the test in eight languages. The QR code also includes a colour chart, further simplifying the interpretation of results," he said. The IITR scientists team said to ensure the accuracy and reliability of SenzHb, extensive validation has been conducted.

It is a point-of-care test (POCT) kit that can be used by healthcare workers, even in the absence of advanced laboratory facilities. Its simplicity and user-friendly design enables efficient and accurate haemoglobin estimation.

# Centre OK's use of UAVs for crop dusting, surveys

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a move aimed to develop Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) as vibrant business enterprises in keeping with changing times, the Government has widened their role by allowing them to venture into the unmanned aerial vehicle sector for crop dusting i.e. spraying of fertilizers and pesticides on crops and also for survey of property. Currently such aerial gadgets have already become the machines of choice for many farmers in the country who are using them for various agricultural activities ranging from spraying liquid fertilisers and pesticides to check crop damage if any.

This was among the five key decisions taken in a meeting held recently between Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah and Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers



Mansukh Mandaviya. In yet another important move, the ministries agreed that on the basis of mapping, PACS — which are not functioning as fertilizer retailers — will be identified and they will be encouraged to function as retailers on the basis of feasibility in a phased manner.

Those PACS, which are not currently functioning as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendras (PMKSK), will be brought under the ambit of PMKSK, according to an official from the Union Corporation Ministry. Further, PACS will also be connected with the marketing of organic

fertilizers, especially Fermented Organic Manure (FoM)/ Liquid Fermented Organic Manure (LFOM)/ Phosphate Enriched Organic Manure (PROM).

Under the Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme of the Department of Fertilizers, fertilizer companies will act as an aggregator for small bio-organic producers to market the end product, in this supply and marketing chain of bio-organic fertilizers, PACS will also be included as wholesalers/retailers. There are about one lakh PACS present across the country.

"These important decisions will increase the income of PACS, as well as increase the employment opportunities in rural areas and farmers will be able to get fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and agricultural machinery at the local level," the ministry added.

# Cong, LF to fight polls in rural Bengal jointly

Opp moves HC for CAPF as violence erupts in regions  
SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Congress and the Left Front will jointly contest the upcoming Bengal rural elections, the leaders of the two parties including Pradesh Congress president Adhir Chowdhury on Friday said.

This, even as the State Opposition parties including the BJP moved Calcutta High Court seeking directions for the State Election Commission to allot more time for filing of nomination and deployment of central forces.

"I have appealed to all the Congress supporters and workers to work in coordination with the Left Front in the panchayat elections," Chowdhury said. On how the seats would be shared he said the parties would put up their own candidates where they were stronger and support the alliance partner where they had better chances of winning.

"If an atmosphere conducive to elections can be created and if the people get a chance to vote then the TMC will take a taste of real opposition this time round," Chowdhury said adding "we have instructed our workers to strike alliance with the Left as far as possible."

CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakrabarty too said that there was a mutual understanding and the Left and the Congress would fight the polls together. "Our candidate list is ready and we are going to file nominations... will fight the elections jointly with the Congress and the Indian Secular Front."

The Congress and Left leaders' declarations came amid a demand for deployment of central forces and extending the time of filing nominations.

While elections will be held on July 8, the nominations for the single-phase elections will start from June 9 and continue till June 15. July 20 has been fixed as the last date of withdrawing nomination.

Both the Congress and the BJP have moved the High Court seeking extension of time for filing nomination together with a demand for deployment of central forces.

"Five days are not enough



for filing nomination as it is clear that the State administrative machinery itself is not prepared to accept nomination... in many places there are no adequate nomination papers, police officials... and in many other areas the BDOs or other district and block level officers seem to be completely unprepared as they have no infrastructure, no police force... it looks like a farce taking place and so we have approached the High Court seeking extension of time and deployment of central forces," said BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya.

Another BJP leader Rahul Sinha said no election was possible in Bengal without central forces. Senior State Congress leader Nepal Mahato too said "we will press for deployment of central forces as the number of state police for a single-phase poll is too low... the number of police forces do not even match the number of booths," he said. There are about 59,000 booths in Bengal.

The Calcutta High Court however on Friday asked the State Election Commission to consider extension of nomination time and left the deployment of central forces to the State government.

The BJP, on behalf of the Leader of Opposition of the West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari — who is in Delhi to meet Home Minister Amit Shah — demanded installation of CCTV cameras in every booth, deployment of paramilitary forces and more time in filing the nomination for the panchayat polls.

The year 2018, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) won uncontested, 34 per cent of the

# Death threats to Pawar, Raut and brother Shinde says Govt has taken serious note of threat to Pawar; Mumbai Police files FIR

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major development, NCP Chief Sharad Pawar has received a fresh death threat through a tweet, saying that the 83-year-old leader would meet the same as rationalist Narendra Dabholkar who was shot dead in Pune in August 2013. On a day when Shiv Sena (UBT) MP and leader Sanjay Raut also received a similar death threat through his MLA-brother Sunil Raut, an unfazed Pawar dismissed the death threat handed to him, by saying: "I have full faith in law and order machinery. I do not bother about this kind of threats."

Every citizen has a right to express his or her views on any subject. No one can silence the voice of anyone through this kind of threats. Pawar's daughter and MP Supriya Sule went along with a delegation of NCP functionaries and met Mumbai Police Commissioner Vivek Phansalkar demanding "strict action" in the matter.

"MP Supriyati Sule and the delegation of NCP today met the Mumbai Police Commissioner and demanded immediate action regarding the death threat received by NCP President Sharad Pawar Saheb on social media. At this time, the Xerox of the screenshot of the threat received on social media was given to the Commissioner of Police," the NCP tweeted.

Taking serious cognisance of the death threat received by Pawar, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday said his Government has taken serious note of the death threat to NCP chief Sharad Pawar and he has given instructions for a probe. His deputy Devendra Fadnavis said such threats will not be tolerated, while Mumbai Police registered a first information report (FIR) over the threat, Pune cops reviewed security at Pawar's residence in Shivajinagar area of the city. Meanwhile, two people were detained here after Sanjay Raut



on Friday said he and his MLA brother Sunil Raut had received death threat calls and asked the Maharashtra Government to take them seriously.

Both the persons were apprehended from the eastern suburb of Govandi, a senior official said. Police are awaiting

an official complaint in the case. Once the complaint is filed, the two will be placed under arrest, said the official.

Sanjay Raut also said that NCP chief Sharad Pawar getting a threat on social media was a serious issue, claiming that moves were afoot to instill fear in

the Opposition. It may be recalled that 69-old rationalist and anti-superstition activist Narendra Dabholkar was shot dead from a point blank range by two motor-bicycle riding gunmen, while he was taking a morning walk on the Omkareshwar bridge located in

the heart of Pune, on August 20, 2013.

"The Government should take it (threat to him and his brother) seriously and not me. The Government wants such threats. The matter is with the police and they will have to look into it," he told reporters.

"Sunil Raut received a threat. I didn't file any complaint. We are not worried about it," claimed Raut, who has received threats in the past as well.

