



# sunday pioneer

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## Sengol belittled as walking stick: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the eve of the inauguration of the new Parliament building and amid a boycott by several Opposition parties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the "Sengol" which was a symbol of the transfer of power from the British in 1947 should have gotten due respect after Independence but it was kept on display as a "walking stick" at Anand Bhawan in Prayagraj.

He made the remarks after receiving a "Sengol" from Tamil Nadu Adheenams (heads of Hindu monasteries) at his residence here on the eve of the inauguration of a new Parliament building.

Modi said "your sevak" and the government have brought the "Sengol" out of Anand Bhawan in Prayagraj.



Anand Bhawan was the residence of the Nehru family and has been converted into a museum.

Modi said a question had arisen over the symbol of transfer of power from the British in 1947 and under the guidance of C Rajagopalachari and Adheenams, a virtuous path of power transfer through the "Sengol" was found from ancient Tamil culture.

"Today, pictures from that era are reminding us of the deep emotional bond between Tamil culture and India's destiny as a modern democracy. Today, the saga of this deep

bond has come alive from the pages of history," Modi said.

He expressed delight that the symbol of the great traditions of India, the "Sengol", will be established in the new Parliament House.

The Congress has claimed that there was no documentary evidence of Moubtatten, Rajagopalachari and Nehru describing the "Sengol" as a symbol of transfer of power from the British to India.

The PM was blessed by the Adheenams on Saturday, ahead of the "Sengol" installation in the new Parliament House on Sunday.

Addressing the Adheenams, the PM expressed great delight that they would be present at the inauguration of the new Parliament House and would shower their blessings.

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## Take financially viable calls for viksit Bharat by 2047: PM to States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday urged States to take financially prudent decisions so as to become fiscally strong to deliver programmes that meet the "dreams of citizens" and evolve a common vision to achieve a "Viksit Bharat by 2047".

Addressing the 8th governing council meeting of NITI Aayog that deliberated over 100 issues, the PM said "when States grow, India grows" and sought States to work together to evolve a common vision for a developed India.

"PM @narendramodi urged States to take financially prudent decisions so as to become fiscally strong and capable of delivering programmes that meet the dreams of citizens," the Aayog said in another tweet.

The council, which is the apex body of NITI Aayog, includes all Chief Ministers, Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories and several Union Ministers. The PM is the chairman of NITI Aayog.

"Chief Minister/Lt Governors gave various policy-level suggestions. They mentioned specific issues pertaining to the States which require Centre-State cooperation. Some of the key suggestions

and best practices highlighted by them included in areas like opting for green strategies, need for zone-wise planning, tourism, urban planning, agriculture, quality of workmanship, logistics, among others", the NITI Aayog said.

"By 2030, India's gig and platform economy is estimated to expand to 23.5 million workers," the Aayog said.

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

### CAN'T TRUST KEJRIWAL, KCR, SAYS CONGRESS

Patna: The Congress on Saturday said it is "still not able to trust" Telangana CM K Chandrasekhar Rao and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. However, the Congress praised Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for his efforts to bring Opposition parties together.

### DELHI SEES 12 FRESH COVID CASES, 1 DEATH

New Delhi: Delhi logged one death and 12 Covid cases on Saturday with a positivity rate of 0.77 per cent, according to data shared by the city government's health department.

## U-turn: Govt didn't speak about RSS ban, says Sidda

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A couple of days after Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge warned of banning RSS "if peace is disturbed", Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday claimed that the Congress or the Karnataka Government has not spoken about banning RSS.

However, Siddaramaiah warned of strict action against any organisation that disturbed peace and harmony in the society.

## NIA, ATS bust ISIS module in MP, 3 held

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has busted an ISIS-linked terror module in an intelligence-led joint operation with Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) of Madhya Pradesh Police, and arrested three persons in the case from Jabalpur district of the State.

Continued on Page 2

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# Those who laid foundation to break India shouldn't be in syllabus: DU VC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the academic council passed a motion to remove a chapter on Pakistan's national poet Muhammad Iqbal from the political science curriculum, Delhi University Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh said those who laid the foundation to break India should not be in the syllabus.

The university has replaced a paper on Mahatma Gandhi in semester V of BA (hons) political science syllabus with one on Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar. The paper on Mahatma Gandhi will now be taught in semester VII, they said, adding this would mean students opting for a three-year graduation course instead of a four-year programme will not study Gandhi.

Born in 1877 in Sialkot in undivided India, Iqbal had written

the famous song 'saare jahan se achha'. He is often credited with giving birth to the idea of Pakistan. The chapter titled 'Modern Indian Political Thought' was a part of the Bachelor of Arts (BA) sixth-semester paper. Iqbal wrote the famous patriotic song 'Saare Jahan Se Achha'.

The university's academic council in a meeting on Friday had passed a motion for the removal of the chapter titled 'Modern Indian Political Thought'. It is part of the BA sixth-semester paper, officials said, adding that the matter will now be presented before the executive council of the Delhi University (DU) for a final call.

Vice Chancellor Singh said Iqbal wrote songs supporting the "Muslim League" and the "Pakistan Movement".

"Iqbal was the first to raise the idea of partition of India and the

## Removal of Iqbal from curriculum



establishment of Pakistan. Instead of teaching such people, we should study our national heroes.

Those who laid the foundation to break India should not be in the syllabus," the vice chancellor (VC) said, according to a DU statement

issued after the nearly 15-hour-long meeting that began 10:30 am on Friday. The university said the VC's proposal was unanimously passed by the academic council.

The university has also replaced a paper on Mahatma Gandhi in

semester V of BA (hons) political science syllabus with one on Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar. The paper on Mahatma Gandhi will now be taught in semester VII, they said, adding this would mean students opting for a three-year graduation course instead of a four-year programme will not study Gandhi.

The move has drawn sharp flak from a section of teachers, who termed it a saffronisation of education and an attempt to compare Gandhi and Savarkar.

Alok Pandey, an Academic Council member who attended Friday's meeting, said: "It seems they are planning to remove the paper on Gandhi from studies as students who will opt for a three-year programme will not study this paper," Pandey said. Pandey, who was also a part of the standing committee where the proposal was

discussed, said he agreed that they will teach about Gandhi in semester V, Savarkar in VI and Ambedkar in VII as per their age chronology.

"I opposed the proposal in the standing committee and they agreed that the paper on Gandhi will not be removed from semester V...But now in the Academic Council, they brought the resolution which was not agreed in the standing committee meeting," he said.

Opposing the move, Rajesh Jha, a former member of the Executive Council, said students should be exposed to Gandhi in initial semesters in order to develop critical thinking.

The proposal to set up the Center for Independence and Partition Studies was also approved during the DU Academic Council meeting. Along with this, the incidents during the tragedy of partition of India will also be deeply

studied and researched. For this, 'oral history' will also be recorded in the voices of those people of that era who have suffered this tragedy.

In the meeting that ended around 1:20 am on Saturday, the syllabus for the fourth, fifth and sixth semesters of various courses under the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework (UGCF) 2022 was passed, it said.

The meeting also considered the recommendations of the standing committee regarding the course of BA proposed by the philosophy department, and approved them unanimously with the head of the department being in agreement, the university said.

The BA courses offered by the philosophy department include "Philosophy of Dr Ambedkar", "Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi" and "Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda".

