

**OPINION 6**  
TERROR HAS TAKEN  
ROOTS IN BANGLADESH

**WORLD 8**  
XI STRESSES US-CHINA  
COOPERATION

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX, NIFTY HIT  
ALL-TIME HIGHS

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INDIA WOMEN  
TO TOUR  
BANGLADESH  
12 SPORT

**CAPSULE**

**ACADEMICIANS COUNTER CHARGES AGAINST NCERT**  
New Delhi: Over 100 eminent academician, including Vice Chancellors and Directors from prestigious institutions like JNU, DU, IITs, IIMS, and Central and State universities, have united to counter charges leveled against the National Council of Educational Research and Training.

**CHAMBA TENSE AS BOY KILLED OVER AFFAIR**  
Shimla: Situation in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district remained tense on Friday after the murder of a 21-year-old man for loving a woman from another community. A mob burned down the house of a murderer accused in Chamba, prompting authorities to impose prohibitory orders.

**Nehru museum renaming sparks BJP-Cong row**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The renaming of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Society in Delhi as the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society has sparked a new battleground between the BJP and Congress leaders. Located at Teen Murti Bhavan, the museum's name change comes nearly a year after the inauguration of the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya on the same premises.

Detailed report on P4

## Manipur arsonists raze Min's house

Total breakdown of law & order, says MoS MEA

**PIONEER NEW SERVICE ■ IMPHAL**

The residence of Union Minister of State for External Affairs RK Ranjan Singh in Imphal town was razed to the ground by a mob, according to officials. This shocking incident serves as a scathing indictment of the Biren Singh-led State Government, with the anguished Minister declaring that the "law and order situation in Manipur has failed".

The gravity of the situation cannot be gauged, especially in the light of recent events, including the burning of two other houses and clashes between the Rapid Action Force of Manipur and the unruly mob.

Throughout Thursday night, the mob wreaked havoc in the town and engaged in clashes with security forces, heightening tensions in the area. The sound of gunfire echoed through the Imphal East district into the early hours of Friday as security forces resorted to firing numerous rounds of tear gas shells



A worker sprays water to douse fire at Union Minister of State for External Affairs RK Ranjan Singh's residence in Imphal on Friday

and mock bombs in an attempt to disperse the angry locals who were protesting the killing of nine civilians on Wednesday. During the confrontation, two protesters and one Rapid Action Force personnel were injured. Officials confirmed that an RAF constable was struck on the head by a stone.

The situation in Imphal remains highly volatile as authorities work tirelessly to restore order and address the deepening discontent among the population. The complete razing of a Union Minister's house underscores the severe breakdown in the law and order situation in Manipur, raising serious concerns about the Government's ability to maintain peace and security in

the region.

Claiming that the "law and order situation in Manipur has failed", Singh said he had constructed his house with prayers and was unable to understand why it was targeted. "Someone tries to vandalize it, demolish it, I feel shocked. I never expect such a kind of attitude and activities from my fellow citizens of this State. I pray to God also not to happen again. This is the second time, the first time, I somehow convinced them and the security protected... that was in early evening. This time yesterday it was late night, around 10:30. Everything was normal, suddenly crowds of people came and attacked, I was told," Singh told ANI.

Continued on Page 2

## TN's former DGP gets 3 years RI for sexually harassing woman IPS officer

**PNS ■ CHENNAI**

A Villupuram court has sentenced former Director General of Tamil Nadu Police Rajesh Das to three years rigorous imprisonment for sexually harassing a fellow woman IPS officer and fined him ₹10,000. However, the court granted bail to Das and gave him a 30-day period to file an appeal.

In February 2021, a complaint was filed by a woman IPS officer against Das, alleging that he made sexual advances while they were on patrol duty together, providing security for then Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami.

Continued on Page 2

## On wane, Biparjoy enters Raj, leaves Guj in tatters

Guj grappling with task of restoring power in 1,000 villages, clearing roads hit by fallen trees

**PNS ■ JAIPUR/AHMEDABAD**

Cyclone Biparjoy, which wreaked havoc in Gujarat's Kutch and Saurashtra regions, has now extended its impact to Rajasthan, bringing heavy rainfall and causing disruptions across the region. Following its landfall in Gujarat, the cyclone gradually weakened and shifted towards south Rajasthan on Friday, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

The Gujarat Government is currently facing the immediate challenge of restoring electricity in approximately 1,000 vil-



An area is waterlogged after heavy rain following the landfall of the Cyclone Biparjoy, in Kutch district on Friday

lages and clearing roads obstructed by fallen trees.

Although the cyclone weakened after hitting the Kutch coast, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning for heavy rainfall in north Gujarat.

Fortunately, no casualties have been reported in Gujarat due to Cyclone Biparjoy.

The heavy rainfall has also affected rail traffic in the North Western Railway zone, resulting in the cancellation of 14 trains. In response to the IMD's alert for heavy rains, the Rajasthan government has temporarily suspended inflation relief camps in the respective districts.

Continued on Page 2

## US prioritises Indians' visas ahead of Modi's visit

**PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ WASHINGTON**

Days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State visit to the US, Washington has said it is making a "huge push" to process as many visa applications as possible in India. Stating this, US Department of State official spokesperson Mathew Miller also called it a "top priority" for

the US Government.

The US Government has also eased norms for Green Cards which will help thousands of Indian technology professionals waiting for permanent residency there.

In a press briefing late on Thursday in Washington, Miller said the consular teams of the US have been making a "huge push" to process visa

applications adding that "there is more that can be done".

Meanwhile, reports from Washington also said the Biden administration has eased norms by releasing policy guidance on the eligibility criteria for those waiting for green cards to work and stay in America.

The guidance issued by

the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding the eligibility criteria for initial and renewal applications for Employment Authorisation Document in compelling circumstances is expected to help thousands of Indian technology professionals who are in the agonisingly long wait for a green card or permanent residency.

Continued on Page 2

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No violence in Bengal, CAPF an Opp ploy: Didi

People highlighting stray incidents; Opp parties have filed 1.51 lakh nomination papers: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ BHANGAR/KOLKATA

A day after political clashes over filing of nominations claimed three lives and a day after the Calcutta High Court ordered immediate deployment of central forces to avoid further loss of lives in the run up to the July 8 panchayat elections, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday slammed the Opposition parties BJP, CPI(M) and the Congress for joining hands to defame Bengal by disturbing an otherwise peaceful poll process.

Reminding how 45 people had died on a single day during the 2003 panchayat elections and how 39 people fell victim to violence in 2013 despite deployment of central forces, Banerjee, while addressing a rally at Namkhana off Sunderbans said, by far her Government had not only seen the most peaceful nominations but also as many as 2.31 lakh including about 1.5 lakh Opposition candidates had filed their papers... making it a record of sorts.

"Some people are shouting over some stray incidents here and there to tarnish the image of Bengal... and that hurts me no end... Had there been violence and had the Opposition been prevented from filing their nomination



could they have filed 1.51 lakh papers in five days," Banerjee asked. Incidentally her Trinamool Congress has filed about 82,000 nominations in the panchayat elections whereas the BJP has given about 55 nominations. The CPI(M) has filed 47.5 thousand leaving about 22,000 seats for its allies Congress, Indian Secular Front, Forward Bloc, RSP and CPI. There are about 74,000 seats in the three-tier panchayat system for Gram Panchayat, Panchayat

Samity and Zilla Parishad. Out of these the TMC has already won about a dozen boards uncontested. Out of these the Jajpur board in Bankura district where both the MP and MLA seat is held by the BJP and Parui board in Birbhum are worth mentioning.

Apparently conscious about the rise of the CPI(M) and the Congress both at the cost of the TMC and the BJP in many areas the Chief Minister picked on the

Left-Congress alliance apart from the BJP wondering, "What used to happen during the CPI(M) rule... we have freed Bengal from the Red violence... what has been happening in the Congress-ruled States... I must not be forced to open my mouth but it is clear that the Congress which is the B-Team of the BJP has now tied up with the Left to once again disturb Bengal... but the Trinamool will not let that happen till the people of this State are with us."

Violence will die in Bengal, assures Guv

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHANGAR

Taking a strong note of the ongoing pre-panchayat poll violence Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Thursday said "I can assure the people of Bengal that violence will be the first victim in this election and violence will be silenced permanently under the Constitution and the law of the land."