Meanwhile, calling Pawar a "senior respected leader", Shinde said police authorities have been asked to beef up Pawar's security if needed.

For the past few days, the Chief Minister said, deliberate attempts are being made to create tension in the State.

"Ever since the Supreme Court verdict (in Shiv Sena-related issues), some people are upset due to which attempts are being made to spoil the atmosphere in the State," he said.

# 'Jungle raj' in Shinde-Fadnavis rule: Cong

PTI ■ MUMBAI/NAGPUR

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Friday claimed 'jungle raj' or lawlessness is prevailing under the Eknath Shinde-BJP Government in the State as it is witnessing murders, rapes, riots and threats to Opposition leaders. In a statement released in Mumbai, he said if Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who also holds the Home portfolio, cannot maintain law and order in the State, where several districts had been in grip of tension over controversial social media posts, he should quit.

"Is it a policy of the Government to eliminate Opposition leaders?" Patole asked while referring to the death threat issued to NCP chief Sharad Pawar. Targeting Fadnavis, the Congress MLA said, "Step down if you cannot maintain law and order." "Everyday there are reports of murders, rapes, robberies, riots, attacks on Opposition leaders from various parts of the State. Opposition leaders are being openly threatened with death.



Under the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis regime, there is absolute jungle raj in the State," Patole alleged.

"The law and order situation in the State is so frightening that people are wondering if a Government exists in the State and if it has a Home Minister," said the Congress leader. There have been riots in ten cities in the State in the last three months alone and incidents of commu-

nal tension are being reported from different towns, he said. The ruling parties (Shiv Sena and the BJP) are creating religious discord and consciously trying to stoke religious tensions in Maharashtra, he said.

"Leaders of Opposition parties are getting death threats in a bid to stop them from speaking against the Government," he said.

# Congress appoints Gohil as Guj PCC chief; Babaria as Hry, Delhi in-charge



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Friday appointed Rajya Sabha MP Shaktisinh Gohil as the new Gujarat PCC president and relieved him from the charge of AICC in-charge of Haryana and Delhi by appointing Deepak Babaria in his place.

"The Congress president has appointed Shaktisinh Gohil as the new Gujarat PCC president and V Vaithilingam, MP, as the new Puducherry PCC president," said an official communication. "The Congress president has appointed Deepak Babaria as AICC in-charge of Haryana and Delhi with immediate effect," said another official order from the party. It also said that the party appreciates the contributions of outgoing AICC in-charge Gohil.

Gohil has replaced Jagdish Thakor, who had resigned after the party's poor performance in the last assembly elections in Gujarat when the party reached its lowest-ever legislator tally. Gohil has been a former Leader of Opposition in Gujarat at the time Narendra Modi was the chief minister of the state.

By appointing Gohil, who is considered close to Rahul Gandhi, the party is seeking to strengthen the organisation in the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. The Congress has remained out of power in Gujarat for over two-and-a-half decades.

Meanwhile, the Congress also appointed MLA Varsha Gaikwad as the new president of Mumbai RCC (Regional Congress Committee) by replacing Bhai Jagtap. Vaithilingam has replaced A V Subramanian as Puducherry PCC chief.

"The party appreciates the contributions of the outgoing PCC/RCC presidents Shri Jagdish Thakor (Gujarat), Shri A V Subramanian (Puducherry) and Shri Bhai Jagtap (Mumbai)," another order said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has also appointed Mansoor Ali Khan as secretary, AICC attached to the AICC in-charge of Telangana with immediate effect. Besides, P C Vishnuvardhan, secretary, AICC is relieved from his current responsibility in Karnataka and is now attached to the AICC in-charge of Telangana.

"The party appreciates the contributions of N S Boseraju and Nadeem Javed and relieves them of their responsibilities as secretaries of AICC," the party said. In another order, the Congress president also approved the proposal for the appointment of chairmen of various committees, and the constitution of the Disciplinary Action Committee of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect.

While Jagneswar Babu has been appointed chairman of the AICC Programme Implementation Committee for Odisha, Sanjay Tripathy is the new chairman of Publicity and Publication Committee and Panchanan Kanungo the chairman of the Manifesto Committee.

The Congress chief also set up a six-member Disciplinary Action Committee for Odisha Pradesh Congress with Santosh Singh Salluja as its chairman and Janaki Ballav Pattanaik as its convener. Bhujabala Majhi, Rajendra Chhatra, Debendra Sahoo and Pratima Mallik have been appointed as members of the disciplinary panel for the Odisha Congress.

# Second innings for Maitreyan in BJP



Former AIADMK MP V Maitreyan (C) joins BJP in the presence of BJP leader Arun Singh (R), at party headquarters in New Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

It is the BJP "once more" for former Rajya Sabha member V Maitreyan, who was expelled from the AIADMK last year, and joined the BJP on Friday for the second time.

Maitreyan was in the BJP before joining the AIADMK more than two decades ago and was considered a close aide to its late leader J Jayalalitha who sent him to Rajya Sabha thrice.

He joined the BJP here at the party headquarters in the presence of its national general secretaries Arun Singh and CT Ravi.

Before re-joining the party, Maitreyan met the party president JP Nadda and presented him with a bouquet. He is an old BJP hand and follower of RSS.

Soon after taking the BJP membership, he expressed confidence that the "lotus" will bloom in Tamil Nadu in 2024 and 2026, when Lok Sabha

and Assembly polls are due respectively. "I returned to the BJP after 23 years. Arun Jaitley was my good friend and Dharmendra Pradhan is my good friend. Modi is visionary leader," he said. Maitreyan was an AIADMK MP for 18 years. Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Maitreyan told reporters that he is not merely a name but the "mission and vision" of a resurgent India which is making rapid strides in different fields.

He was expelled by the current AIADMK leader Edappadi K Palaniswami for "anti-party activities"

With the BJP's ties with the AIADMK are seen to be far from smooth despite Palaniswami's assertions that their alliance continues, BJP general secretary Ravi said his party has been playing the role of a real Opposition in the State even though it has only four MLAs. It is fighting the DMK Government over people's issues, he said.

# Govt demolishes school used as morgue after triple train accident

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government on Friday began demolishing the 65-year-old Bahanaga High School building that was used as a temporary morgue for victims of Coromandel Express. The demolition was carried out in presence of the school managing committee (SMC) members and Public Works Department officials.

The decision to raze the building was taken after the SMC said it was old and not safe

and that kids were reluctant to attend classes in the school where bodies were kept.

Guardians had also demanded demolition of the building as photos of bodies being ferried to the school for identification by their families had been imprinted in the minds of the children.

Based on the SMC's decision and request by guardians and locals, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik held a meeting with senior Government officials including the Chief

Secretary and sanctioned reconstruction of the institute on Thursday. He also approved a proposal to make it a model school with modern facilities such as a library, science laboratory and digital classrooms.

During his visit to the institution on Thursday, Balasore Collector Dattatraya Bhausaheb Shinde had said the school managing committee wanted the building to be demolished.