# Security upped, advisory issued on Parl opening

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Capital is all geared up for the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. Ahead of the mega event, the police have made adequate arrangements to ensure that the event is held without any hiccups. Adequate security arrangements have been made ahead of the event and the police have assured deployment of adequate personnel on Sunday.

Special Commissioner of Police Deepender Pathak said that enough deployment will be made for maintaining the law and order situation during Sunday's event.

Police have already issued a traffic advisory that the New Delhi district will be treated as a controlled area for the period and entry of vehicles will be restricted.

The Parliament building is located in a high-security area. Besides additional deployment, there is continuous monitoring



A security personnel near the new Parliament building on the eve of its inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

through CCTV cameras, the police said. While around 20 parties have announced a boycott of the ceremony, agitating wrestlers, who are demanding the arrest of Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for allegedly sexually harassing seven women grapplers, are threatening to hold a protest meeting before the new Parliament building on Sunday. All Delhi borders have

been sealed in order to prevent any protest or gathering. However, an official said that no permission has been given for the 'women mahapanchayat' announced by the wrestlers, who have been staging a sit-in at Jantar Mantar — about 3 km from Parliament complex. A police official said that adequate security personnel have been deployed near the Parliament building, but refused to go into details.

# Delhi, NCR record season's strongest thunderstorm; wind sweeps at 99 km/h

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) recorded its strongest thunderstorm of the season in the early hours of Saturday, with wind speeds touching 99 km/hour at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport, leading to at least six flights being diverted and several flights being delayed.

Thundershowers in Delhi uprooted trees and snapped branches of many others disrupting power supply in some areas of the city. Power supply in some areas, including Fatehpur Beri, Sainik Farms, Chattarpur, Mundka, Najafgarh, Dwarka, Mahipalpur, Suraj Mal Vihar, Baljeet Nagar and Dilshad Garden, was disrupted at various lengths of time due to the rains.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), most parts of the Capital received light to moderate rain after a large cluster of thunder clouds, which began forming in north Rajasthan, moved towards the region, covering large parts of



Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Haryana too. "Due to the moisture from the Arabian Sea, northwest India will have similar weather on Sunday. Its effect will be mostly in UP and it will reduce from the next day onwards.

There will be thunderstorms in North-Western India for the next five days... There is a possibility of thunderstorms in Delhi for the next 3-4 days. We have issued Orange alert for Haryana, North-East Rajasthan, UP but tomorrow there is a possibility of heavy rain in North-East UP and thunderstorm in other areas," said Dr Soma Sen Roy, IMD Scientist.

"We have issued an Orange alert for Haryana, North-East Rajasthan, UP but tomorrow

there is a possibility of heavy rain in North-East UP and thunderstorm in other areas," she added.

"IMD data showed Safdarjung, representational of Delhi's weather, received 15.7mm of rainfall till 8.30am this morning. Palam recorded 18.8mm of rainfall, Lodhi road 17mm, Ridge 33.2mm and Ayanagar 19.8mm.

"An airport official said flights began to be diverted from 6am onwards, with some delays also occurring as flights could not take-off during the period wind speeds were gusting up to 100 km/hour."

At least six flights have been diverted due to bad weather. This was due to rain, lightning and very strong winds," the official said.

# Alipur gets Vatsalya Sadan for children

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Women and Child Development Minister Atishi along with Supreme Court Judge Justice S Ravindra Bhat and various Juvenile Justice Committee judges, laid the foundation stone for the Integrated Complex for Child Protection Services, named "Vatsalya Sadan," in Alipur on Saturday. The complex, being developed by the Kejriwal Government, aims to provide a respectful and nurturing environment for the remedial care and holistic development of children in need of care and protection. Equipped with augmented safety and advanced security standards, it will ensure round-the-clock staff support systems, as well as medical and mental health support units.

The model complex, comprising a 6-storey building, will have a total capacity to accommodate 276 children in a special home, places of safety, and an observation home. Additionally, a separate building for the Juvenile Justice Board has been included in the



complex spread over 18700 Sq. M., featuring two board rooms and allied facilities. Child Care Center at Vatsalya Sadan will provide essential services including an observation Room, legal aid clinic, and rehabilitation center for rescued children. The construction of sports facilities for children's entertainment and physical fitness is also planned in the integrated complex.

During her address at the ceremony, WCD Minister, Atishi, expressed her delight upon witnessing the passion of the WCD officials who showcased the design of the complex. She emphasised the significance of this facility for children who have experienced turbulent pasts and have been deprived of the amenities they rightfully deserve.

# Baffled at BJP, PM's silence on wrestlers' protest, says Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Jailed former Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said in a note from Tihar jail Saturday he was baffled by the "silence" of the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi over wrestlers' protest at Jantar Mantar, and accused them of treating the grapplers as if they "are from Pakistan".

In the note, shared by AAP minister Atishi on her Twitter handle, Sisodia appealed to the prime minister to ensure justice to the wrestlers, who have accused BJP MP and Wrestling Federation of India Chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexual harassment.

"What baffles me is the deafening silence of the BJP, the Central government, and even the prime minister himself, as if these women are from Pakistan," read the letter written in Hindi. It was only after the intervention of the Supreme Court that FIRs were finally registered in this case, he said.

"I am sure we all remember the time when these wrestlers returned to India as proud medal-winners, and the prime minister posed for photos and videos with these talented athletes," Sisodia said.

He said he wondered if no action will be taken against Singh just because as he belonged to the ruling party. As these "courageous young women" leave behind their training and responsibilities at home to protest under scorching sun and pouring rain, the prime minister remains "indifferent" to their plight, he alleged.

"How can our prime minister, who once considered these girls as his family, remain



silent when they face sexual harassment? Is it simply because the accused is a powerful Member of Parliament from his own party?" Sisodia asked.

He alleged that over the last eight years, the BJP-ruled Centre has been "stifling" the constitution and using its agencies to "obstruct" works of Delhi government, and sent its ministers to jail in "false" cases.

"You can continue to send your political adversaries to jail, you subject them to persecution, even hang them if you want...But I implore you to at least provide justice to these daughters who have brought immense pride to India," said the letter.

In a related development, the Delhi Police on Saturday informed a court here that it has recorded the statements of women wrestlers who have accused Singh of sexual harassment.

The probe agency made the submissions before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Harjeet Singh Jaspal through a status report submitted on the direction of the court.

The court directed the police to supply copies of the status report to the complainants on a request made by their advocate. The police also informed the court that statements of all victims were recorded under Section 164 CrPC before a magistrate. The court has listed the matter for further hearing on June 27.

# Sisodia planted, manufactured public opinions in support of excise policy, claims CBI

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia "planted" manufactured public opinions in support of the excise policy by getting favourable views from interns of Delhi Minority Commission to make grounds for the now scrapped policy, the CBI has alleged in its supplementary charge sheet.

In the supplementary charge sheet filed in the case against Sisodia and other accused, the CBI said he "dishonestly and fraudulently" wanted to prepare grounds through "fabricated public opinions" for incorporating provisions in the policy as per his "pre-conceived" ideas.

The charge sheet said Sisodia "got fabricated certain emails through Zakir Khan, chairperson of Delhi Minorities Commission which were sent by interns of Delhi Minorities Commission on the dedicated email ID of the excise department...With a copy to...Accused Manish Sisodia," the charge sheet alleged.