Extensively touring for more than two hours the violence-hit lanes and by-lanes of Bhangar a few miles east of Kolkata, and taking cognizance of how bombs were hurled even at the media persons covering Thursday's skirmish, Bose said, "It is also revolting that the media is also under attack by the hooligans," adding "at any cost violence will be eradicated and made first casualty of these panchayat elections... no one however high and mighty... will be allowed to take law into their hands... miscreants and those who flaunt muscle power will be brought to book and shown their due place behind the bars." The Governor's irate statements came in tandem with a letter written by Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking immediate



intervention in the state of affairs in the State. Bose's statement came almost in tandem with Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar's plea to Shah seeking his intervention in the violence-hit State. Referring to the violence-related deaths at Bhangar and Chopra in North Dinajpur district, Majumdar sought Shah's "immediate intervention and proactive measures to redress," the situation in Bengal.

The Governor's visit to Bhangar coincided with recovery of seven drums of bombs stacked away inside an abandoned Government enclosure a few metres from the Bhangar police station, sources said.

BJP to hold protests in K'taka over anti-conversion law repeal plan



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The political battle between the Congress and the BJP has intensified over the issue of the anti-conversion law in Karnataka. The BJP has threatened to hold "massive protests" across the State unless the Congress Government withdraws its decision to repeal the law that was passed by the saffron party last year.

BJP national general secretary CT Ravi said the "conversion mafia" in Karnataka "ensures that the anti-Hindu Congress repeals the anti-conversion law brought in by the @BJPKarnataka government." "Congress is the new Muslim League and it will go to any extent to hurt Hindus", Ravi alleged.

With an eye on the Lok Sabha polls, the two parties have engaged in heated debates on several politically-sensitive matters, including the revision of textbooks in the State. Karnataka's Animal Husbandry Minister, K Venkatesh, had pre-

viously indicated that the cow slaughter law passed by the previous BJP-led Government would be re-evaluated by the current Congress Government.

Demanding the withdrawal of the anti-conversion law, the BJP has called for widespread protests throughout the State. The warning comes after the Karnataka Cabinet announced plans to introduce a Bill to effect during the forthcoming legislative session commencing on July 3.

Accusing the Congress Government of pushing Karnataka back into the "Tipu Sultan era" senior BJP leader and former Minister R Ashoka stated, "After Congress came to power in Karnataka, it appears that the foundation has been laid for the beginning of the Tipu era once again. Congress has decided to become the brand ambassador for religious conversion."

The BJP plans to stage protests both inside and outside the Assembly, with a meeting scheduled for June 19 to discuss the matter. He further claimed that a significant number of

All K'taka Mins called to Delhi by Cong chief on June 21

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday said the entire State Cabinet has been called to New Delhi by Congress president M Mallikarjun Kharge for a meeting with the party top brass. They are also likely to meet a host of Central Ministers separately during the visit to discuss various State projects, he said, and did not rule out the possibility of him and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There are reports that Siddaramaiah has sought an appointment with the Prime Minister.

Not giving any direct answer regarding him and the Chief Minister meeting the Prime Minister during the visit to the national Capital, Shivakumar merely stated, "We are in a federal structure. All have to work together."

Hindus, ranging from 30 to 40 lakhs, had allegedly been forcibly converted or enticed through inducements like money, love jihad, and promises of medical treatment.

UN CONVENTION ON RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

India stresses on clear definition for better execution

PNS ■ NEW YORK

The 16th Session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP 16), held from June 13 to 15 in New York saw India highlighting the importance of a clear and comprehensive definition of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD) for ensuring effective implementation at the grassroots level.

Justice Arun Mishra, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India, actively voiced this concern during the 3rd Roundtable on Implementation of CRPD as part of the CoP meeting in New York. Justice Mishra emphasised that although the CRPD incorporates the concept of reasonable accommodation, there is a lack of clarity when it comes to its practical implementation. Mishra called for a proper definition of the convention to ensure its effective execution and realization of rights for people with disabilities.

He emphasised that the opportunities for employment should not be denied by prescription of any kind of disabilities; full opportunity should be afforded to ensure need-based distributive justice.



Discrimination in adoption must come to an end. Physical, mental, and emotional stability needs to be defined. Also the concept of severe disability should be properly defined along with the circumstances to take the consent of guardians etc for surgery to avoid its misuse, said Justice Mishra.

Giving a brief insight into the legal provisions in India for the protection of the Rights of disabled people, Justice Mishra said that the standards for accessibility have been defined in India's The Rights of Persons with Disabilities, RPWD Act, 2016.

"Now the challenge is to create awareness. Disabled are called specially-abled to provide them dignity and improve their mindset. Preparation of education and other material for the primary to secondary level education in sign language, audio-visual mode, print, and electronic media is being focused upon."

All future managers must become wealth creators for nation: Pradhan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on Friday told future managers to become wealth creators and contribute to the economic development of the country.

Addressing a gathering of eminent academicians and graduating students on the occasion of 6th Convocation Ceremony of Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu, he said, "This is the beginning of a new chapter of your life. Be ready for the challenges. Don't remain in your comfort zone. You must not only look forward to becoming job creators but aspire to become wealth creators and contribute to the economic development of the country."



Pradhan told the graduating students, "The responsibility of our great nation, this entire human civilization rests on the shoulders of the youth. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the progressive education system and the future-oriented IT reforms are paving the strong foundation for the better future of the younger generation."

The Lt Governor Manoj Sinha in his speech said, "India is emerging as a new knowledge economy on the world horizon and it is growing at an exponential pace. Transformational work in every sector driving the nation on the path to become a powerhouse."

Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State, said the passing out students today are privileged to be the graduates and post graduates in the era, under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

You are among the earliest beneficiaries of NEP 2020 and will be the celebrators of century India in 2047, which comes with both challenges and responsibilities. Now, it depends on you how to tackle the challenges and discharge your responsibilities, said the Union MoS.



Philip Green is Australia's new envoy to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Australia on Friday appointed Philip Green as the next envoy to New Delhi. He will replace incumbent Barry O'Farrell, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong announced. Green was most recently Australia's ambassador to Germany. "The Australia-India relationship has never been closer. Australia and India share perspectives, challenges and a democratic heritage," Wong said, announcing Green's appointment.

"We are working together, through our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and as Quad partners, to promote a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, where sovereignty is respected," the Foreign Minister said. Green has previously served as Australia's High Commissioner to Singapore, to South Africa, and to Kenya.

Sickle cell anemia deaths 11 times higher than data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A recent analysis of global health data from 2000 to 2021 has revealed that deaths resulting from sickle cell anemia are 11 times higher than indicated by mortality data sources alone, as the vast majority of children in developing countries go undiagnosed and untreated for this genetic blood disorder. The study, conducted by researchers, sheds light on the urgent need for improved diagnosis and treatment of sickle cell anemia worldwide. India, known for having the second-highest global prevalence of the disorder, is taking proac-

tive measures to address this issue. The country is in the process of launching the Sickle Cell Disease Mission with the goal of curbing the disease by 2047. Shockingly, in India, 1 in 86 births are affected by Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). The tribal population residing in India's southern, central, and western states is particularly vulnerable to the condition, according to estimates. The research, published in The Lancet Haematology journal, is part of the Global Burden of Disease 2021 study coordinated by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington's School

of Medicine. Findings from epidemiological models demonstrate that the "total mortality burden" of sickle cell disease in 2021 amounted to 373,000 deaths, significantly higher than the 34,600 deaths attributed solely to sickle cell disease. This increase was particularly prominent in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where fatality figures were 67 times higher and nine times higher, respectively. Sickle cell disease emerged as a leading cause of mortality among children under 5 years old, as well as in youth aged 5-14 years and adults aged 15-49 years. The study reported that

half a million babies were born with sickle cell disease in 2021, with 79% of these cases occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

The research also highlighted the underdiagnosis of sickle cell disease, which not only increases the risk of infection but also contributes to deaths caused by conditions such as stroke, heart problems, kidney problems, and pregnancy complications. In some cases, healthcare professionals may not even be aware of a patient's sickle cell disease or the potential complications associated with it, leading to a failure to attribute the disease as a cause of death.

PUBLIC NOTICE section with ICICI Bank logo and text regarding a borrower's default.