The District Collector appealed to all not to spread fear and superstition, suggesting that



efforts should instead be made to inculcate a scientific temper in the young, impressionable minds. School and Mass Education Department Secretary S Aswathy said the authorities will organise counselling for students and teachers to remove fear from their minds.

Two days after the June 2 train accident, the State Government shifted the bodies from the school to different hospitals in Bhubaneswar.

While above 200 bodies have so far been identified and

handed over to their families, around 80 still remain unclaimed and unidentified at Bhubaneswar AIIMS morgue, officials said.

The Coromandel Express had crashed into a stationary goods train, derailling most of its coaches on June 2. A few of those toppled over the last few coaches of the Bengaluru-Howrah Express which was passing by at the same time. In all, 288 people died in the accident and more than 1,200 were injured.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## In bad taste

A tableau depicting the assassination of Indira Gandhi in Canada is not the done thing

A controversial tableau depicting the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has sparked widespread debate and outrage, especially in Canada and India. The tableau, displayed during a cultural event, has ignited discussions surrounding artistic freedom, historical sensitivity and the limits of expression. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her bodyguards on October 31, 1984. It was their response to her government's operation against militants hiding in Golden Temple, Amritsar. The assassination had profound repercussions, including widespread violence and riots targeting the Sikh community across India. Recently, during a cultural event in Canada, a tableau depicting the assassination of Indira Gandhi was showcased. The tableau featured actors dressed as assassins, reenacting the tragic event. The inclusion of such a portrayal in a public setting has ignited a firestorm of criticism, with both the Indian diaspora and the broader Canadian public expressing outrage. Leave alone the rationale of showing such a tableau; it was at best a peevish attempt to glorify the event. No matter how opposed you might be to your opponent, trampling graves is never the done thing. The tableau showed a lack of sensitivity and respect for a painful moment in Indian history. The assassination of Indira Gandhi was a traumatic event that claimed the life of a prominent leader and led to communal violence. The reenactment of this event, especially without proper context, is the trivialisation of the suffering caused.

Moreover, it opens up wounds of an event that took place 39 years ago. Not only does it put Sikhs in a bad light, creating a notion that all of them supported the assassination, but also makes them suffer all over again. The tableau has also drawn condemnation for perpetuating negative stereotypes and stigmatising the Sikh community. Sikhism is a peaceful religion, and the actions of a few individuals do not represent the beliefs and values of an entire community. Associating Sikhs with violence through such a portrayal exacerbates existing prejudices and can lead to increased discrimination. This is not to say that artistic expression should not be protected, but it should not border sadism and should not celebrate vicious campaigns. Striking a balance between artistic expression and cultural sensitivity remains a challenge in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. It is crucial to continue engaging in dialogue to foster understanding and mutual respect while upholding the principles of freedom of expression. In this context, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has done the right thing and issued a statement condemning the depiction, saying it was in bad taste and would harm India-Canada relations. It goes without saying that the Minister rose above the party line and talked about the image of the country, for which he needs to be complimented.

## PICTALK



A farmer works at his field on a hot summer day in Amritsar

## Churn among the Christian community



PRAFULL GORADIA

Hinduism does not have an "Other" to quarrel with. It is the deductive approach that has made many a European lose interest in Christianity

There is a greater affinity between Hinduism and Christianity than with Islam or Judaism. Jesus Christ walked the earth and performed innumerable miracles to cure and otherwise help common folk in the region around Jerusalem. His betrayal by Judas, trial by the Roman rulers and crucifixion on Calvary Hill are all on record. Christians insist Jesus was the son of God whereas the Muslims look upon him as a prophet; the Jews reject him as nobody. Hindus, who take an interest in knowing about other religions, would say he was rather like an avatar.

I am a committed Hindu with clear views on my faith. When I visited Jerusalem a few years ago, I was feeling somewhat ill and weak. On our visit to Calvary Hill, I somehow forgot about rest and simply kept going upward, with my family, till we reached the top of the hill and returned to the base and then our hotel. Evidently, some unknown and unseen power was driving me to walk on and further upwards.

To come back to similarity, Christianity is not as much against idol worship as its priests might claim. Every church has a cross, while every Roman Catholic place of worship has a portrait or statue of the Virgin Mary as a symbol of Immaculate Conception. Hinduism also permits the practice of yoga, which means surrogacy, wherein the fathers could even be celestial figures, as were the fathers of the Pandavas of the Mahabharata. Significantly, Islam and Judaism demand transnational loyalty from their followers. The Muslims call this "qaum above vatan", i.e., religion above state. On the other hand, nationalism above all, as a concept was conceived by Christian Europe. Hindus have their faith in Bharat Mata as the political goddess to be followed. In this context, the only point of difference in India between Christianity and Hinduism is the conversion of poor Hindus. Tempting and luring needy Hindus by offering help, including money, in



exchange for quitting the worship of say, Ambaji and Hanuman, and worshipping Jesus Christ in a Church from day one after conversion, has been unwelcome, and also a source of tension.

A day's visit to the Dangs district of Gujarat would demonstrate the anguish local Hindus feel. The Christian community across the world comes through as well-educated. And knowledge can lead to thinking, and quite a few thinking people can become hungry for their spiritual advancement. They would prefer not to be told as to what is pious and what is sinful; what is heaven and how they would be dispatched to one or the other on Doomsday, on the command of God. If religion touches base with logic, Christianity would fall on the side of Deductive Logic, which begins with an imaginary premise. For example, my god is the only god and there is no other. If one wants to go to heaven, one has to go through him. For a simple person, it would be convenient to accept such a given thesis because the corollaries that follow such a thesis are easy to digest. But a thinking person may find the proposition imposing. He/she

would welcome the freedom for his psyche to play about with. In this case, Hinduism with its inductive logic would be more satisfying. The reason is that the faith would expect the follower to choose his dharma or duty in life. Thereafter, it would be a matter of how well he works towards fulfilling that dharma. That is karma. For the thinking psyche, it is freedom and freedom all the way. There is almost a limitless treasure of scripture and mythology to guide the follower, from the Vedas, Puranas, Bhagavad Gita and the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Fortunately, in the inter-religious context, Hinduism does not have an "Other" to quarrel with. It is the deductive approach that has made many European lose interest in Christianity. There is no animosity against it, but a loss of interest as it leads to an unfulfilled spirituality. Hinduism as a whole has not proselytized, made no real attempt to convert and yet, there are some one hundred ISKCON temple complexes, mainly in the USA and Europe. The chant of "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama" has been popularized by ISKCON.

Take, for example, Kerala. Christianity simultaneously faces two rivals. There is communism along with its insistent atheism, and the sword of Islam then Hindus who ideally would prefer peace and harmony. Christianity on its own cannot wield power. The choice of the Christian community to solely depend on itself in the last elections handed the communists a thumping victory. Why should Kerala enjoy the unique honour of keeping the flag of Marx fluttering? Hardly anywhere else in the world is it even remembered. Even libraries have reduced space on their shelves for Das Kapital. Kerala is a cultural jewel of India. Its speciality is worship; the state's temples and churches are a unique sight to behold. The Maharaja of Travancore, when he ruled as the trustee of Lord Padmanabha, allowed up to 20 per cent of his people to become worshippers of Jesus Christ. Today, there is hardly any Christian denomination that is not present in Kerala.