The suggestions given in the emails — allotment of retail liquor licence through the auction of zones, reduction of excise and VAT as well as enhancement of licence fee and increase in the number of liquor vends, were handed over to Khan by Sisodia "in a handwritten note" with the directions to get multiple emails on "said lines" on the email id given for seeking public opinion, it alleged.

"This proves that the accused Manish Sisodia was working with pre-conceived ideas for the formulation of the Excise Policy and was planting manufactured public opinion in support of the same," it alleged.

The agency has relied heavily on the testimony of government officials, including the FIR named accused former excise commissioner Arva Gopi Krishna, against whom the CBI could not find any incriminating evidence of criminal misconduct and quoted him as a witness only. The CBI said that his statements recorded before the Magistrate under Section 164 of CrPC are "relevant" to prove the accusations against Sisodia and other accused.

The CBI has alleged that Sisodia obtained copies of the fabricated emails, sent by the interns of Delhi Minorities Commission from the Excise Department through his Secretary C Arvind.

He directed Excise Commissioner Rahul Singh that many of the opinions received on his emails have not been included in the summary prepared by the department and directed him to include them as well. "In this manner, Manish Sisodia dishonestly and fraudulently wanted to prepare grounds through these fabricated public opinions for creating ground for incorporating provisions in the Excise Policy as per his pre-conceived ideas," the charge sheet alleged.

# LG visits St James' Church to review restoration

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday visited the 187-year-old heritage St James' Church at Kashmere Gate and took stock of the restoration and renovation work being undertaken by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). The restoration of the Church began nearly six months ago and the same is scheduled for completion by June 30. He was accompanied by Vice Chairman, DDA, Experts and other senior officials. He also visited the Election Museum at Chief Electoral Office, Delhi.

Saxena, while inspecting the renovation work of the Church, instructed the officials to strictly ensure that the originality of the heritage structure is retained, while curation and restoration took place. St James' Church (also known as Skinner's Church), is known to be the official church of the British Viceroy of India in Delhi.

The Lt Governor stressed that the Church building and its vicinity should be developed in such a way that it becomes a prominent landmark in the city, as it once used to be. DDA officials informed Saxena that the renovation work would be completed by June 30 and the building would be handed over to the Church management for further rededication to the people of Delhi.

St James' Church is one of the oldest churches in the city and is part of the Church of North India Diocese of Delhi. Restoration of the Church assumes great significance as this area has close proximity with several historical monuments in Old Delhi-Walled City and are frequented by thousands of visitors every day.

# Sengol belittled...

**From Page 1**

In his remarks, Modi highlighted the role of Tamil Nadu in the freedom struggle and said the southern state was a bastion of Indian nationalism.

Noting that the Tamil people have always had a spirit of service, he said, "It is very unfortunate that the contribution of the people of Tamil Nadu in India's independence was not given the importance it should have

been given." He added that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has started raising this issue prominently.

"The people of the country are getting to know what treatment was meted out to the great Tamil tradition," the prime minister said.

He remembered several great seers from Tamil Nadu who had reverently mentioned Ujjain, Kedarnath and Gauri Kund.

As a member of the Parliament from Varanasi, Modi also talked about Swami Kumaragurupara of Dharmapuram Adheenam, who had gone to Kashi from Tamil Nadu and established the

Kedareswar temple at the Kedar Ghat.

He further pointed out that the Kashi Math in Tamil Nadu's Thiruppanandal is also named after Kashi.

Throwing light on an interesting fact about the "math", Modi informed that the Kashi Math of Thiruppanandal used to provide banking services to the pilgrims where one could deposit money at the "math" in Tamil Nadu and withdraw it by showing a certificate in Kashi.

"This way, the followers of Shaiv Siddhanta not only spread devotion to Shiva, but also did the work of bringing us closer to each other," he said.



# जन संवाद कार्यक्रम

## जो कहा...करके दिखाया

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- 8 Government High School, Bharolian Wali
- 9 Government High School, Khairekan
- 10 Government High School, Sukhera Khera
- 11 Government High School, Gindran
- 12 Government High School, Jagmalwali
- 13 Government High School, Lakarwali

#### JIND

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- 15 Government High School, Butani
- 16 Government High School, Jamni
- 17 Government High School, Karela Jhamola
- 18 Government High School, Hatho
- 19 Government High School, Dablain
- 20 Government High School, Khokkeri
- 21 Government High School, Badhana
- 22 Government High School, Dhakal
- 23 Government High School, Bhikhawala

#### GURUGRAM

- 24 Government High School, Lakhawas
- 25 Government High School, Kankrola
- 26 Government High School, Kanhai
- 27 Government High School, Dhanwapur
- 28 Government High School, Nakhrola
- 29 Government High School, Hayatpur
- 30 Government High School, Sadhrana
- 31 Government High School, Ritthoj

#### SONIPAT

- 32 Government High School, Bari
- 33 Government High School, Chirasmii
- 34 Government High School, Jahri
- 35 Government High School, Chhatehra

#### KARNAL

- 36 Government High School, Nagla Megha
- 37 Government High School, Badarpur
- 38 Government High School, Alipur Khalsa
- 39 Government High School, Mehmampur
- 40 Government High School, Kalsi Barsalu
- 41 Government High School, Sheikpura Manchuri
- 42 Government High School, Khera
- 43 Government High School, Raipur Jattan
- 44 Government High School, Naraina
- 45 Government High School, Balu
- 46 Government High School, Pundri

#### FARIDABAD

- 47 Government High School, Chand Pur
- 48 Government High School, Mangar
- 49 Government High School, Mahawat Pur

#### ROHTAK

- 50 Government High School, Rohtak (Sukhpura)

#### PANIPAT

- 51 Government Girls High School, Jaurasi

#### BHIWANI

- 52 Government High School, Dhani Hanuman
- 53 Government High School, Lilas
- 54 Government High School, Riwarei Khera
- 55 Government High School, Kikral

#### YAMUNA NAGAR

- 56 Government High School, Rasulpur
- 57 Government High School, Manglour
- 58 Government High School, Shadipur
- 59 Government High School, Darpur

#### KAITHAL

- 60 Government High School, Gohran
- 61 Government High School, Barta
- 62 Government High School, Kathwar
- 63 Government High School, Badsikri
- 64 Government High School, Sangrauli
- 65 Government High School, Balwanti

#### PANCHKULA

- 66 Government High School, Maranwala
- 67 Government High School, Jalauli
- 68 Government High School, Billa
- 69 Government High School, Tagra Hakim Pur
- 70 Government High School, Samlehri

#### NUH, MEWAT

- 71 Government High School, Alduka

#### MAHENDERGARH

- 72 Government High School, Mulodi
- 73 Government High School, Chhapra Bibipur

#### REWARI

- 74 Government High School, Ramgarh Bhagwan Pur
- 75 Government High School, Tatarpur Khalsa

#### AMBALA

- 76 Government High School, Sonda
- 77 Government High School, Rampur Chhapra
- 78 Government High School, Khanpur Labana
- 79 Government High School, Chaurmastpur
- 80 Government High School, Khanpur Brahman