PUBLIC NOTICE section with ICICI Bank logo, branch office details, and a large table listing defaulted borrowers.



## Burning fingers

There's still time to take steps for safeguarding young lives at institutes prone to fires

It's time again for a quick reality check on the health of buildings in metropolises that host vulnerable populations like children and the elderly, say, in schools, coaching centres or hospitals. In the latest such hair-raising incident, a massive fire broke out on June 15 at a four-storey coaching centre in Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar, resulting in injuries to at least 22 students. With over 500 students enrolled at the institute, they desperately tried to escape a fiery death by smashing windows, using ropes to rappel down the façade and clinging on to ladders. All the students, though scarred by the incident, at least got away with their lives. It is not a happy thing to say, but the situation could have been a lot worse. It's obvious that fire safety protocols in the building were not in shape. While they undertake the routine investigation into the cause of the fire, the authorities concerned should also carry out an audit of the state of fire-fighting preparedness in other adjacent buildings so that proactive steps may be initiated to preempt such tragedies.



And it's not that like the Coronavirus, our nation was suddenly brought face to face with lurking danger: There are umpteen instances where the lure of the lucre, owners' negligence and casual attitude or downright illegalities have claimed the lives of scores of children. The worst case in this century is the July 2004 Kumbakonam school fire in Tamil Nadu, where 94 primary section students were killed after the school's thatched roof caught fire.

It was one of the most significant fire accidents in Tamil Nadu and the second-largest school fire in India in terms of casualties after the December 1995 Dabwali fire tragedy in Sirsa, Haryana, where at least 442 deaths were recorded. The Mukherjee Nagar incident was a massive tragedy averted by sheer providence; else it could easily have been a repeat of the Surat incident of May 2019 in which 22 students died when the illegal building constructed on a plastic frame caught fire on top of a business centre. Similarly, a fire broke out in August 2022 in Sarvodaya Kanya Bal Vidyalaya, a Government school in East Delhi's Trilokpur area, and another one in October 2009 injured six students in an MCD school in southwest Delhi. There are many coaching institutes, and other overcrowded buildings in almost all cities across the country, and a good percentage of these don't adhere to any building codes or safety and maintenance standards. Governments and civic authorities across the nation must undertake various preemptive measures based on past experiences. These include stringent safety regulations, fire safety training and infrastructure, adequate staffing and emergency planning, building construction and design, regular inspections and audits, public awareness campaigns, collaboration with fire services, emergency response drills, monitoring and accountability, and a public reporting mechanism. By implementing these measures, Governments can work towards preventing fire tragedies in educational institutes and ensuring the safety and well-being of students, teachers and staff members.

### PICTALK



A man plays with a child as raindrops fall in New Delhi on Friday

# Terror has taken roots in Bangladesh



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Though Bangladesh's incumbent Awami League Government is taking strong action, Sheikh Hasina has a very serious challenge on her hands

On the face of it, any talk of Islamist terrorism posing a threat to Bangladesh or the latter becoming a global staging ground for it appears absurd. Things have been improving since the savage terrorist strike at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka on July 1, 2016, which left 20 persons (guests at the eatery), all five of the terrorists, two police officers and two members of the bakery's staff, dead. According to South Asia Terrorist Portal's Datasheet Bangladesh, from 132 in 2016, the number of deaths—including those of civilians, members of security forces and terrorists—from terrorism-related incidents declined to one in 2021 before rising to 18 in 2022 and 53 until June 11, 2023.

Though representing a rising trend, the figures since 2022 are lower than that in 2016. This has resulted from strong action taken by Bangladesh's present Awami League government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. In its Bangladesh Mutual Evaluation Report, October 2016, the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) says, "Bangladesh has made significant progress since the last Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) in 2009, reflecting political commitment and leadership on AML (Anti-Money Laundering) /CFT (Countering Financing of Terrorism)." It states, "Inter-agency work to assess TF (Terror Funding) risks shows strengths, but more work is needed to assess foreign TF threats, to further assess ML." It also says that at operational levels "coordination and cooperation occur to a varying degree although recent reforms have sought to address identified issues, particularly between law enforcement agencies (LEAs)." The Bangladesh government's efforts to cleanse the educational institutions of those aligned with Islamist terrorist groups have been successful in some measure. It needs to be continued and extended to other areas. In Dr Abdul Gafur, Memorial Lecture titled Bangladesh Moulabader



Arthaniti (The Economics of Fundamentalism in Bangladesh), delivered on May 21, 2005, Professor Abul Barkat of Dhaka University stated that fundamentalists used their political and economic power to place militant and communally-oriented members in strategic locations in government and NGOs. The ill-disguised military dictatorships of Zia-ur Rahman and HM Ershad that promoted Islamist fundamentalism during their and their proxies' rule from 1975 to 1991, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's government with Begum Khaleda Zia as prime minister, which came to power in 1991 with the support of the fundamentalist Jama'at-e-Islami Bangladesh (now reincarnated as Bangladesh Jamaat-Islami), filled the administration with their supporters as well those of the fundamentalist Islamists they courted. It was the same with the BNP-Jama'at coalition government that ruled Bangladesh from 2001 to 2006. These elements have to be wrinkled out.

Since the 2016 attack, efforts by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit, as well as Rapid Action Battalion's (RAB) campaign in the countryside, has led to the liquidation of sev-

eral terrorists and terrorist hideouts. The former, particularly, has been building up special counter-terrorism expertise. Intelligence gathering has improved. There, however, is still considerable scope for improvement.

In Bangladesh, its criticality has been enhanced by three factors. First, terrorist outfits remain. The latest to emerge is the Jamatul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya (JAFHS), formed by former members of three banned militant organizations: Ansar Al Islam, Neo-Jama'at-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh, and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami Bangladesh. The group, active since 2017, adopted its current name in 2019. It has been forging links with other terrorist organisations since then. In February 2023, RAB arrested 17 personnel of the JAFHS and three members of the Kuki-Chin National Front and recovered rifles, bomb-making equipment and other weapons.

Second, Islamist terrorists have been using the Internet and social media to win recruits and spread their fundamentalist doctrines. Bangladesh had 35 lakh Internet users in 2008. According to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, the number was 12.61 crore in March 2023. A report in Prothom Alo cites a report released by Facebook's parent company Meta stating that at least two billion people in Bangladesh logged into Facebook at least once a day during December 2022.

Third, a keen watch has to be kept on the camps of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, particularly those close to Teknaf, the river that constitutes the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. As Eric Hoffer's insightful work, The True Believer, shows, criminals often tend to join fundamentalist mass movements in search of redemption and honourable images. According to reports, the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation has cooperated with the JMB on weapons and explosives training.

Finally, the fight against Islamist terrorism is fundamentally ideological. Hence, besides cleansing educational bodies, it is important to establish firm governmental control over the quality of madrasas which teach around 1.4 million students in Bangladesh. Many of these have been set up by the Jama'at and its front organisations and are the breeding grounds of terrorists.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



THE FIGHT AGAINST ISLAMIST TERRORISM IS FUNDAMENTALLY IDEOLOGICAL. HENCE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH FIRM GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL OVER THE QUALITY OF MADRASAS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### WELCOME ANNOUNCEMENT

Sir — From the United Nations to non-governmental organisations and other non-profit organisations working for the welfare of refugees, they must have rejoiced at the announcement by the Greek government, according to which the Greek government has set up an international naval base off the country's southwest coast. Three days of national mourning have been declared for the 79 people killed in a ship accident in the waters. Is the government of Greece hurt by this accident? Do they have so much sympathy for refugees? So will Greece give shelter to all the illegal refugees who have survived the accident? It's all a show. All European countries like France, Britain, Italy, Germany, Portugal etc. have made strict laws to not allow illegal immigrants inside their territories. If the law was not strict, then the refugees would not have to travel thousands of miles by sea, risking their lives. In February, more than 100 people, including children, were killed when a boat capsized off southern Italy. Thousands of men, women and helpless children die in such accidents every year.