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



CHRISTIANS INSIST JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD WHEREAS THE MUSLIMS LOOK UPON HIM AS A PROPHET; THE JEWS REJECT HIM AS NOBODY

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## TEXTBOOK ROW IN KARNATAKA

Sir — Karnataka Primary and Secondary Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa on Friday stated that the previous BJP government had tried to infuse its "corrupt" mindset into the system of studies. He stressed that the changes to be introduced in school textbooks will be in the interest of children; it won't be about pro-Congress or anti-BJP changes. The statement was made amid reports that the textbook lesson on RSS founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar will be removed. The remarks come after the Minister announced that the revision of school textbooks will be done this year.

The Congress in its poll manifesto had promised to undo the changes made to school textbooks when the BJP was in power and had also promised to scrap the NEP. The Karnataka Primary and Secondary Education Board stated: "It'll be done very soon and it will be handled by professional people." There was a controversy during the previous BJP regime, with demands by the Opposition Congress and some writers for sacking the then textbook review committee chief Rohith Chakrathirtha for allegedly "saffronising" school textbooks and omitting chapters on key figures like freedom fighters, social reformers and the writings of noted literary figures.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

## INDIA-US BILATERAL RELATIONS

Sir — Recently, US Defence Secretary Lloyd J Austin had visited India to further expand bilateral relations. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to make an official visit to the US in a few days. During Modi's visit, Joe Biden will host a state dinner for him, a nod to the US-Indian relationship. The frequent exchange of high-ranking officials between India and the US shows that both countries are keen to develop their relationship in the light of their shared concerns, especially with respect to China. However, India's different approach to dealing with the Ukraine crisis has influenced it to some extent.



ARPITA KATYAL

## Give a green touch to product development

Environment considerations can provide a sustainable future for all. It is not only a responsible but also a promising opportunity

In today's world, where environmental issues are becoming increasingly critical, it is essential for companies to adopt sustainable practices. Integrating environmental considerations into the product development process is a key step towards minimising the ecological footprint of businesses. By focusing on sustainability, companies can contribute to the preservation of the environment while also enhancing their reputation and gaining a competitive edge.

Promoting sustainable ethics and practices within companies is crucial for the betterment of the environment. While transitioning to complete sustainability overnight may be challenging, every company can take steps towards positive change. By embracing sustainable principles, companies can contribute to a greener future.

**Conducting a Life Cycle Assessment and Design**  
To start with, companies should conduct a comprehensive Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of their products. This assessment involves evaluating the environmental impact of a product throughout its



entire life cycle, from raw material extraction to disposal. By identifying the hotspots where environmental impacts are most significant, companies can make informed decisions to reduce their ecological footprint.

**Prioritise Sustainable Design**  
During the product design phase, sustainability should be the priority. This involves considering materials, energy efficiency and recyclability. Choosing renewable and biodegradable materials, reducing energy consumption and designing products that are easy to repair, upgrade or recycle can significantly minimise environmental impact.

**Energy Efficiency and Resource Conservation**  
Companies should focus on improving energy effi-

ciency and conserving resources in their product development process. This can be achieved by integrating energy-saving technologies, such as low-power components and efficient manufacturing processes. Implementing waste reduction strategies, such as recycling and reusing materials, can also minimise resource consumption and decrease waste generation.

**Continuous Improvement and Innovation**  
Sustainable product development is an ongoing process. Companies should continuously evaluate and improve their environmental performance. Regularly monitoring and benchmarking against key performance indicators (KPIs) can help identify areas for further enhancement.

**Consumer Education and Engagement**  
It is very important to educate the target audience and customers about the products. By providing clear information on eco-friendly features, such as reduced energy consumption or recyclability, companies can empower consumers to make

environmentally conscious choices. Engaging with customers through social media, informative campaigns and interactive platforms can foster a sense of shared responsibility for the environment.

Thus, it is evident that integrating environmental considerations into product development is not only a responsibility but also a promising opportunity. In one of the latest reports in 2023 titled "10 Steps to Reducing Costs While Saving the Environment," Barbara Swenson outlined strategies for manufacturing businesses to become more sustainable, reduce costs and increase profits. These steps offer a roadmap for businesses to align with sustainability goals, reduce expenses, and contribute to environmental preservation. By prioritising sustainability, businesses can contribute to the preservation of our planet, enhance their reputation and secure long-term success. This concerted effort allows us to create a positive impact and shape a better world for future generations.

(The writer is the CEO, Founder of Roperro)

## Internet economy on an upswing



A joint report by Google, Temasek and Bain & Company predicts that India's internet economy will reach \$1 trillion by 2030. This represents a substantial increase from its value of \$175 billion in 2022. The internet economy encompasses various sectors and, among them, B2C e-commerce is playing a significant role by contributing approximately one-third of the overall value. Several factors are driving the growth of India's internet economy. One, there is a rising digital demand in tier 2+ cities, which are urban areas beyond metropolitan cities. Two,

the digitisation of traditional businesses is contributing to the expansion of internet economy. Traditional sectors like retail, healthcare, education and financial services are increasingly adopting digital technologies and online platforms to reach customers, improve operational efficiency and offer new services. This digital transformation is opening up new opportunities and driving economic growth. Three, the report highlights the success of India Stack as a significant factor in the surge of the internet economy. The projected growth of India's internet economy is expected to make the country more attractive as an investment destination. The report indicates that three out of five investors anticipate increased deal activity in India within the next two to three years. This is driven by the promising growth prospects and the expanding digital market, which presents opportunities for both domestic and international investors.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

Despite this, Biden will make another attempt to woo India with high-level arrangements to receive Modi. But a sceptical India is wary of warnings from the US and its allies. In March this year, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom criticised religious freedom in India, saying it had declined drastically since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. The US State Department also criticised India in its annual report on human rights. After this, Modi announced that India is actually the mother of democracies.

Bhupendra Singh | New Delhi

## NEWSREADER GITANJALI AIYAR NO MORE

Sir — Award-winning anchor Gitanjali Aiyar (71), one of India's first English female news presenters on the national broadcaster, is no more. In our early service life, after the office hours, the best time was Doordarshan's (DD) 8.45 PM to 9.15 PM's Hindi and English (Gitanjali Aiyar

news were among the best moments of the day, still lingering in mind. Immediately after graduating from Loreto College in Kolkata, Gitanjali joined the English news section of All India Radio, and later DD in 1971.

She was awarded the honour of "best anchor" four times. She also won the Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award for Outstanding Women in 1989. Gitanjali had Parkinson's disease and was on medication. She collapsed after returning home from a walk on June 7 evening. Aside from making a name for herself in news, Aiyar had also been a popular face in several print advertisements and even acted in Sridhar Kshirsagar's TV drama "Khandaan." She also held a diploma from the National School of Drama. Aiyar is survived by two children and her husband, journalist and economist Swaminathan Aiyar.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### BREAK THE CORRUPTION CHAIN

A morally sound individual does not need to fear law and punishment



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Recently, the whole nation went agog in shock while watching the scenes of bundles of cash currency coming out from the basement of the residence of a government servant from a northwest Indian state. We all know that the issue of corruption has stirred up numerous debates and agitations and attracted extensive coverage in the mass media over the past few years. It is also a well-known fact that in many countries taking and giving bribes, financial scams and misuse of public money have become a norm.