#### HISAR

- 81 Government High School, Kharkra
- 82 Government High School, Kanoh
- 83 Government High School, Kumbha
- 84 Government High School, Pattan Tokas
- 85 Government High School, Satrod Kalan
- 86 Government High School, Chuli Kalan
- 87 Government High School, Sahu
- 88 Government High School, Khairi
- 89 Government High School, Ludas
- 90 Government Girls High School, Tokas

#### PALWAL

- 91 Government High School, Ranyala Khurd
- 92 Government High School, Likhi
- 93 Government High School, Baghola
- 94 Government High School, Guraksar
- 95 Government High School, Alhapur
- 96 Government High School, Chhaprola
- 97 Government High School, Chirawta
- 98 Government High School, Leharpur

#### FATEHABAD

- 99 Government High School, Dhani Gopal
- 100 Government High School, Nathuwal
- 101 Government High School, Ban Mandori
- 102 Government High School, Gurasar
- 103 Government High School, Tibbi
- 104 Government High School, Matana
- 105 Government High School, Barseen
- 106 Government High School, Biran Badi

#### KURUKSHETRA

- 107 Government High School, Lohar Majra
- 108 Government High School, Bhat Majra
- 109 Government High School, Teora
- 110 Government High School, Ishaq
- 111 Government High School, Ajrawar
- 112 Government High School, Sudhpur
- 113 Government High School, Diwana

# Army Chief Pande visits violence-hit Manipur

To take stock of situation in Imphal

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

Army Chief General Manoj Pande is on a two-day visit to Imphal starting Saturday to review the situation in the violence-hit State. He will visit various locations where he will interact with the local formation commanders and obtain a first-hand account of the situation obtaining on ground. He will also interact with the troops.

His visit comes days ahead of Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the State next week. He is likely to be there for nearly three days.

Giving details about the Army Chief's visit to Manipur, the Army said in New Delhi on Saturday, Pande will meet Governor of Manipur Anusuiya Uikey, Chief Minister N Biren Singh and Kuldeep Singh, Chief Security Advisor of Manipur on Sunday, to discuss and deliberate over the



current situation and future trajectory, in order to restore normalcy at the earliest. Owing to the internal security situation in Manipur, the state administration had requisitioned Army and Assam Rifles on May three. As an immediate response, Army and Assam Rifles deployed 135 columns to diffuse the situation by carrying out active domination of sensitive and fringe areas.

Approximately 35,000 civilians were evacuated to safe zones and immediate relief and humanitarian aid was provisioned to displaced civilians by the Army and Assam Rifles,

the Army said.

Reports from Imphal said Eastern Army Commander Lt General Rana Pratap Kalita will also accompany the Army Chief during his two-day visit to the state.

A senior Army official told PTI that Pande and Kalita will reach Imphal from Delhi to review the ground situation on the backdrop of ongoing ethnic clashes between communities. "Pande will meet the Governor, Chief Minister and Security Advisor to discuss the situation," he added.

Pande and Kalita will also meet the ground commanders, including those from other forces, and review the law and order situation. The Army chief is scheduled to return on Sunday, while Lt General Kalita is likely to stay back for Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Manipur from Monday, Army sources said.

The ethnic clashes claimed over 70 lives and some 10,000 army and para-military personnel had to be deployed to bring back normalcy in the north-eastern state.

# Rajnath to attend Nigerian Prez-elect's swearing-in event

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will visit Nigeria between May 28-30 to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the President-elect of the West African nation Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Rajnath Singh will attend the swearing-in ceremony at Eagle Square in Abuja on May 29. He will also meet the outgoing Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari during a reception hosted by him on May 28.

Giving details of the defence minister's schedule here on Saturday, defence ministry officials said this will be the first-ever visit of an Indian Defence Minister to Nigeria.

Rajnath's visit will be an important landmark in building the strong bonds of friendship between the two countries. Considering the growing defence cooperation between India and Nigeria, senior officers of Ministry of Defence and



top leadership of important Defence Public Sector Undertakings will accompany him.

They will hold meetings with the representatives from the Nigerian industry and the Armed Forces to identify the equipment and platforms, through which the Indian defence industry can support the country's requirements.

Nigeria is home to an estimated 50,000 members of the Indian community.

Rajnath will address the Indian diaspora at Abuja during the visit.

# Prachanda to visit India from May 31 to June 3

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/KATHMANDU



India and Nepal will discuss the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties here during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Pushpa Kamal 'Prachanda.' This will be his first travel abroad after assuming office in December last year. He will be in India from May 31 to June 3.

Giving details of the Nepalese Prime Minister's schedule, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said here on Saturday, Prachanda is coming to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Modi. The visiting dignitary will be accompanied by a high-level delegation.

During the visit, Nepalese Prime Minister will call on President and Vice-President and will hold extensive talks with Prime Minister Modi to discuss the diverse areas of the bilateral partnership between India and Nepal. Other Indian dignitaries will call on the Prime Minister of Nepal.

In addition to the official

engagements, Prime Minister of Nepal will also be visiting Ujjain and Indore as part of his visit. The visit continues the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and Nepal in furtherance of our 'Neighbourhood First' policy, the MEA said.

The bilateral relations between the two countries have significantly strengthened in the last few years in all areas of cooperation. This visit underscores the importance given by both sides in adding further momentum to the bilateral partnership.

Reports from Kathmandu said Prime Minister Prachanda will travel to India on Wednesday next week on a four-day official visit during which he will hold talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and other leaders to further strengthen the

age-old, multifaceted bilateral ties, the foreign ministry here said Saturday. Prachanda will hold delegation-level talks with Modi on June 1. The talks will be followed by a joint press meet by the two prime ministers, it said, adding that Modi will host a luncheon in honour of his counterpart from Nepal and his delegation.

"This is the fourth visit of Prime Minister 'Prachanda' to India as the Prime Minister of Nepal. The visit will further strengthen the age-old, multifaceted, and cordial relations between Nepal and India," it said.

"The Prime Minister will address Nepal-India Business Summit in New Delhi jointly organised by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and interact with business leaders of both countries," it said. Prachanda will interact with the Nepali community in India over a welcome reception being hosted by Ambassador of Nepal to India Shankar Prasad Sharma, the statement said.

# Bill in US Congress to declare Diwali as Federal holiday

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

In an effort to acknowledge the diverse cultural make up of the country, a prominent American lawmaker has introduced a bill in the US Congress to declare Diwali, the festival of lights, a federal holiday, a move welcomed by different communities from across the country.

The Diwali Day Act, if passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden would make the festival of lights the 12th federally recognised holiday in the United States.

"Diwali is one of the most important days of the year for billions of people across the globe, and for countless families and communities in Queens, New York, and the

United States," Congresswoman Grace Meng told reporters during a virtual news conference here soon after introducing the bill in the House of Representatives late Friday.

Establishing a federal holiday for Diwali would allow families and friends to celebrate together, and demonstrate that the government values the diverse cultural makeup of the nation, Meng, a Democrat, said.

"Diwali celebrations are a wonderful time here in Queens, and each year it is easy to see just how important this day is to so many people. America's strength is derived from the diverse experiences, cultures and communities that make up this nation," she said.

"My Diwali Day Act is one step toward educating all

Americans on the importance of this day and celebrating the full face of American diversity. I look forward to shepherding this bill through Congress," Meng said.