### DALIT LEADERSHIP

Sir — Sometimes caste and community matter for parties to climb up the ladder of power. Karnataka Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara has been now lamenting for missing the opportunity to become Chief Minister. He was mum when the tussle for chief ministership was going on between Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar. Parameshwara, a Dalit leader, did not stake his claim for chief ministership. Now he has been crying over the spilt milk one month after the election result came out and after Siddaramaiah has settled as Chief Minister for the second time. Cry for 'dalit CM' in Karnataka Congress starts when there is no vacancy. Congress came to power in 2013 under the presidency of Parameshwara. Even then it was the writ of Siddaramaiah, a migrant from JDS, that ran large over Shivakumar

## Three years of Galwan clash



If you peep at the bilateral relationship of India and China, after the third anniversary of the Galwan Clash, we both are still standing on the point of difference. So far nothing improved much in these 3 years. Neither China returned to the status quo at Demchok and Depsang Valley, nor did China return us to the Aksai-Chin area. Despite pushing the bilater-

al rounds of talks with the Chinese delegation to fix the matter on an urgent basis, no strong consensus had been reached so far. In the year 2020 June, when the incident took place, India lost 20 soldiers. Then too we are unable to counterbalance Chinese aggression, now too three years later we are yet unsuccessful to lift ourselves above China economically and geopolitically. Our Atma Nirbharta in defence and halting aggression of external forces is yet a dream vis-a-vis China.

Long story short, we had passed three years in taming China to return to status Quo, which China in particular will never do. However, it is required that we must strengthen ourselves.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

because of which he became the Chief Minister. There is no point for Prameshwara to go back to 2013.

It is the leadership quality that always matters to head a government. In undivided Uttar Pradesh, Kanshi Ram, a Dalit leader, founded BSP. Mayawati who is also a Dalit leader, established her supremacy and could not be sidelined on the ground that she is Dalit. If Dr Parameshwar wants to realise the dream of a Dalit on the post of Chief Minister in Karnataka, he has to take the risk of forming his party.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

### MANIPUR IS BURNING

Sir — As per reports, the bungalow at Kongba in Imphal belonging to Union Minister of State for External Affairs RK Ranjan Singh was set on fire by a mob on Thursday night and destroyed to show their anger against the Central government. Two days after the sharpest escalation of violence in the state resulted in nine people being shot dead and another 10 being injured, a mob burned down two houses as skirmishes broke out between demonstrators and security officials in Imphal on Thursday. The sameday, a hapless Chief Minister N Biren Singh stated that the government is holding conversations at all levels and gave the assurance that those responsible for the violence would face consequences. The governor has constituted a peace committee and consultation with peace committee members will start. Over 100 people have died and 310 have been injured as a result of recent ethnic violence in Manipur between the Meitei and Kuki communities. Army and paramilitary personnel have been sent in as a response to restore order in the state. The fighting first broke out on May 3 after the hill districts organised a "Tribal Solidarity March" to protest the Meitei community's desire for Scheduled Tribe (ST) designation. The majority of Meiteis, who make up around 53% of Manipur's population, reside in the Imphal Valley. Another 40% of the population is made up of the Naga and Kuki tribes, who live in the hill districts. With this Manipur is burning under the present regime.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

# English a catalyst in global employability

Job seekers need to be armed with marketable language capabilities and essential soft skills for a globally hyper-connected work forum

English has evolved from a global language to a critical 21st century skill. Proficiency in English opens doors to countless opportunities, empowering individuals to compete, access international education, and thrive in the knowledge-based global job market. Fluency in English is now a prerequisite for many positions. Mastering this language has become a necessity in today's interconnected world. This is evident by the findings of the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation and consulting firm Sattva's report, which states that English proficiency is a 'must have' for 73 per cent of job roles.

**Sustainable Employment and Career Advancement**  
Proficiency in English unlocks a multitude of benefits. It enables individuals to communicate effectively with colleagues, clients and stakeholders from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, fostering collaboration and expanding business horizons. Moreover, English proficiency empowers professionals to access global resources.



Consolidating the argument, 'English at Work: Global Analysis of Language Skills in the Workplace' reported in 2016 that 64% of employers in India offer better packages to applicants with quality English communication skills.

In addition, English proficiency serves as a gateway to valuable skilling resources. Many educational programs, online courses and professional certifications are offered in English, providing individuals access to cutting-edge knowledge and skill development opportunities. **Soft Skills and Technical Know-How**

English has been globally proven and accepted as a compulsory skill of this century and potentially of many industrial evolutions to come. Hence, augmenting learners at the university level with English language acquisition abilities is a crucial step to engendering a professional paradigm with job-ready individuals.

Although, the lingering gap is a matter of deep review. As far as adult education is concerned, higher educational institutes may



RATNESH JHA

need a profound re-analysis of new-age industry needs.

Another pertinent method to forge equity in the working tier of India is for multinational corporations to equip their employees with sharp English language skills by adopting Learning & Development interventions. Technology and digital innovations can lead to personalised, scalable, and well-targeted results to accomplish the same.

### Better English, Better Business

English is a global catalyst of business acumen and personal success. A pre-requisite for high-end employment, English is declared as the official language of communication by many corporations. Multinationals are vibrant spaces with linguistic, cultural, economic, political and social diversity. The professional population needs to be armed with marketable English language capabilities and essential soft skills to qualify for a globally hyper-connected work forum.

(The writer is CEO, of Burlington Group of Companies, Asia Pacific)



## FIRST COLUMN

WHEN ON A HIGH,  
WATCH OUT

Good times, such as profits, must be ploughed back for future well-being



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

When I first came across the following verse of the Bhagavad-Geeta, I wondered what Lord Krishna meant when He stated, "The contact between senses and their objects are givers of pleasure and misery, being temporary, they come and go; tolerate them. (2.14) I could understand tolerating the misery part, but why club misery with pleasure? Isn't pleasure nice, something to feel good about? Over the years, I have understood what the Lord was alerting us about. This is when we make big mistakes.

In good times our weaknesses surface. Senses become demanding. The feeling of high excitement/elation lowers our guard. One feels that one is superior and highly deserving, and one must reward self. Deep desires become dominant, which are mostly to enjoy lustily. And what does our so-called intelligence do? It justifies whatever our minds cook up. One break 'Maryada' (social norms). Then, there is no turning back; one has been tainted for life. The most glaring instances are those when fans of a winning team go berserk. People damage public property besides doing many odd things. One throws caution to the wind and pays its price in leisure. This becomes increasingly difficult if one drinks after such an event. Conscience is covered and sins/crimes may be committed.

Different people have different weaknesses, which flare up during good times. Most people throw parties when drinks are gulped as if it did not matter. Then, there is dancing, etc. Hotels have arrangements these days to lift such persons from floors who have exhausted themselves by dancing excessively and taking them to their waiting cars. During good times, 'Shankar' is reinforced. The feeling that I am superior and can do no wrong becomes dominant. The worst lot are the ones, who indulge in immoral behaviour, for which they pay a heavy price. In pleasant times, it is quite common to see people on a high getting into heated arguments and spoiling relationships permanently. Some people take important decisions in a mood of 'I can do no wrong,' and end up making big mistakes.



How does one protect oneself from hurting self, and in some cases very seriously? There are two main solutions. One is what we can do in the material sense and the other is spiritual. Materially, we should be much pleased with the arrival of good times, but at the same time we must keep in mind that this is not our final destination; we have to go far. Some sober celebration is fine and then, back to the routine, which has borne fruit. It is the right time for meditating on what we wish to achieve in this life, and the present is not our final destination; we have far to go. We must not stop worrying about our future, not in a fearful sense, but in positive terms.

Spiritual solutions are also available. It is time to strengthen our relationship with God, if we have not already developed it. Good times are the best for this purpose. In bad times, one is only thinking of coming out of them. If the relationship with God has not taken shape so far, the time is right to develop it.

This planet has been created for yoga (connection with God), not bhoga (unlimited enjoyment). All enjoyments must be according to dharma only. (7.11) Our earth's planet is neither heaven nor hell; we are in the middle and must be very careful in what we do. Wise persons always remain in the shelter of God to avoid making costly mistakes. The conclusion is obvious. Good times are for investment in future, just like in business profits are meant to be ploughed back into business. And we need God's protection at such times because our defence mechanism protects us in bad times, but in good times all bets are off; only good Sanskars and God can help us.