It has been a kind of tradition for every government coming to power, to introduce various legislative proposals to root out bribery, pass Bills to check corruption in government purchases and monitor the working of various ministries and independent regulatory bodies to ensure transparency and fair work culture. But! We all know that no number of laws will be able to arrest corruption as has been the experience so far. Reason? Already a plethora of legislation exists but when it comes to their implementation, there comes a big question mark. This is so because the implementing agencies also consist of such humans who could be taken over by greed just like those who they are expected to monitor. The growing frenzy for acquiring more and more wealth by any means is born out of the illusion that money can buy anything – respect, love, even peace and happiness.



This belief has found favour with most over the years and materialism has eroded people's faith in moral and spiritual values. There is no doubt about the fact that our standards of living may have risen, but standards of life have taken a nosedive. Today, simple living and high thinking have become a thing of the past and luxurious living and low thinking are the order of the day. The media and the advertising industry are further making this mirage look so life-like by glamorising a money-driven lifestyle.

As a result of this, people are keeping more and more of their inner selves at stake to consume more and more from outside, fearing that they might otherwise be left behind. A corrupt government servant and a citizen have one thing in common - overwhelmed by greed they both bypass their conscience first before bypassing the laws of the land. Whereas, a morally sound individual, on the other hand, does not need to fear law and punishment to refrain from an act detrimental to society. He abstains from wrongdoing simply because he is obedient to his inner call. Hence, we as a civil society should understand one thing very clearly there is no magic wand to root out corruption. However, what we need urgently is a dedicated strategy to rebuild the conscience of the country. And it can only be done by imparting moral values in individuals through the education system and the media. Along with this, the government can also work in collaboration with reputed NGOs who are already involved in the process of character building. It is only when we weed out moral corruption from within individuals and emerge their spiritual values, our mass campaign against corruption will bear fruit. Otherwise, though laws might be able to snub it, the monster of corruption will keep resurrecting again and again.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal & UK)

# India is helping bring the world together



SHIVANI RAJ

In the true spirit of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam', India is trying to bring about a world order which is just, equitable and mutually respectful to all



Indeed, the year 2022 was special and memorable for India in many ways. On one hand, we faced various global challenges firmly, on the other hand, we achieved many milestones in the fields of sports, education, business, economy, science and technology. But as they say, "All is well that ends well", this phrase was seen to be true when India officially assumed the chairmanship of the G20 group on December 01, the last month of the year 2022. It was a matter of pride for all the Bharatvanshis. This unique opportunity came at a stage when India was taking pride in its history by celebrating 'Amrit Mahotsav of Independence' in a historic manner and Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the ramparts of the Red Fort wished India to emerge as a strong global superpower in the next 25 years. He was telling about the resolution of 'Panch Prana'.

Those who are confused about what is G20 after all? Why is there so much discussion on India getting its chairmanship? So, they should know that G20 European Union is an international group of 19 countries including India, Russia, Germany, USA, England, France, China, Japan, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey. It was established in 1999 to discuss global economic issues. Every year one of the member countries gets the responsibility of presiding over it. All G20 members together represent about 85 per cent of global trade, more than 75 per cent of the



DURING ITS PRESIDENCY OF THE G20 FOR ONE YEAR, INDIA WILL HOLD MORE THAN 190 MEETINGS AT 55 DIFFERENT PLACES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

(The writer is a Research Scholar of Political Science, PPU, Patna)

global market, and two-thirds of the world's population.

Since India has got the chance to preside and host it for the first time, it is being considered a great achievement because after the United Nations, G20 is the only powerful organization at the global level. Every time at the G20 summit, there is a group of 3 countries known as 'Troika', which is a Russian word meaning "three". In this, the countries of the presidency of the outgoing, current and upcoming years are included. Indonesia, India and Brazil are included this year, this time the 'Troika' is also special because all three are developing countries. Their importance also increases because according to the provision, the issues of 'Troika' countries are given special importance in the G20 conference.

On one hand, the chairmanship of G20 is an opportunity for India to increase its credibility in front of the world and on the other hand it is also a challenge to try restoring peace in Ukraine amid the Russia-Ukraine war and to get rid of the global economic crisis. India had already made its stand clear on September 2022 when Prime Minister Modi said in his meeting with Russian President Putin that "today is not the era of war". This was also reiterated in the 'Bali Declaration' at

the end of the G20 summit held in Indonesia in November 2022, which was unanimously accepted by all the member countries. It was diplomatic skill of India that despite mutual differences in many countries, no political conflict was seen in this conference, which was most feared in the past. For this, Prime Minister Modi had held talks with all the heads of states one by one. Placing India's side in his address, Prime Minister said that "the responsibility of building a new world order after COVID is upon us. The need of the hour is that we come together with a firm resolve to maintain peace and security and show determination towards it."

India's vision for the world has always been that of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam'. It has been a culture on the soil of India that considers everyone equal and wants the welfare of everyone. Glimpses of this are also being seen in G20. Just as in the past India gave the mantra of renewable energy revolution to the world with One Sun, One World, One Grid and called for strengthening the global health infrastructure with One Earth, One Health, similarly the G20 mantra under its chairmanship 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' means 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. This was also heard in the Prime Minister's

statement in Bali last year where on India getting the presidency of the G20, he said that "I believe that if the leaders of the G-20 meet on the soil of Buddha and Gandhi, then we will bring peace to the world." Will send a strong message."

During its presidency of the G20 for one year, India will hold more than 190 meetings at 55 different places across the country, including Jammu and Kashmir. Its main meeting will be held in New Delhi on the 9th and 10th of September. For this whole year, the hope of the world will also rest on India as its increasing global political stature, it is to see how much India is also successful in making consensus on various issues, it will be worth watching. By the way, during this period, along with the heads of state, social and business organizations of the member countries, industrialists, scientists and important international organizations like the United Nations will also be a part of many meetings. There is no doubt that India will provide new thinking and momentum to the world's largest group through political, economic, social and intellectual leadership. Along with this, it will also showcase to the world the vastness of India's amazing diversity, distinctive tradition and rich cultural heritage.

# Keep your heart healthy to enjoy a longer life

Your heart is far more important than you think; taking good care is paramount. Nutritious food and supplements are vital to keep it healthy

Heart issues are the leading cause of death across the globe affecting more than 17.9 million lives every year. Heart health is the most important in the human body and we don't need studies to prove it. Your brain and heart pretty much shape the entire body and its functions. Conditions like stroke and hypertension arise due to mental and physical issues in the body. Yes, stress is also a leading factor in such matters. Do you think your everyday diet provides enough for your heart?