Welcoming the move, New York Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar said, "This year, we saw our entire state speak with one voice in support of recognising Diwali and the South Asian community."

"My extraordinary partner in government Congresswoman Meng is now taking the movement national with her historic legislation to make Diwali a federal holiday. Together, we are showing that Diwali is an American holiday. To the over 4 million Americans who celebrate Diwali, your government sees you and hears you," she said.

Applauding Meng for her



continued work to increase the visibility of the Asian-American community, New York State Senator Jeremy Cooney said naming Diwali a federal holiday not only hon-

ours those who observe but highlights a cultural tradition some Americans do not experience regularly.

"Diwali is a special holiday for so many South Asian and

Indo-Caribbean communities," said New York City Councilman Shekar Krishnan.

"As the first Indian American ever elected to NYC government, I am so proud to support Congresswoman Meng's legislation to establish 'Deepavali' as a federal holiday. It is crucial that children like my own are able to officially celebrate our holidays with their families in a way that I was not able to grow up," he said.

A large number of community members applauded the introduction of the Diwali Day Act in the House of Representatives. "The recognition of Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas is pivotal to enriching the cultural fabric of the United States and fostering greater understanding and appreciation for the rich South Asian

diaspora," said Sim J Singh Attariwala, Senior Policy and Advocacy Manager of The Sikh Coalition.

"Today is a milestone that demonstrates our visibility, our contributions, and the progress we are making in the United States with the Diwali Day Act," said Richard David, Board Member at the Indo-Caribbean Alliance.

Congratulations Congresswoman Meng, Coalition of Hindus of North America president Nikunj Trivedi said. This joyous festival is celebrated by millions of Americans and symbolises the victory of good over evil and of light over darkness and brings together people from all backgrounds to cherish goodness, well-being, peace and prosperity - things that everyone can value and benefit from,

Trivedi said. "As Hindu Americans, we are so glad to see a bill to honour the multitude of celebrations that take place across the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean, and beyond on Diwali," said Ria Chakrabarty, Policy Director for Hindus for Human Rights.

"It is high time to recognise Diwali as a holiday in US public schools," said Dr. Neeta Jain, founder and president of the International Ahimsa Foundation. "Our children should be treated equally. As our children celebrate other cultures, others should celebrate and learn about our culture as well. This is the only way we can teach children to have mutual respect, mutual understanding and mutual acceptance," she said.

Manmohan Singh on March 13, 2010 in the presence of then Congress President Sonia Gandhi. Jayalithaa did not step into that secretariat even for once as there were serious allegations of corruption in connection with the construction of the building. Though the construction remained incomplete, the inauguration took place as scheduled. Karunanidhi hired the services of cinema art director Thotta Tharini to make the building look like a fully completed structure. Tharini put up a massive cinema set with plaster of paris and other decorative materials.

# Cong pays tribute to Nehru Legacy of India's first PM tall like beacon: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Saturday paid rich tributes to Jawaharlal Nehru on his death anniversary with former party chief Rahul Gandhi saying the legacy of the country's first prime minister stands tall like a beacon, illuminating the idea of India and values of freedom and democracy.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Gandhi also visited Nehru's memorial at the Shanti Van here and paid floral tributes to him. Senior leaders KC Venugopal and Pawan Bansal were among those present at the memorial.

Several party leaders paid tributes on social media to the Congress stalwart. Born in 1889, Nehru remains India's longest-serving prime minister. He was prime minister between August 1947 and May 1964. He passed away on May 27, 1964.

"India of the 21st century cannot be imagined without the contribution of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru," Kharge said



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi pays tribute to India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru on his death anniversary, at Shanti Van in New Delhi on Saturday

in a tweet in Hindi.

A fearless defender of democracy, his progressive ideas strongly propelled India's social, political and economic development despite challenges, the Congress president said. "My humble tribute to 'Hind ke Jawahar,'" he said.

Paying tributes to the former

prime minister, Rahul Gandhi in a tweet said Nehru's legacy stands tall, like a beacon, illuminating the idea of India and the values he dedicated his life for - freedom, democracy, secularism and modernity. "His vision and values always guide our conscience and actions," Rahul Gandhi

said and tagged an audio-visual montage on Nehru.

Paying homage to Nehru, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also shared on Twitter an audio-video montage on the country's first prime minister.

The Congress, from its official Twitter handle, also paid tributes to Nehru. "We remember Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, our first prime minister and the 'Architect of Modern India' on his death anniversary. A visionary who led the nation to great heights through a plethora of economic policies and industrial establishments," the party said.

"From the 'Temples of Modern India' including IITs, IIMS, AIIMS, DRDO and India's industrial marvels to India's forays into nuclear and space research, it was under him that India's prowess amplified to an unprecedented magnitude.

Today, we cherish the legacy of Pandit ji, who brought India to the world stage as a leading, global power," the Congress said.

# Announce that India would get new Parl after 2024 LS election, Kerala Cong MLA urges Cong-led Opp

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

Veteran Kerala Congress legislator P C George, seven-time member of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, has asked the Congress-led Opposition to take a cue from late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa and declare that the nation would get a new parliament after the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

"The Congress-led Opposition alliance claims from rooftops that the new Parliament building is a blot on the face of the nation. If they are serious about this charge, let them assure the people that they would either construct a secular, liberal and people oriented Parliament when they come to power after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. That's the spirit," George told *The Pioneer*.

He pointed out that Jayalithaa had declared that she would not step into the new Tamil Nadu Legislature Building constructed at a cost of ₹1,100 crore during the tenure of M Karunanidhi which was inaugurated by the



then Prime Minister

It took another six months for the new secretariat to become fully functional. But the number 13 proved to be unlucky for the DMK chief as he lost the 2011 election.

Jayalithaa after winning the election ordered the shifting of the secretariat to its original venue Fort Saint George and converted the new Secretariat into a super specialty hospital and medical college!

The controversy over the golden scepter (Sengol) too came to an end by Saturday as Indologist Dr Nanditha Krishna released portions from historian Yasmin Khan's 2007 book *The Great Partition*.

# Pharmacy of World: Affordability, Quality, R&D must, says Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of a few tough syrup making export phramas coming under scanner on quality issue, Union Minister of chemicals and fertilizers Dr Mansukh Mandaviya said the industry is progressing at a rapid rate, and to maintain India's stature as the 'Pharmacy of the World,' it need to focus on quality and affordable manufacturing with an increased focus on research and innovation.

He was speaking to the industry leaders, chairing a roundtable meeting with the leading CEOs of pharmaceutical industry in the country on the second day of 8th International Conference on Pharma and Medical Device Sector.

The Minister urged the stakeholders to capitalise on the current opportunities, adding, "Substantial investment in terms of production linked incentive schemes as well as upcoming drug parks are bearing fruitful results. To catalyse growth, we must maintain a



Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya addresses a roundtable meeting with the leading CEOs of pharmaceutical industry in the country on the second day of 8th International Conference on Pharma and Medical Device Sector, in New Delhi on Saturday

degree of competitiveness to consolidate our presence in the world."

He invited the stakeholders to put forth their suggestions addressing the aspects of pricing, regulatory, policy and strategy, with the respective action points in a detailed presentation and due consideration will be given to facilitate further policy growth.