(The author is a spiritual writer)

Curb frivolous PILs  
in national interest

The misuse of public interest litigations adversely affects the democratic process and undermines the credibility of the judicial system



RAJESHWAR SINGH

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was introduced in Indian jurisprudence in the 1970s. Justice Bhagwati of the Supreme Court, who is considered the father of PILs, had imagined it to act as a noble legal concept for providing access to justice for the poor and marginalized. Technically a PIL is the power that is given to the public by the court via judicial activism. However, the party that introduced the PIL needs to prove the intent behind it. The party needs to show that the PIL affects the public at large and that a particular case isn't just some random litigation for personal gain or a case to solve any personal agitations.

Essentially, the concept of PILs was introduced to enable individuals or groups to file lawsuits on behalf of the "public interest". Since its introduction, there have been notable instances where PIL has been an important tool for social change in India and has been used to address a wide range of issues, including environmental protection, human rights, and corruption. However, a more dominant trend has taken hold, and "public interest" is now being substituted for 'private' and 'political' interests.

No matter how much progress PILs have brought to the Indian Judicial system, we cannot unsee the flip side of the coin at any cost as PILs are being abused a lot nowadays. Many PIL activists in India have been using the PILs as a handy tool for harassing the judicial system.

To counter the misuse of PILs, in 2010, the Supreme Court issued guidelines for filing PILs, which included the requirement of the petitioner to disclose their identity, the source of funding, and the reason for filing the PIL. However, despite these measures, PIL Petitioners have devised new ways to flout these guidelines, by making filings through proxy representatives and by maintaining ostensible albeit not real degrees of separation. These motivated PILs often target government officials or other powerful individuals to harass and intimidate them or to derail important government initiatives.

## GLARING EXAMPLES

In 2018, the Supreme Court dismissed a PIL which demanded a probe by a Special Investigative Team (SIT) into the death of BH Loya, a Judge presiding over the Central Bureau of Investigation Special Court in Mumbai. He was hearing one of the most high-profile cases in the country, involving the allegedly staged encounter killing of Sohrabuddin Sheikh in 2005. The case had obvious political overtones in as much as the prime accused in the case was the present Home Minister of India.

Again, in 2016, a PIL was filed in the Supreme Court of India challenging the appointment of a new Chief Justice of the country. The PIL was filed by a group of lawyers who alleged that the appointment was unconstitutional. In 2022, a PIL was filed in the Supreme Court of India challenging the government's decision to increase the price of fuel. The PIL was filed by a group of economists who alleged that the increase was unconstitutional and would hurt the poor. Ultimately this too was dismissed on the ground that Courts cannot interfere in policy or economic matters.



ALTHOUGH THE PIL TOOK BIRTH AS A NOBLE CONCEPT TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE TO THE VULNERABLE SECTIONS OF SOCIETY, IT IS INCREASINGLY BEING USED AS A TOOL FOR VESTED INTERESTS TO PURSUE POLITICAL AGENDAS AND HARASS THOSE IN POWER

[The writer is a BJP MLA from Lucknow, Ex-Joint Director of ED and a practising lawyer]



Most recently, in the wake of the killing of former MP and gangster Atique Ahmed, a PIL was filed seeking a probe and the constitution of an independent expert committee to investigate the event. PILs such as this try to enter the waters of policing and policy, which the courts are not necessarily competent or required to venture into.

## NEED FOR SAFEGUARDS

PILs are now rarely used by those they initially sought to protect - that is, the marginalised. Instead, it is used as yet another tool to influence the power and political dynamics, draining both Courts and the people and organizations targeted through these PILs. These PILs can hurt the democratic process and can make it more difficult for the government to function effectively. Most shockingly, a recent survey reveals that the number of PILs being filed has nearly quadrupled in the last three years alone.

This amplifies the need to revisit the guidelines to control frivolous and motivated PILs. A few suggestions are as under:

- One way to counter these issues is to simply make it more difficult to file PILs - for example, more attention should be paid to the PILs filed by a registered organization that represent a vast number of people and simultaneously limit be imposed on PILs filed by an individual, which mostly are like proxy filings. This would help to ensure that PILs are only filed by groups that have a legitimate interest in the issue at stake.

- Secondly, upon admission - the Courts could consider necessarily substituting the Petitioner and instead appointing an amicus curia to aid the Court on the issues involved.
- Thirdly, The Press should also be directed to not publicise the name of the Petitioner in any manner.

- Another solution could be to make it more expensive to file PILs. The courts should require that a filing fee be paid when a PIL is filed. This would help to discourage frivolous litigations.

- The number of Petitions that can be filed by a Petitioner should also be limited in some manner.

- Moreover, guidelines should be laid down that PILs be decided on a time-bound basis. This will help to prevent the misuse of PILs to delay important government initiatives and policies or to harass government officials.

- Another suggestion is for the Supreme Court to not entertain PILs directly - and necessarily require adjudication on any PIL to be first done at the level of the High Court. This will ensure that if and when the matter does reach the Supreme Court, it would have the benefit of the decision of the High Court on the issue.

Recently, an effective tactic being adopted by Courts is higher penalties where PILs are found to be frivolous. For example, in June 2022, a Supreme Court Bench ordered the litigant in a PIL to deposit a penalty of Rs. 18 Lakhs, being Rs. 1 Lakh for each

of the 18 minutes of the Court's time spent on hearing the patently absurd and frivolous petition. Although the Court eventually reduced the penalty to Rs. 2 Lakhs, the attitude of the Court revealed the Court's awareness and distaste towards such apparent exploitation of legal processes.

Although the PIL took birth as a noble concept to provide access to justice to the vulnerable sections of society, it is increasingly being used as a tool for vested interests to pursue political agendas and harass those in power. It is evident that the misuse of PILs adversely affects the democratic process, and undermines the credibility of the judicial system.

Recent years have seen examples of such abuse and exploitation of the PIL, which should serve as a deterrent to prevent similar incidents in the future. If used in the correct manner and for the right causes, PIL can prove to be an asset to the people. New ways and methods should be formulated to sieve out frivolous petitions so that justice is served fairly and well within time. The existing guidelines have unfortunately failed to act as a strong deterrent to the misuse of PILs and there is a need to strengthen the existing safeguards. There is a need now, more than ever, to revisit these guidelines and implement strong, stringent measures to ensure that PILs are only filed for genuine causes, and not for political or ulterior purposes. By doing so, we can help to ensure that PILs continue to be an effective tool for social change and not a weapon for political gain.

## Emergency remains a blot on the face of our democracy

There was no rationale for declaring Emergency; it was Indira Gandhi's fear that public would react sharply for her not obeying the court order

What has happened before-can it happen again? The answer is -undoubtedly yes," said Nani Palkhivala, the last word in democracy. This was during a speech delivered by the legendary lawyer during the 20th anniversary of the Emergency, the 21-month-long darkest period in the country's political history when the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi subverted the democratic process as well as the Constitution and jailed all the dissident leaders of both the Opposition and the Ruling parties. Indira wanted to derail the Allahabad High Court verdict that disqualified her from the membership of Lok Sabha and unseated her as Prime Minister for violating the Election Commission rules



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

(Writer is Political Editor, The Pioneer. Views expressed are personal)

and the Prevention of Corruption Act. For 21 months, there was no media freedom in India. Censoring officers in all newspaper establishments to scrutinize and clear news for publications. The emergency culminated with the defeat of the Indian National Congress and Indira Gandhi in the 1977 General Election.

Though persons like Indira and her servile Om Mehta (the then minister of home) are still fresh in the minds of the people, how many among us remember Raj Narain (the giant killer who defeated Indira in her home turf of Rae Bareilly as well as in the Allahabad High Court) or Jai Prakash Narayan (JP), the person who launched "Total Revolution" against corrup-

tion, favouritism and nepotism. Is the new generation being taught about the life and times of JP? Exactly a fortnight before the 48th anniversary of Emergency (11, June 2023 to be precise) MV Govindan, the physical education teacher-turned- CPI(M) State secretary, warned the media from writing anything against his party and its frontal organization Students Federation of India (SFI). What annoyed Govindan was the boldness shown by a section of the Kerala media in bringing to light the massive irregularities employed by a prominent leader of the SFI who managed to pass the post-graduate degree examinations without writing them while another youth leader succeeded in furnishing fake degree certificates

as well as experience certificates to get the job of a lecturer in a government-run college.