AMIT DESHPANDE

"Adulterated" is a small word, your food items contain the unhealthiest substances if not washed properly. This creates a huge deficiency of essential nutrients in the body. And, supplements foster the

(The author is founder & Director, Activist)

bridging of this nutritional gap. Yes, people are still doubtful about their advantage.

Supplements are readily available and do not even need a prescription at times. But consult an expert, don't be one! Our busy schedules have no space for a nutrition-rich diet and we have become too comfortable with the sedentary lifestyle. Junk food, an imbalanced sleep routine, mental stress and ignorance of health harm our heart health. However, we can fulfil the nutrition quota with these seven supplements:

**Omega 3 Fatty Acids**  
These supplements work miraculously in lowering triglycerides (the most common type of fats in the body), inflammation, stroke, and other heart conditions. Food

items like walnuts, chia seeds, fish, flaxseed oil and canola oil are rich sources of Omega 3 Fatty Acids. One must work hard to keep up with a routine to add these items in adequate amounts. If not possible via diet, taking Omega 3 Fatty Acids capsules is a great option. It aids in the maintenance of cardiovascular functioning and the regulation of cholesterol levels.

**Magnesium**  
According to a study, magnesium lowers blood pressure by 12 points. It is one of the 3 micro-minerals (along with calcium and zinc) responsible for around 300 biochemical reactions in the body. Magnesium deficiency can lead to muscle contractions, cramps, seizures, abnormal heart rhythms, personal-

ity changes and coronary spasms. Cashew nuts, almonds, whole grains, legumes, seeds, and dairy products are some of the rich sources of magnesium.

**Cod Liver Oil**  
This fish oil supplement is famous for its numerous benefits to the human body. Rich in antioxidants, healthy fats and minerals, cod liver oil can help reduce risk factors for heart diseases. The supplement can contribute a great deal to decreasing inflammation and reducing liver fat. It is also said that cod liver oil is excellent in the development & maintenance of healthy bones and teeth. These are often suggested by healthcare providers and that is the right method to consume them. Do not go for

supplements without a prescription or doctor's recommendations.

**Folate (folic acid)**  
It is said that folic acid (vitamin B) has been shown to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke in many people. Vegetables, beans, and citrus fruits are terrific sources of folate. The supplement is naturally present in many food items however in the form of a capsule or others it can be a part of your routine. If you are already on some medications, treatments or therapies, folic acid intake cannot be effective. You better have a word with an expert before beginning the dosage.

**Grape Seed Extract**  
If you are diagnosed with hypertension, grape seed extract is just the right thing

to include in your routine. It is full of antioxidants and lowers blood pressure. According to a study, around 100mg-800mg of grape seed extract every day for 8-16 weeks can help maintain blood pressure if you have symptoms or are suffering from pre-hypertension.

**Multivitamins**  
Scurvy, beriberi, pellagra, and rickets are some of the classic examples of vitamin deficiencies. While malnutrition is a silent culprit in developing countries, multivitamin supplements can make a big difference. A meal consisting of plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and more is good but at times not enough. For a person suffering from chronic conditions like cardiovascular

diseases, it is already late to consider essential nutrition; however, you can begin consuming these supplements from an early age to avoid trouble.

**Ashwagandha**  
People with high blood pressure have a dire need for calming food items. While these are not always sufficient, supplements comprising Ashwagandha calm the brain, reduce swelling, lower blood pressure and help alter the immune system. Ashwagandha is used for ages now and works fantastically in reducing physical and mental stress of any kind. These days, ashwagandha has become a prime tea variant among premium beverages as well. One can include it in many ways to improve heart health.

# Historic first: Trump indicted in classified documents case

AP ■ MIAMI

Donald Trump has been indicted on charges of mishandling classified documents at his Florida estate, a remarkable development that makes him the first former president in US history to face criminal charges by the federal government that he once oversaw.

The Justice Department was expected to make public an indictment ahead of a historic court appearance next week in the midst of a 2024 presidential campaign punctuated by criminal prosecutions in multiple states. The indictment carries unmistakably grave legal consequences, including the possibility of prison if Trump's convicted.

But it also has enormous political implications, potentially upending a Republican presidential primary that Trump had been dominating and testing anew the willingness of GOP voters and party leaders to stick with a now twice-indicted candidate who could face still more charges. And it sets the stage for a sensational trial centred on claims that a man once

entrusted to safeguard the nation's most closely-guarded secrets willfully, and illegally, hoarded sensitive national security information after leaving office.

The Justice Department did not immediately confirm the indictment publicly. But two people familiar with the situation who were not authorized to discuss it publicly said that the indictment included seven criminal charges.

One of those people said Trump's lawyers were contacted by prosecutors shortly before he announced Thursday on his Truth Social platform that he had been indicted.

Within minutes of his announcement, Trump began fundraising off it for his presidential campaign. He declared his innocence in a video and repeated his familiar refrain that the investigation is a "witch hunt." He said he was due in court Tuesday afternoon in Miami, where a federal grand jury had been hearing testimony as recently as this week. The case adds to deepening legal jeopardy for Trump, who has already been indicted in New

York and faces additional investigations in Washington and Atlanta that also could lead to criminal charges. But among the various investigations he has faced, legal experts — as well as Trump's own aides — had long seen the Mar-a-Lago probe as the most perilous threat and the one most ripe for prosecution.

Campaign aides had been bracing for the fallout since Trump's attorneys were notified that he was the target of the investigation, assuming it was not a matter of if charges would be brought, but when.

Appearing Thursday night on CNN, Trump attorney James Trusty said the indictment includes charges of willful retention of national defence information — a crime under the Espionage Act, which regulates the handling of government secrets — obstruction, false statements and conspiracy. The case is a milestone for a Justice Department that had investigated Trump for years — as president and private citizen — but had never before charged him with a crime. The most notable investigation was an earlier special counsel probe into ties



between his 2016 campaign and Russia, but prosecutors in that probe cited Justice Department policy against indicting a sitting president. Once he left office, though, he lost that protection.

The inquiry took a major step forward last November when Attorney General Merrick Garland, a soft-spoken former federal judge who has long stated that no one person should be regarded as above the law, appointed Jack Smith, a war crimes prosecutor with an aggressive, hard-charging reputation to lead both the docu-

ments probe as well as a separate investigation into efforts to subvert the 2020 election.

The indictment arises from a monthslong investigation into whether Trump broke the law by holding onto hundreds of documents marked classified at his Palm Beach property, Mar-a-Lago, and whether Trump took steps to obstruct the government's efforts to recover the records. Prosecutors have said that Trump took roughly 300 classified documents to Mar-a-Lago after leaving the White House, including some 100 that were seized by the FBI last

August in a search of the home that underscored the gravity of the Justice Department's investigation. Trump has repeatedly insisted that he was entitled to keep the classified documents when he left the White House, and has also claimed without evidence that he had declassified them.

Court records unsealed last year showed federal investigators believed they had probable cause that multiple crimes had been committed, including the retention of national defence information, destruction of government records and obstruction.