S Aparna, secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals urged the attending representatives to collate and collectively represent their perspectives adher-

ing to the aforementioned four categories to facilitate policy makers, government in fostering a stronger ecosystem for all.

N Yuvaraj, joint secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Anandhesh Kumar Choudhary, senior economic advisor, Vinod Kotwal, member secretary, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority, DCGI Dr Rajeev Raghuvanshi, chairman, NPPA Kamlesh Pant, various industry stakeholders and representatives of academia and associations were also present in the conference.

# 400 med plants can reduce Type-2 diabetes: Research

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A team of researchers from JIPMER-Puducherry and the AIIMS-Kalyani has noted that there are at least 400 medicinal plants that can be effective in reducing the amount of sugar level in the blood which is necessary to control Type-2 diabetes, but intensive studies have been done only on 21 of them so far.

In their study titled "Treatment on Nature's Lap: Use of Herbal Products in the Management of Hyperglycemia," they also noted that "many allopathic drugs (to manage diabetes) have herbal background" and said evidence-based trials in natural products could lead to the development of "novel drugs in the modern management of diabetes."

So far, intensive trials have been done only on 21 herbal plants, including vijayasar, jamun, cumin,

daruharidra, little gourd, bael, fenugreek, neem, amla and turmeric, which have been found to have prominent anti-hyperglycemic action, said the study published in the *World Journal of Diabetes*.

These medicinal plants have been the basis of many drugs to manage diabetes, the researchers said after analysing data available on PubMed. They also cited examples of herbal formulations such as BGR-34 prepared by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

Marketed by AIMIL Pharmaceuticals, BGR-34 contains many active compounds derived from four medicinal herbs daruharidra, gudmar, methi and vijayasar. "Besides these, giloe and majetha have also been added to increase immunity as well as anti-oxidants levels," executive director at AIMIL Pharmaceuticals Dr



Sanchit Sharma said.

He said that "our ancient texts on medicine and ayurveda too are rooted in nature which abounds with a range of medicinal plants. Since the number of diabetic patients in India is increasing at an alarming rate, research on other herbal plants can give a new outlook to the medical field."

Last year, a study by AIIMS-Delhi too found that BGR-34 is effective not only in reducing sugar but obesity as

well. This ayurvedic medicine also improves the body's metabolic system.

The latest study also noted that though partial research has been conducted on eight plants such as pomegranate, shilajit, bean, tea, ginkgo biloba and saffron that have shown anti-diabetic properties, more trials are needed.

"Interestingly, many allopathic drugs have herbal background," the researchers noted in their study and cited the examples of allopathic drugs such as metformin for diabetes management which is obtained from the galega officinalis plant. The plant was used to manage diabetes in the 19th century in Europe, they said.

"Similarly, SGLT2 (sodium-glucose cotransporter-2), which is effective in treatment of diabetes, was manufactured after obtaining phlorizin from the bark of apple tree," the study said.



# India will be bright shining light for the world: OYO founder

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will be the bright shining light for the world driven by its young people who are "driving startups", hospitality and travel-tech firm OYO Founder & Group CEO Ritesh Agarwal said on Saturday.

India has become a hub of startups that have created new age services such as Ola ride sharing, OYO rooms and Paytm, which one cannot live without today but were non-existent nine years ago, he said while speaking at a conclave on completion of nine years of the Modi government.



"In my opinion, India will be the bright shining light for the world and driven by of course young people in India who are driving startups..." he said.

Agarwal said OYO, which also started in 2014, is also nine years old and the company has witnessed a single ecosystem where India has only moved forward.

In nine years, he said, India's startup revolution has created around USD 300 billion market cap "out of nothing".

Many young people from smaller towns are today aiming to not only become big entrepreneurs but they are also dreaming to become the biggest global innovators.

When asked for his advice for the youth, Agarwal asked them to focus on pursuit of excellence and not be discouraged by people who discourage them from working towards their dreams.

Earlier at the conclave in a video message, Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said that she witnessed a number of transformational initiatives over the last nine years which impacted the lives of people from all sections of society.

The country saw a path breaking and world beating technology during the COVID-19 pandemic that really helped in managing it very effectively, she noted.

"There were over two billion vaccinations that were rolled out to over a billion people in the country, the largest mass vaccination initiative in the world on a digital platform and I was proud as a citizen to see vaccines being sent to other nations," Mazumdar-Shaw stated.

She noted that being a woman entrepreneur and one of the first startup entrepreneurs in the country, it was heartening to see what is happening in the startup ecosystem.

"It is very exciting to see the way the government is supporting the new startups with so many initiatives, making it easier for them to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities," Mazumdar-Shaw said.

# About 27K employees lost jobs at Indian startups to date, over 8K this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At least 27,000 tech employees at Indian startups have lost their jobs since the funding winter crept in last year, and the list is only growing.

Nearly 26,868 employees have been handed over pink slips by 98 startups, including unicorns led by the edtech majors, according to data by leading startup news portal Inc42.



Another homegrown edtech startup Teachmint laid off over 70 employees, its second round of job cuts after sacking about 45 workers more than five months ago.

Chennai-based edtech startup Skill-Lync laid off employees as it consolidates operations across Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad amid global macroeconomic conditions.

The year 2023 has become the worst year for tech employees as nearly 2 lakh tech employees — from Big Tech firms to startups — have been sacked to date globally, as companies like Meta, BT, Vodafone and many others announced further plans to lay off more employees in coming months.

As per the data by layoffs tracking site Layoffs.fyi, 695 tech companies have shown the doors to around 1.98 lakh employees so far this year.

At least 22 edtech startups have slashed 9,781 jobs to date.

In the first five months into 2023, more than 8,000 employees lost their jobs in India by nearly 50 startups.

Homegrown virtual events platform Airmet sacked about 30 per cent of its workforce, or at least 75 employees, according to the report.

Corporate expense management platform Happy, owned by credit Card bill payment provider CRED, slashed nearly 35 per cent of its workforce as part of a restructuring exercise.

# WayCool Foods, IIT Madras join hands to offer climate-smart agricultural practices for farmers

PTI ■ CHENNAI

WayCool Foods, an agricultural supply chain startup company, on Saturday said it has entered into a partnership with Indian Institute of Technology-Madras here to further expand its offerings to improve farmers' income and profitability.

Through this MoU, WayCool Foods would provide technical solutions for seeding and expansion of the Regenerative Agriculture Sustainable Architecture (RASA) tech stack. It would also offer its domain knowledge of the agri-supply chain from soil-to-sale and fur-



ther strengthen the design and structuring of the agri-stack.

"Partnership with IIT Madras will further boost our continuing efforts towards driving adoption of regenerative agriculture among Indian farmers. Our on-field experience has demonstrated commercial benefits to farmers when they adopt regenerative agri practices there-

by improving income," WayCool Foods Managing Director Karthik Jayaraman said. "We are confident that synergies between WayCool Foods and IIT Madras will provide farmers with access to the most advanced technologies equipping them to take proactive measures to combat climate change..." he said.

IIT-Madras has developed and built the RASA Tech Stack in 2022 which would aid the farmers to monitor and fine-tune their cultivation.

"Through this collaboration, we hope to create innovative solutions that can address some of the key challenges faced by the farming and agriculture industry today," IITM Pravarthak CEO M J Shankar Raman said.