The reporters who filed the reports as well as the news readers who read the news have been listed as accused in the FIR filed by the Kerala Police. This is happening at a time when the all-India secretary of the party was lambasting the Modi Government for unleashing vendetta against media personalities who do not toe their line of thought.

A couple of months ago, the Police vandalized the offices of "Crime", an investigative publication that "broke" reports about high-level corruption happening in the State. Nandakumar, the editor and proprietor of the publication was subjected to physical tor-

ture of the highest order.

The computers in which he had filed the details of the information were destroyed and he was assaulted and imprisoned. The Kerala High Court had to intervene to get him released from jail. This is the situation in a State ruled by a secular, democratic front that stands for a renaissance in all fields.

Elsewhere in the country, things are not different. The Jantar Mandar gathering of sports personalities is no different. When people do not get a fair deal from the government and when justice is denied to them, it is natural for them to come out protesting to express their indignation. Ignoring such protests is at the peril of the government itself.

Indira Gandhi did not

have to declare National Emergency in 1975. She was afraid of the public anger towards her for not obeying the Court order and vacating her chair. The treatment turned out to be worse than the disease and it remains an eternal blot on the face of democratic India.

The Judgement by Kuldeep Nayar, and All the Prime Ministers Men by Janardan Thakur are a few of them.

It is sad to see leaders who claim to have worked against the infamous National Emergency days behave with the attitude "Deluge after Me". In Kerala alone, there are more than 200 septuagenarian activists who fought against the national emergency and ended up as victims of police brutality. Though they do not

get anything in return from civil society, hundreds continue to get government pensions for their involvement in Punnappa Vayalar agitation which has nothing to do with democracy or liberalism.

There is no shortage of political buffoons who sang a paean to the national emergency throughout the dark days and jumped the fence once the Congress was defeated in the polls.

How many of us remember that C Achutha Menon of the CPI was the chief minister of Kerala during the dark days and he had the services of Congress leader K Karunakaran as Home Minister? The CPI leaders look the other way when the topic of emergency is broached by others!









# Spain strike late against Italy to reach Nations League final

AFP ■ ENSCHEDE (NETHERLANDS)

Spain's Joselu pounced with two minutes remaining to snatch a 2-1 win over Italy on Thursday and set up a Nations League final clash against Croatia.

Luis de la Fuente's side shaded a tight battle in Enschede to progress to Sunday's final, where Zlatko Dalic's outfit are lying in wait after beating hosts the Netherlands on Wednesday.

Jeremy Pino sent La Roja ahead after three minutes but Cristiano Ronaldo netted from the penalty spot to level and the game seemed destined for extra-time before Joselu prodded home from point-blank range to win it.

The victory eases pressure on De la Fuente, who had been heavily criticised after March's loss to Scotland, in what was only his second game in charge.

Joselu, who has three goals in three games under the new coach, who handed him his debut, managed to stay onside and convert after Rodri Hernandez's effort was deflected into his path.

The poacher, 33, was relegated with Espanyol this season but netted 16 times in La Liga.

"I am very happy for everyone, the group and the coach deserve it," Jesus Navas, who became Spain's oldest ever player at 37, told Spanish broadcaster TVE.

"We played with great intensity, we're delighted and we can be very proud of getting ourselves into the final."

"It's a beautiful and hard-fought triumph, this is the way we have to go to achieve success."



De la Fuente handed new "signing" Robin Le Normand his debut alongside another French-born centre-back, Aymeric Laporte, at De Grolsch Veste.

The Manchester City defender and his team-mate Rodri were playing after tasting Champions League success last Saturday, with the latter scoring the winning goal against Inter Milan in the final.

Mancini lined up with three at the back, giving veteran centre-back Leonardo Bonucci a start despite his patchy season with Juventus.

Italy immediately paid the price, with captain Bonucci robbed on the edge of his own box under pressure from Gavi and Jeremy Pino, with the latter driving into the box and firing past Gianluigi Donnarumma. However the Azzurri quickly pulled themselves level, when Le Normand handled Nicolò Zaniolo's effort. Striker Ciro Immobile dispatched the penalty, back with the side for the first time since their catastrophic World Cup play-off defeat by North Macedonia in March 2022.

Sassuolo midfielder David Frattesi ran onto Jorginho's chip and slotted Italy's second past Unai Simon, chosen in goal over Kepa Arrizabalaga, but it was ruled out for offside. Alvaro Morata forced Donnarumma into a solid save down to his right as Spain played on the counter-attack, willing to go long to find the Atletico Madrid striker in an end-to-end affair, the 40th "Mediterranean derby".

Spain thrashed Italy 4-0 in the Euro 2012 final and won in the 2021 Nations League semi-finals, while Italy won Euro 2020 after beating Spain on penalties in the semis.

# Mbappe says PSG 'my only option for now'

AFP ■ FARO (PORTUGAL)

Kylian Mbappe on Thursday said staying at Paris Saint-Germain was his "only option for now" after the France superstar told the club he would not be extending his contract beyond 2024.

"I've already answered this question, I said that my goal was to carry on at the club, to stay at PSG, it's my only option for now," Mbappe told a news conference ahead of Friday's Euro 2024 qualifier against Gibraltar in Portugal.

Mbappe earlier this week sent a letter to the club confirming he would not take up an option to remain at the French champions until 2025.

"I didn't think a letter could kill or offend someone," Mbappe said on Friday.

He told AFP he had never discussed extending his contract with PSG beyond next year.

That immediately raised the prospect of the 24-year-old forward, one of the most coveted players in world football, following Lionel Messi out of Parc des Princes this summer.

Mbappe said he wasn't surprised by suggestions PSG could look to cash in by selling him now, rather than allowing him to leave for nothing at the end of next season.

"No, there's not much that shocks me," he said.

The France captain also



denied interfering with the national team's preparations by sending the letter four days before the Gibraltar fixture.

"I accept everything, people can talk, criticise, I understand," he said. "People don't have all the ins and outs. I know why I do what I do and I say what I say. There's no problem with that."

"I have a responsibility as captain. A few noises won't make me run away from this responsibility. It's not my temperament to run away," he added.

Mbappe also touched upon comments from President Emmanuel Macron, who on Wednesday said he would "try to push" for the player to stay in France. "He wants for me to stay in Paris and my goal is to stay, so we're on the same wavelength," said Mbappe.

After playing Gibraltar in Faro, World Cup runners-up France host Greece on Monday in Group B of Euro 2024 qualifying.

Mbappe was named as France's new captain before they began Euro qualifying in March with wins over the Netherlands and Ireland.

With the Dutch currently focused on the Nations League finals, France can all but wrap up qualification by claiming back-to-back victories.

# Spain morale is sky high after Italy win: Coach



AFP ■ ENSCHEDE (NETHERLANDS)

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said his team's morale was "sky high" after they beat Italy on Thursday to reach the Nations League final against Croatia.

La Roja snatched a late winner through Joselu after Italy's Ciro Immobile cancelled out Jeremy Pino's opening goal.

The coach had been criticised heavily after his first two matches in March, the second of which was a defeat by Scotland.

"(I feel) satisfaction and pride, I think we played an extremely high-level game," De la Fuente told reporters.

"We followed what we had prepared to the letter. We're

happy and our morale is sky-high."

The coach handed Robin Le Normand his debut after the French-born defender obtained Spanish nationality in May, and the Real Sociedad player impressed despite conceding an early penalty for handball.

"We have seen him so many times, I was very calm, he's shown he's top draw, he's cool-headed, he's another player for the cause and the future of Spanish football," said De la Fuente.

"He is very calm, he doesn't get nervous in tough situations. There was the accidental situation, he had the bad luck of hitting the ball with his hand." (But his level) doesn't surprise us,

that's how he is, he's very good."

Italy coach Roberto Mancini said he wished he had approached the second half with more attacking intent.

The coach stuck to the 3-5-2 formation he opted for at the start and watched his team fade as Spain took control.

"I think it is a significant defeat because I care about it and I would have liked to have made it to the final," said Mancini.

"We could have gone to a back four, knowing we would have given them a bit more ball than they ordinarily have."

"Maybe we could have taken up a higher block and been more attacking. We dropped off too much in the second half, absolutely."



# Frenchman Garcia named new Napoli boss

AFP ■ NAPLES (ITALY)

Rudi Garcia said on Thursday he was "as motivated as ever" after the Frenchman was named coach of runaway Italian champions Napoli.