Since then, the Justice Department has amassed additional evidence and secured grand jury testimony from people close to Trump, including his own lawyers. The statutes governing the handling of classified records and obstruction are felonies that could carry years in prison in the event of a conviction. Even so, it remains unclear how much it will damage Trump's standing given that his first indictment generated millions of dollars in contributions from angry supporters and did-

n't weaken him in the polls. The former president has long sought to use his legal troubles to his political advantage, complaining on social media and at public events that the cases are being driven by Democratic prosecutors out to hurt his 2024 election campaign.

He is likely to rely on that playbook again, reviving his longstanding claims that the Justice Department — which, during his presidency, investigated whether his 2016 campaign had colluded with Russia — is somehow weaponised against him. Trump's legal troubles extend beyond the New York indictment and classified documents case.

Smith is separately investigating efforts by Trump and his allies to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. And the district attorney in Georgia's Fulton County is investigating Trump over alleged efforts to subvert the 2020 election in that state. Signs had mounted for weeks that an indictment was near, including a Monday meeting between Trump's lawyers and Justice Department officials.

## Judge who issued favourable rulings to oversee criminal case

Miami (AP): The historic federal criminal case against Former President Donald Trump has been initially assigned to a judge he appointed who faced criticism over her decision to grant the Republican's request for an independent arbiter to review documents obtained during an FBI search of his Florida estate.

A person familiar with the matter says the case has been assigned to Judge Aileen Cannon, a former federal prosecutor who was nominated to the bench by Trump in 2020 and sits in Fort Pierce. The move seems a rare bit of good news for Trump. Cannon's profile was thrust into the spotlight when she issued what many legal experts saw as an extraordinary decision to approve a so-called special master to review the documents seized by the FBI.

## Sudan government bars UN mediator in conflict

AP ■ CAIRO

The United Nations envoy to Sudan, a key mediator in the country's brutal conflict, is no longer welcome in the African country, Sudanese authorities say. A terse statement issued by Sudan's Foreign Ministry late on Thursday comes just weeks after the head of the country's military, Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, demanded in a letter to envoy Volker Perthes that he should be removed from his post.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has been notified that Perthes has been formally declared "persona non grata," the Foreign Ministry said. Since April 15, Sudan's military, headed by Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, have been locked in a violent power struggle that has killed more than 860 civilians, according to Sudan's Doctors'

Syndicate which tracks civilian casualties. The actual death tally is likely to be much higher. Perthes has been a key mediator in Sudan since being appointed as special envoy in 2021, first during the country's failed attempts to transition to democracy and then as relations between the military and the RSF deteriorated.

Fighting exploded in April. Perthes' native Germany condemned the announcement. "The international community, including the German government, continues to stand fully behind Mr. Perthes and his efforts," said Andrea Sasse, spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, in Berlin on Friday.

She said Perthes will continue to do his job from Kenya, from where he is supporting efforts in Jeddah to get the warring parties to the table and secure a cease-fire. Perthes was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, on Thursday meeting representatives from the African Union and the eight-nation eastern Africa bloc known as IGAD. Neither the UN nor Perthes immediately commented on

the decision. In recent months, the German diplomat has received death threats and numerous calls to resign. In his letter last month, Burhan accused Perthes of "being partisan," and negatively contributing to pre-war talks between the generals and pro-democracy groups in the weeks building up to the conflict. Responding to these allegations, Perthes told The Associated Press that those who threatened him were marginal "extremists" and that there is a wide appreciation of UN efforts in Sudan, which has relocated its headquarters to the coastal city of Port Sudan.

The conflict between the two generals has reduced Khartoum to an urban battlefield, with many districts of the city without running water or electricity. There have been reports of widespread looting and sexual violence, including the rape of women and girls in Khartoum and the western Darfur region, which has seen some of the worst fighting in the conflict.

## Blinken reschedules China trip following spy balloon incident

Washington (AP): Secretary of State Antony Blinken is planning to travel to China this month as the Biden administration pushes to improve badly deteriorated ties with the Chinese. US officials say Blinken expects to be in Beijing on June 18 for meetings with senior Chinese officials, including with Foreign Minister Qin Gang and possibly President Xi Jinping.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because neither the State Department nor the Chinese foreign ministry have yet confirmed the trip.

The visit, which was agreed between Xi and President Joe Biden last year at a meeting in Bali, had been initially planned for February but was postponed after the spy balloon incident in which the US shot down a Chinese aircraft that Beijing insisted was a weather balloon that had strayed off course. Since then,



there have been contacts between the US and China, but they have been rare as tensions have risen over China's conduct in the South China Sea, aggressive actions toward Taiwan and support for Russia's war against Ukraine.

Last week, China's defence minister rebuffed a request from US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin for a meeting on the sidelines of a security symposium in Singapore.

However, China's commerce minister travelled to the US last month and Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan met with China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, in Vienna in early May.

## Xi urges troops to build 'Great wall of steel' at China's borders

PTI ■ BEIJING

President Xi Jinping has called on China's border troops to forge a "great wall of steel" along the country's frontiers by enhancing their capabilities in border defence and control, the state media reported Friday.

Xi, 69, who heads the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and the country's Central Military Commission (CMC), the high command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), made a fact-finding trip on Wednesday to survey the work of border management and control and the development of frontier troops in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

The Chinese president asked troops to break new ground in border defence, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Friday.

Xi has called on Chinese border troops to enhance their capabilities in border defence and control to forge a "great wall of steel" along the country's borders, it said.

Unlike his predecessors,



Xi, who came into power in 2012, has regularly visited troops in various border regions, including Tibet.

In 2021, he made a rare visit to Nyingchi, a strategically located border town close to Arunachal Pradesh, during his first visit to Tibet.

While visiting the Inner Mongolia military command of the PLA, Xi emphasised the importance of ensuring integrity and a high degree of unity among the border troops.

Highlighting cooperation among the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and government departments, the military, law enforcement agencies, as well as the ordinary people in border defence as China's

unique strength, Xi called for joint efforts from all parties to break new ground in defending the country's borders.

He called for additional efforts to intensify troop training and enhance combat preparedness, and speed up capacity building concerning information technology-enabled border defence and control. He also called for efforts to transform how border defence duties are performed, tighten military discipline, maintain good troop order, and foster more border defence professionals.

Xi commended the role of the region's border troops in ensuring security and stability on the country's northern border. Praising China's progress in border defence work since he came to power in 2012, Xi said the country's border troops have boosted military training and combat preparedness and resolutely safeguarded border security and the stability in regions along the frontiers.

He added that the troops have effectively safeguarded China's sovereignty, security, and development interest.

## Zimbabwe polls date announcement sparks hope and despair

Harare (Zimbabwe) (AP): Munyaradzi Mushawatu, an electrician in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, was both ecstatic and jittery after President Emmerson Mnangagwa announced recently that national elections would be held on August 23.

"I have voted in every election since 1990. I can't wait to make my voice heard. I am ready," said Mushawatu.

But the bravado turned to chagrin as he recalled how the country's "skewed" elections environment has remained intact for decades. "It's only the election date that is new. The usual old obstacles remain," said the 56-year-old father of three. Allegations of fraud, violence and harassment of opposition members have char-

acterised elections held in Zimbabwe since independence from white minority rule in 1980.