"Be it leveraging sensor technology and data science techniques, we believe we can help improve crop yield, reduce waste and increase farmers' income. This will also create new opportunities for growth," Raman said.

The module enables tax officers to carry out scrutiny of GST returns of Centre administered taxpayers selected on the basis of data analytics and risks identified by the System.

# CBIC issues SoPs for scrutiny of GST returns for FY'20 onwards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBIC has come out with a standard operating procedure (SoP) for scrutiny of GST returns for fiscal 2019-20 onwards under which the analytics unit will identify returns for scrutiny depending on various risk parameters.

As per the SoP, selection of returns for scrutiny will be done by the Directorate General of Analytics and Risk Management (DGARM) based on various risk parameters identified by them. DGARM will select the GSTINs registered with the Central Tax authorities, and the details of GSTINs selected will be made available on the scrutiny dashboard of the concerned Central Tax officer on ACES-GST application.

"The details of the risk parameters, in respect of which risk has been identified for a particular GSTIN, and the amount of tax/ discrepancy involved in respect of the concerned risk parameters (i.e. Likely revenue implication), will also be shown on the scrutiny dashboard of the proper officer for their convenience," the SoP said.

Earlier this month, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) had rolled out a module for automated scrutiny of GST returns.

The module enables tax officers to carry out scrutiny of GST returns of Centre administered taxpayers selected on the basis of data analytics and risks identified by the System.

The SoP further said that as the data made available on the dashboard has been generated at a particular point of time for the calculation of risk parameters, this data may undergo change at the time of scrutiny of returns, due to subsequent compliances carried out by the taxpayer or by the suppliers of the taxpayer. The concerned tax officer shall, therefore, rely upon the latest available data, it added. The concerned Central Tax officer would have to conduct scrutiny of returns pertaining to minimum of 4 GSTINs every month, which would include scrutiny of all returns pertaining to a financial year for which the said GSTIN has been selected for scrutiny.

"As far as possible, scrutiny of return should have minimal interface between the proper officer and the registered person and, there should normally not be any need for seeking documents/ records from the registered persons before issuance of Form GST ASMT-10," it added.

# PTC India Q4 net profit falls 17.67 pc to ₹129 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Power trading solution provider PTC India Ltd on Saturday posted a 17.67 per cent fall in its consolidated net profit at Rs 129.34 crore during the March quarter, dragged by higher expenses.

Its net profit was Rs 157.11 crore during the January-March quarter of FY22, the company said in a regulatory filing.

The company's total income, however, rose to Rs 3,643.02 crore from Rs 3,107.04 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Expenses too grew to Rs 3,471.95 crore as against Rs 2,890.57 crore a year ago.

# Currency management exercise, not demonetisation: RBI to Delhi HC on 2K note issue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday told the Delhi High Court that its decision to withdraw Rs 2,000 notes from circulation is only a "currency management exercise and not demonetisation".

The central bank defended its decision on a PIL filed by petitioner lawyer Rajneesh Bhaskar Gupta challenging RBI's decision. The PIL argued that it lacks the independent authority, as per the RBI Act, to make such a decision.

Appearing for the bank, Senior Advocate Parag P. Tripathi urged before the court that the matter be heard on a later date as the bench has already reserved its judgment in a similar PIL by petitioner lawyer Ashwini Upadhyaya.

"This is a currency management exercise and not demonetisation. The bench has earlier reserved judgment in a matter. I am suggesting that let that order come and we can hear it after that. Most of what is being contended would have been dealt with it there. It is the pure nature of economic policy," Tripathi said.

The petitioner has contended that the withdrawal of the banknotes after 4-5 years, with a specific deadline, is deemed "unjust, arbitrary, and contrary to public policy".

later date as the bench has already reserved its judgment in a similar PIL by petitioner lawyer Ashwini Upadhyaya.

"This is a currency management exercise and not demonetisation. The bench has earlier reserved judgment in a matter. I am suggesting that let that order come and we can hear it after that. Most of what is being contended would have been dealt with it there. It is the pure nature of economic policy," Tripathi said.

The petitioner has contended that the withdrawal of the banknotes after 4-5 years, with a specific deadline, is deemed "unjust, arbitrary, and contrary to public policy".



"This is beyond the jurisdiction of the RBI. There is no provision in the RBI Act saying that RBI can take such a decision independently. I would have understood if the central government had taken the decision," the petitioner said.

After hearing the parties, the court posted the matter for next hearing on May 29. The parties were asked to submit a short note in the matter.

"Counsel for the RBI has informed the court that another petition with the same subject matter has been heard. He prays for listing on Monday. List on Monday," the court said.

The PIL says: "It is respectfully submitted that the RBI, as Respondent no 1, does not possess independent power under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, to direct the non-issue or discontinuance of any denominational value banknotes. Such power is exclusively vested with the Central Government, as stated in section 24 (2) of the RBI Act, 1934."

The PIL highlights that the circular in question fails to indi-

cate that the decision to withdraw the banknotes has been made by the central government.

It argues that the RBI has provided no explanation other than the "Clean Note Policy" for taking such a significant and arbitrary step of withdrawing the banknotes from circulation, without adequately considering the potential repercussions for the general public.

Referring to the provisions of the RBI's clean note policy, the PIL points out that damaged, counterfeit, or soiled banknotes of any denomination are typically withdrawn from circulation and replaced with newly printed ones.

# ONGC posts ₹248 crore loss in Q4 on tax provisions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's top oil and gas producer ONGC posted a surprise loss in the March quarter after it made over Rs 12,100 crore provision for a contested tax liability. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) reported a net loss of Rs 247.70 crore in the January-March quarter as compared to a net profit of Rs 8,859.54 crore a year back, according to a company statement.

Service tax department at various work centres had raised a demand for payment of service tax on the royalty the company paid to the state and central government on crude oil and natural gas it produces from below ground. The company challenged the demands in courts.



While the matter is pending in courts, "as an abundant caution, the company has deposited the disputed service tax and GST on royalty along with interest under protest amounting to Rs 11,558 crore up to March 31, 2023," the notes to the accounts said, adding Rs 1,862 crore towards penalty and other differences in the tax demands has also been disclosed as contingent liability.

ONGC said it will continue to contest the tax before various forums based on the legal opinion, as per which the service tax/GST on royalty in respect of crude oil and natural gas is not applicable.

"The company has reviewed the entire issue of disputed service tax and GST on royalty and has decided to make a provision towards these disputed taxes as a prudent and conservative practice.

# Pressman Advertising gets shareholders' nod to merge with Signpost India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pressman Advertising Limited said it has received shareholders' approval for the company's merger with digital out-of-home ad firm Signpost India.

The board of directors of both Pressman and Signpost on June 24 last year had approved a scheme of arrangement of Pressman's merger with Signpost.

In a shareholders' meeting held on May 25, 2023, as per the order of the Kolkata bench of the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal), "Pressman sought its shareholders' approval for the scheme of arrangement", the company said in a statement.

At the meeting chaired by Urmila Chakraborty, Chairperson appointed by the NCLT, "99.9986 per cent votes were cast in favour of the scheme, while a fractional 0.0014 per cent voted against" it, the Kolkata-based firm said.

As per the merger pact, shareholders of Pressman will get one share of Signpost in exchange of each share in Pressman.