Ex-Roma boss Garcia, 59, takes over from Luciano Spalletti who left his position after guiding the southern club to their first Scudetto in 33 years.

Garcia was sacked by Cristiano Ronaldo's Al Nassr in April with the Saudi Arabian side second in the table just months after the five-time Ballon d'Or winner joined in a deal worth tens of millions of dollars.

"What a pleasure to take on the Napoli project. What a pleasure to return to Italy," Garcia said on Twitter.

"I am as motivated and as ambitious as I have ever been," he added.

Earlier, Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis confirmed Garcia's arrival before the club announced the news on social media.

"I have the pleasure of announcing that, after having met and spent time with him during the last 10 days, Mr. Rudi

Garcia will be the new coach of Napoli," De Laurentiis said on Twitter.

"A sincere welcome to him and a big good luck!" he added.

Fluent Italian speaker Garcia won the French double with Lille in 2011, before guiding Roma to Champions League qualification in 2014 and 2015.

He has also coached Marseille and Lyon in his homeland.

Italian media had reported that former Barcelona and Spain coach Luis Enrique was the favourite to replace Spalletti and ex-Paris Saint-Germain boss Christophe Galtier was also linked with the job.

De Laurentiis had said he had a shortlist of 40 names to succeed the colourful Spalletti.

Garcia will have big boots to fill by following 64-year-old Spalletti, the oldest coach to win the Scudetto and the man who led Napoli to the quarter-finals of the Champions League for the first time.

The Italian has departed Naples for a return to his Tuscan vineyard on gardening leave with sporting director Cristiano Giuntoli having also vacated his position.

# Prannoy, Satwik-Chirag enter semifinals

In the final match, seventh seed Prannoy prevailed over Naraoka, seeded third, to book his semifinal berth



PTI ■ JAKARTA

India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty shocked top seed Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto to sail into the men's doubles semifinals before HS Prannoy entered the last-four stage of men's singles competition at the Indonesia Open here on Friday.

Prannoy registered a win over Kodai Naraoka of Japan.

However, world championship silver medalist Kidambi Srikanth bowed out of the men's singles competition after going down fighting to China's Li Shi Feng in the quarterfinals.

The first Indian to take the court, Srikanth lost 14-21 21-14 12-21 in one hour and nine minutes against world No. 10 Feng.

The win enabled Feng to restore parity as far as his head-to-head record against Srikanth

is concerned, which stands at 1-1 now.

The seventh seeded duo of Satwik and Chirag then displayed a flawless game to outwit Indonesia's Alfian and Adrianto 21-13 21-13 in 41 minutes.

Satwik and Chirag will play the winner of the quarterfinal between Koreans Min Hyuk Kang and Seung Jae Seo and Indonesia's Leo Rolly Carnando and Daniel Marthin.

In the final Indian match of the day, seventh seed Prannoy prevailed over Naraoka, seeded third, 21-18 21-6 to book his semifinal berth.

Prannoy will take on the winner of the match between top seed Viktor Axelsen of Denmark and Chinese Taipei's Tien Chen Chou.

In the battle between Srikanth and Feng, the Chinese came out on top in the first game despite taking more time to get off the blocks.

It was world No. 22 Srikanth, who opened up an early 2-0 lead before Feng bounced back with five straight points, with the Indian guilty of committing too many unforced errors.

The initial lead was all Srikanth could manage as his Chinese opponent upped his game as the match progressed to take a 11-7 lead at the game break.

Feng's court coverage and anticipation was way better than his opponent, who made a number of mistakes near the net.

Barring a few glimpses of his old self, Srikanth looked completely off colour as Feng continued to increase his lead, executing drop shots with precision and body smashes to easily pocket the first game.

# Pulisic double fires US over Mexico

AFP ■ LAS VEGAS

Christian Pulisic scored twice as the United States beat Mexico 3-0 on Thursday to set up a CONCACAF Champions League final showdown with Canada after a stormy battle that saw both sides finish with nine men.

Chelsea winger Pulisic opened the scoring in the 37th minute and then drove in a second a minute after the interval, slotting home a low cross from Tim Weah, who had been sent clear down the right by a fine long pass from Weston McKennie.

The game at Las Vegas's Allegiant Stadium turned ugly in the 69th minute when Cesar Montes was shown a red card for an ugly wild kick at US debutant Folarin Balogun and McKennie was also dismissed for his role in the fracas which followed.

Substitute Riccardo Pepi made sure of the win with the American's third goal in the 78th minute after an offside flag was over-ruled after a VAR review.

Two more red cards followed in the 85th



minute when Mexico's Gerardo Arteaga and the US's Sergino Dest were sent off after another mass brawl.

The match was stopped in the final minutes due to a homophobic chant from Mexico supporters, triggering the stadium warnings of a potential suspension of the game. There were also objects and drinks thrown from the stands on to the field and the referee blew for time with around half of the announced 12 minutes off stoppage time still to play.

Pulisic expressed satisfaction with the result but frustration that the game was allowed to spiral out of control.

"It's a great scoreline for us, it's a big win and we're into the finals," Pulisic said. "But the game didn't need to turn into all this madness that it did."

"They really need to control the game much more. It's sad. And now we're missing two good players just because everyone's losing their heads."

"I'm a little bit upset but at the end of the day we're in the finals."

# No news from Hamilton on future before Canadian Grand Prix

AFP ■ MONTREAL

Lewis Hamilton arrived at one of his favourite circuits on Thursday to praise Mercedes' progressive work but had no news on his future with the team before this Sunday's Canadian Grand Prix.

The seven-time world champion and seven-time winner of the Canadian Grand Prix, a record he shares with seven-time champion Michael Schumacher, said he was "buzzing" after his and team-mate George Russell's double podium finish in Spain.

Hamilton's contract with Mercedes ends this year.

But, asked about a keenly-anticipated meeting with team chief Toto Wolff, to finalise his next deal with Mercedes, he said: "We never hooked up."

Pressed on the subject, he laughed off a suggestion that he had been to share a pizza with Wolff and explained there was no fresh developments to reveal.

"No, we never had a pizza!" he said.

"I've seen Toto and we talked several times. We have a great relationship so there is nothing else to say at the moment."



He added he wanted to see if the upgraded Mercedes car that carried him to second place in Spain would remain as competitive this weekend.

"We've gone through a tough patch and we're kind of like on that up now," he said.

"It feels like we had wins at some races - but it's just about perspective because of course we haven't been in first place."

"The steps we've taken at the last race as a team to be on the podium with both drivers, that was a win for us."

"We're just focused, we know where we need to go. We don't know everything about how to get there, but we know that together, we can get there if we just keep our heads down."

"The science, the engineering at our team is fantastic, we've got a great development team. I honestly think we've got the best development team."

"It's as good as not know if this track suits our car, but the weather may change that and then we'll have to see."

He has a career total of a record 103 victories, but he has not won since the 2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix.

# Root, Bairstow revive Eng after Aus threaten to take command



**AP ■ BIRMINGHAM**  
Australia threatened to take control of the first day of the Ashes series before an unbeaten 64-run partnership between Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow lifted England to 240-5 at tea on Friday in an evenly balanced contest.

Root was 66 not out and his Yorkshire clubmate Bairstow had 33. The pair came together after Harry Brook was out in bizarre fashion and captain Ben Stokes lasted only eight balls. England scored at nearly five runs an over in the morning but refrained from all-out "Bazball" attack, settling for a mix of some 54 singles and 12 fours but no sixes to go to lunch on 124-3 against an uncharacteristically cautious Australia.

Brook won't want to watch a replay of his dismissal - not that he was looking the first time - and Stokes was out for a single to Josh Hazlewood (2-44) in wicketkeeper Alex Carey's third catch of the innings. Root and Brook brought up their 50 partnership at almost a run a ball. Australia needed wickets

and broke through, though not in a way it expected. Lyon (2-71) bowled Brook when the batter's thigh pad sent the ball looping into the air and seemingly away from his crease before dropping centrally and spinning back onto the stumps, with Brook taking no preventive action. Stokes came in to huge cheers and almost got out in the same over, putting his wicket in peril with an ambitious reverse sweep. The captain was caught behind shortly after at the other end, appealed and walked off when the screen showed a definite edge.