The 2018 elections were the first following a coup that replaced Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's longtime autocratic ruler, with Mnangagwa, amid promises of reform.

But after a close-run contest, the Constitutional Court dismissed opposition leader Nelson Chamisa's claims of vote-rigging.

Mnangagwa, an 80-year-old former enforcer and ally of Mugabe, is again expected to face a strong challenge from the 45-year-old Chamisa. The election will also decide the composition of the 350-seat parliament and close to 2,000 local council positions.

## Israeli troops disperse Lebanon border protesters with tear gas

PTI ■ KFAR CHOUBA (LEBANON)

Israeli soldiers fired tear gas to disperse scores of protesters who pelted the troops with stones along the border with Lebanon on Friday, leaving some Lebanese demonstrators and troops suffering breathing problems.

The tension on the edge of the Lebanese border village of Kfar Chouba began earlier this week over the Israeli military digging in the area that Lebanon claims. On Wednesday, a Lebanese villager tried to stop an Israeli bulldozer from digging a trench along the border. Once the villager's legs were covered with sand as the bulldozer moved ahead, UN peacekeepers jumped in and convinced the driver to move back. Videos of the elderly man with his legs



Lebanese soldiers, demonstrators and journalists duck down after Israeli troops fired tear gas, in the southern Lebanese border village of Kfar Chouba on Friday.

stuck in the sand dune went viral on social media.

Israel ended an 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon when its troops withdrew from the area in May 2000.

Friday's protest took place

on the edge of Kfar Chouba hills, which Beirut says is Lebanese land occupied by Israel. Kfar Chouba hills and the nearby Chebaa Farms, are areas captured by Israel during the 1967 Mideast War and claimed by Lebanon.

## Assange's extradition to US on spying charges upheld

PTI ■ LONDON

A British judge has rejected the latest attempt by WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to fight extradition to the United States to face spying charges.

High Court justice Jonathan Swift said a new appeal would simply "re-run" arguments that Assange's lawyers had already made and lost. Assange has battled in British courts for years to avoid being sent to the US, where he faces 17 charges of espionage and one charge of computer misuse over WikiLeaks' publication of classified diplomatic and military documents more than a decade ago.

In 2021, a British district judge ruled that Assange should not be extradited because he was likely to kill



himself if held under harsh US prison conditions. US authorities later provided assurances that the Australia-born Assange wouldn't face the severe treatment that his lawyers said would put his physical and mental health at risk.

Those assurances led Britain's High Court and Supreme Court to overturn the lower court's ruling, and the British government authorized extradition in June 2022.

## South Korea summons China's envoy

Seoul (AP): South Korea's Foreign Ministry summoned China's ambassador on Friday to protest comments he made accusing Seoul of tilting toward the United States and away from China, as competition between Washington and Beijing for global influence intensifies.

South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Chang Ho-jin warned Chinese Ambassador Xing Haiming over his "senseless and provocative" remarks made during a meeting with a South Korean opposition leader.

The ministry accused Xing of violating diplomatic protocols and interfering with South Korean domestic politics but didn't specify the parts of Xing's comments it saw as inappropriate. The ministry also didn't share what Xing said in reply to Chang.

In a meeting Thursday with South Korean Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung, a key rival of conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, Xing accused Yoon's government of leaning excessively toward Seoul's treaty ally, the United States, and damaging its relations with China, its biggest trading partner.

Xing said South Korea was entirely to blame for the "many difficulties" in bilateral relations, citing its growing trade deficit with China which he attributed to "de-Chinaization" efforts, apparently referring to actions by South Korean companies to shift their supply chains away from China. He demanded that Seoul respect Beijing's core interests including Taiwan and other major regional issues.

"With the United States pressuring China with all its might, some are betting that the United States will win and China will lose. But this is clearly the wrong judgment,"

## Biden, Sunak vow to stick together on Ukraine, deepen cooperation on AI

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Thursday reiterated their commitment to help Ukraine repel Russia's ongoing invasion, while agreeing to step up cooperation on challenges their economies face with artificial intelligence, clean energy, and critical minerals.

The leaders said the "first of its kind" agreement — what they are calling the "Atlantic Declaration" — will serve as a framework for the two countries on the development of emerging technologies, protecting technology that is crit-



ical to national security and other economic security issues.

"We will put our values front and center," Biden said as the two leaders started talks in the Oval Office. He later added at a joint news conference that the agreement will help both

nations "adapt and upgrade our partnership to ensure our countries remain on the cutting edge of a rapidly changing world." As part of the declaration announced Thursday, the two sides will kick off negotiations on the use of minerals

from the U.K. that are critical in the production of electric vehicles that are eligible for US tax credits. The administration has also opened talks with the European Union and forged a deal with Japan that allow certain critical raw materials for EVs to be treated as if they were sourced in the United States.

Allies have raised concerns about incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act favoring the North American auto industry. The legislation — one of Biden's key policy victories — invests some USD 375 billion to transition the United States to cleaner cars and energy sources.

## France lauds 24-year-old's 'heroic intervention'

PTI ■ LE PECQ (FRANCE)

The attacker slashed at the 24-year-old man with the knife that he used to savagely stab one young child after another.

But rather than run, Henri held his ground — using a weighty backpack he was carrying to swing at the assailant and fend off his blade.

French media hailed Henri as "the hero with a backpack" Friday after he was shown in a video grappling with the assailant and charging after him during the knife attack that critically wounded four children

between the ages of 22 months and 3 years old, and also injured two adults. Henri also got personal words of gratitude Friday from President Emmanuel Macron, who toured hospitals to meet victims and their families.

In the Alpine town of Annecy, the French leader thanked medical workers, police, firefighters, civilians — including Henri — and others whose first aid and swift interventions helped save lives during the attack in the town's lakeside park on Thursday.

"You experienced very hard moments, traumatis-

ing," Macron said.

"I am very proud of you." Henri had a heavy backpack on his back and was holding another in his hand when the attacker slashed at him.

But despite the blade and the attacker's chilling aggression, Henri still continued to harass him, pursuing the man inside a playground — where he repeatedly stabbed a child in the stroller — and then out of the park again, carrying his backpacks all the while.

Henri appeared to hurl one of the backpacks at the assailant at one point and then pick it up again to take another swing.











नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

# मुख्यमंत्री लाइली बहना योजना

सवा करोड़ लाइली बहनों के  
जीवन का **ऐतिहासिक**  
**पल**

मुख्यमंत्री  
शिवराज सिंह चौहान

लाइली बहनों के खाते में  
भेजेंगे आज  
सिंगल क्लिक से  
रुपये 1000

10 जून, 2023 | शाम 6:00 बजे  
गैरीसन ग्राउंड, जबलपुर

‘ मैंने भाई होने के नाते मेरी बहनों को संबल देने का फर्ज निभाया है। बहनों को सशक्त बनाने का आज एक बड़ा संकल्प पूरा हुआ है। ’

- शिवराज सिंह चौहान