England was 176-5 and the game moving Australia's way until Root and Bairstow joined forces. Zak Crawley (61) was earlier dismissed by seamer Scott Boland off the last ball before lunch. Australia had set mostly defensive fields after losing the toss on an excellent wicket to bat on in hot and sunny conditions. Australia captain Pat Cummins said he would have also batted first, no surprise given his team boasts the top three-ranked Test batters in Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith and Travis Head.



## 'Like Ashwin against me': Stokes reveals Warner factor

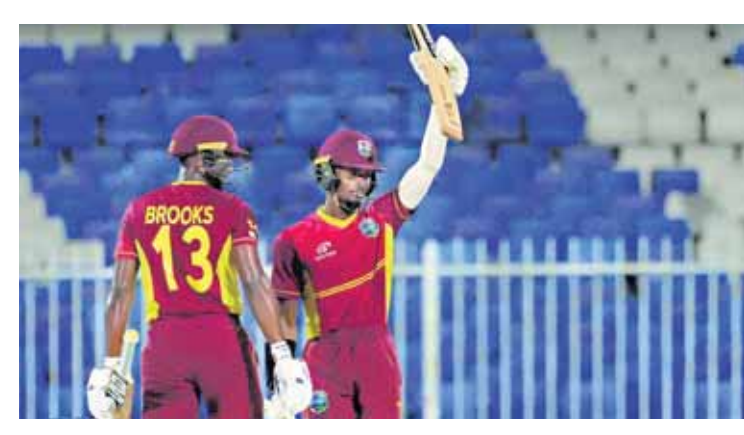
**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**  
England captain Ben Stokes revealed that Stuart Broad's dominance over David Warner was a major factor in his selection for the Ashes opener, starting on Friday.

The English captain compared Broad's impact on Warner to Indian spinner R. Ashwin's record against him. He also applauded the fast bowler for his consistency throughout the years.

Warner showed signs of form during his first-innings hand of 43 in the World Test Championship (WTC) Final last week and has vowed to be more aggressive against Broad than he was four years ago. Australian skipper Pat Cummins has also expressed his confidence that Warner will prevail over his long-time nemesis.

# West Indies, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka head into WC Qualifier unbeaten

**PTI ■ DUBAI**  
West Indies, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka will enter the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 Qualifier high on confidence, having won both their warm-up matches ahead of the tournament. Netherlands and Nepal will also both enter the group stages on the back of victories, with the Netherlands overcoming Ireland while Nepal beat Oman.



**ZIMBABWE GO TWO FROM TWO AFTER DOMINANT SCOTLAND VICTORY:** Brandon McMullen fell one run short of a half-century as Scotland were bowled out for 163 having been put into bat by hosts Zimbabwe.

from 28 balls while Joylord Gumbie and Craig Ervine both made 37, with Micheal Leask's two quick wickets only providing temporary resistance.

strong middle-order striking from Charith Asalanka and Dasun Shanaka, who added 112 for the fifth wicket. After losing both openers for just 10 runs to begin their response, the USA rebuilt through Monank Patel who scored 68 before becoming one of three wickets in an over for Matheesha Pathirana to leave USA on 106 for seven.

Shayan Jahangir was left stranded on 63 not out as Usman Rafiq was run out with USA falling 198 runs short.

# Handling Indian superstars has got Menon 'match ready'



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Umpiring at home over the past three years under the constant pressure put by the big Indian stars has helped Nitin Menon grow immensely as an ICC Elite Panel umpire, preparing him well for his much-awaited Ashes debut next month.

place for foreigners. He also got to officiate in a couple of T20 World Cups in UAE and Australia and he was in England last year for their home series against South Africa, taking his match tally to 15 Tests, 24 ODIs and 20 T20 Internationals since June 2020. In an exclusive interview to PTI ahead of the Ashes, Menon said it was a blessing in disguise that he got to do so many games over the past three years.

# Bangladesh close in on victory against Afghan



**AP ■ MIRPUR**  
Najmul Hossain and Mominul Haque both hit a century as Bangladesh closed in on a victory in the one-off Test against Afghanistan after setting up an improbable 662-run target for the opponent on Friday.

Najmul followed his 146 from the first innings with 124, making him the second Bangladesh batter to hit a century in both innings of a Test. Mominul, the first Bangladeshi to achieve the feat, brought up his first century since April 2021 with an unbeaten 121 as Bangladesh declared its second innings on 425-4. Afghanistan batted 11 overs to score 45-2 before bad light

After playing in limited-overs style, Najmul completed his fourth test century off 115 balls, nudging occasional bowler Hashmatullah Shahidi behind square for a single. Left-arm wrist spinner Zahir Khan momentarily intervened in Bangladesh's run-fest, taking two wickets in three balls. After hitting 15 boundaries in his 151-ball knock, Shanto fell, clipping one to short midwicket. Veteran Mushfiqur Rahim miscued a reverse sweep, after hitting a six on the previous delivery. Mominul and Liton Das then denied Afghanistan any success, with the former guiding a short delivery of pacer Yamin Ahmadzai over the keeper for a boundary to reach his 12th century. Liton, who was not out on 66 on his captaincy debut, picked up his 16th half-century, also hitting a boundary through fine leg against Zahir. Paceman Shoriful Islam then gave Bangladesh a breakthrough with his first delivery, trapping Ibrahim Zadran lbw for duck. Abdul Malik edged a delivery of Taskin behind wicket as Bangladesh lost two wickets for seven runs in the second over. Rahmat Shah was batting on 10 with Nasir Jamal on 5. Bangladesh put up 382 in its first innings before dismissing Afghanistan for 146.



# Ind women's cricket team to tour Bangla for white-ball series

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**  
The Indian women's cricket team will be back on the international circuit through a tour of Bangladesh for the white-ball series in July. The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side last played on the international circuit when they lost to Australia by five runs in the semi-final of the Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa in February.

Cricket Stadium will host women's international matches, with all games between India and Bangladesh to be day-night affairs. The last time the Bangladesh women's team played at this venue was in 2012 against South Africa. It added that the Indian team will arrive in Dhaka on July 6 to play three ODIs and as many T20Is. The T20Is are scheduled on July 9, 11 and 13 while the three ODIs, which are part of the 2022-25 ICC Women's ODI Championship cycle, will be played on July 16, 19 and 22. The Indian team members recently underwent a High-Performance training and conditioning camp at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru, with men's head coach Rahul Dravid and NCA head VVS Laxman giving them pep talks during the camp.

# SA women cricket team's first tour of Pakistan confirmed

**IAN S ■ LAHORE**  
South Africa women's cricket team will undertake their first-ever tour to Pakistan in August/September which will kick-start a busy 2023/24 international cricket season for the Pakistan women's cricket team, said the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday.



South Africa will play three T20Is and three ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 ODIs in Karachi from September 1-14. Pakistan is presently sitting second on the points table with five wins in nine ODIs (three series), while South Africa has played only one series of three ODIs and has six points. "I am extremely excited to be back to play a bilateral series in Pakistan. Having visited Pakistan earlier this year for the women's league exhibition matches, I was truly impressed by the warm hospitality and the passionate cricket fans."

since their remarkable runners-up finish in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup on home soil in February. South Africa will be the fourth high-profile national women's side to tour Pakistan in recent times, after West Indies, Sri Lanka and Ireland made trips to the country in the last few years. "We are pleased to announce the Proteas Women's first-ever tour to Pakistan. This tour not only signifies the strengthening of bilateral relations between our nations but also highlights the ICC's commitment to globally competitive women's cricket through the Women's Future Tours Programme. We are confident that this tour will pave the way for further collaborations and opportunities in the future."

provide the Proteas Women's team with an opportunity to further establish themselves among the elite in international cricket. Success during this tour will contribute to a seamless journey towards the upcoming tours and the ICC Women's T20 and 50-over World Cups, which will take place within the next two years, Pholetsi Moseki, the CEO of Cricket South Africa. In head-to-head encounters between South Africa and Pakistan, the Proteas have had the upper hand, with a 76% win rate. Out of 24 matches played, South Africa has won 19 ODIs, with one match ending in no result. In the T20i format, the competition has been closer, with South Africa recording 11 wins and seven defeats against the hosts. "These six matches will also