# Equitas Small Finance Bank collaborates with IBM to build digital banking platform

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Equitas Small Finance Bank has signed an agreement with IBM Consulting to design and build a digital banking platform aimed at providing a secure experience to customers, the bank said on Saturday.



Officer Narayanan Easwaran said in the release.

"This partnership with IBM is just the first step towards engaging customers. We are confident that this strategic partnership will help simplify and transform the banking experience for customers across the board," Easwaran said.

Speaking about the partnership with Equitas, IBM Consulting India-South Asia Country Managing Partner Kamal Singhani said they were excited to be the consulting partner and technology collaborator of Equitas in its next growth phase.

The collaboration between the two entities aims at boosting the digital products offered by Equitas as well as its service offerings, as it evolves its business for a digital-first generation, a press release from the bank said.

As part of the next growth phase, Equitas aims to commence its modernisation journey with a cloud-native platform architecture. "The bank's delivery model would be highly product-centric, moving away from traditional program management methodologies to agile frameworks for the various channels including mobile," Equitas's Chief Information

Officer Narayanan Easwaran said in the release.

"This partnership with IBM is just the first step towards engaging customers. We are confident that this strategic partnership will help simplify and transform the banking experience for customers across the board," Easwaran said.

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# Sun Pharma proposes to fully acquire Israel-based Taro Pharmaceutical Industries

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries on Saturday said it has proposed to fully acquire Israel-based Taro Pharmaceutical Industries through a reverse triangular merger.

The Mumbai-based drug major said it has issued a letter to the Taro board with a proposal containing a non-binding indication of interest to acquire all of the outstanding ordinary shares for a purchase price of USD 38 per ordinary share in cash.



Sun Pharma currently owns a 78.48 per cent stake in Taro.

"We envisage the proposed transaction to be consummated in the form of a reverse triangular merger under the Israeli Companies Law, 1999 and practice," Sun Pharma said in a regulatory filing.

The purchase price represents a premium of 31.2 per cent over Taro's closing price on May 25, 2023, a 41.5 per cent premium over Taro's average closing price in the last 60 days and a compelling liquidity opportunity for Taro's shareholders, it added.

# Office demand to rise in Bengaluru's Whitefield; rent may climb 8-10% in 2 years: Colliers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Demand for prime office space in Bengaluru's key location Whitefield is likely to rise on improved infrastructure and rent may go up 8-10 per cent in next two years, according to Colliers. Real estate consultant has come out with a report 'Bengaluru Metro Rail: Key office market impact'.

With Baiyappanahalli-Whitefield metro project likely to be fully operational by mid-year, rentals of office spaces in Whitefield are likely to go up by about 8-10 per cent over the next two years, the report said.

The growth in rentals will also hinge upon the overall demand from corporates and macro-economic factors among others, it added.

Whitefield, the second largest office market in Bengaluru, has office stock of about 40.4 million square feet, with vacancy levels hovering around 17.2 per cent at the end of the last calendar year. The metro line towards Whitefield, which became partially operational in March 2023, will connect the technology hub of Whitefield to the rest of the city. The report highlights that the average annual supply in Whitefield rose by 10 per cent during 2017-22, as the construction of metro project began, when compared to 2011-16 period.



# 'India will be able to become \$5-trillion economy by 2027'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will be able to become USD 5-trillion economy by 2027, Bharti Enterprises founder and Chairman Sunil Mittal said on Saturday.

While speaking at a conclave on 9 years of the Narendra Modi government, Mittal said businesses in general require a very decisive leadership and India after a long time not only has government with full majority but also a leader who is recognised as a global leader.

"This country has clearly moved to an additional USD 1.4 trillion taking us to USD 3.5 trillion and I think the audacious target of USD 5 trillion, which couple of years ago would have looked a difficult one to accomplish, is now clearly in sight and I think by 2027 we should be able to achieve it," Mittal said.

He said that he personally experienced the change in last five years. Mittal said that India, according to him, is the most advanced country in the world as far as telecom is concerned.

"My generation grew up in the age of very deep and long shortages of telecom and connectivity to a point today where

the deepest and remotest part of the country is using smartphones. "We moved very quickly from technology shifts. India now has the fastest 5G roll-out in the world. By 2024 March India will have 5G connectivity across the country," Mittal said.

India has set up 2 lakh base stations for 5G services within eight months of the launch of the service.

Mittal said that even in remote areas people see mobile phone, radio connection and a DTH television connection.

"This to my mind is the power of technology which this government has used to its utmost power to usher in reforms and benefits for the masses. I am very proud that we are part of the industry which is a great enabler for economic growth. Today telecom services give 1-1.5 per cent additional GDP growth to this country," Mittal said. He said telecom services enabled e-commerce, online banking, remittance of payments in rural areas, healthcare and now with the help of 5G there will be roll-out of many services such as drone management and other advanced technologies.

## IN BRIEF

### CONVOCATION EVENT HELD

New Delhi: Asim Siddiqui Memorial (PAG) Degree College Badaun has organised the convocation ceremony of the entrepreneurship course, which is being run with the joint efforts of Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, John Carroll University, America and Asim Siddiqui Memorial (PG) Degree College Badaun.

## Nepal starts exporting electricity to India

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal has started exporting electricity to India from Saturday, as the generation of hydroelectricity from run-of-the-river projects increased with the onset of the monsoon in the Himalayan country.

Last year also, Nepal exported hydroelectricity to India from June to November.

"We have started selling 600 MW hour electricity to India from Saturday as there is a surplus in the electricity in the country," said Suresh Bhattarai, spokesperson of Nepal Electricity Authority.

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"We have started selling 600 MW hour electricity to India from Saturday as there is a surplus in the electricity in the country," said Suresh Bhattarai, spokesperson of Nepal Electricity Authority.

AFP ■ DORTMUND

## Dortmund Bottles Again As Jamal Musiala's 89th-minute Strike Seals Bundesliga Title For Bayern Munich On Dramatic Final Day

Bayern Munich have won their 11th straight Bundesliga title, a 90th minute goal from Jamal Musiala sealing a late 2-1 win at Cologne after Borussia Dortmund were held 2-2 at home to Mainz.

With Bayern needing a win to overtake Dortmund, the England-raised Germany forward hammered home with the clock winding down, ensuring the Bavarians keep their grip on the title for another season.

Dortmund knew a win would guarantee a title, but were 2-0 down after just 25 minutes, with striker Sebastien Haller also having missed a penalty.

Dortmund scored two second half goals to draw the game but the point was not enough, Bayern winning the title on goal difference.

Heading into the final matchday, with Dortmund two clear at the table, Bayern knew only a win would give them hope of a title, while hoping for a Dortmund collapse.

France forward Kingsley Coman struck after eight minutes to set down the gauntlet to Dortmund, playing one hour to the north.

Despite a bright start, Dortmund soon found themselves behind 1-0 after 15 minutes, Andreas Hanchel-Olsen tapping in from a corner.

Dortmund were handed a lifeline when Raphael Guerreiro was brought down in the box, but Sebastien Haller failed to convert the penalty.

Mainz doubled their lead shortly after, Karim Onisiwo heading in from close range as the visitors began tearing up the home fans' script.

The home side, who had scored 15 goals in their past three home games, grew nervous and lacked potency in front of goal, while Mainz grew bullish and had several chances on the counter.

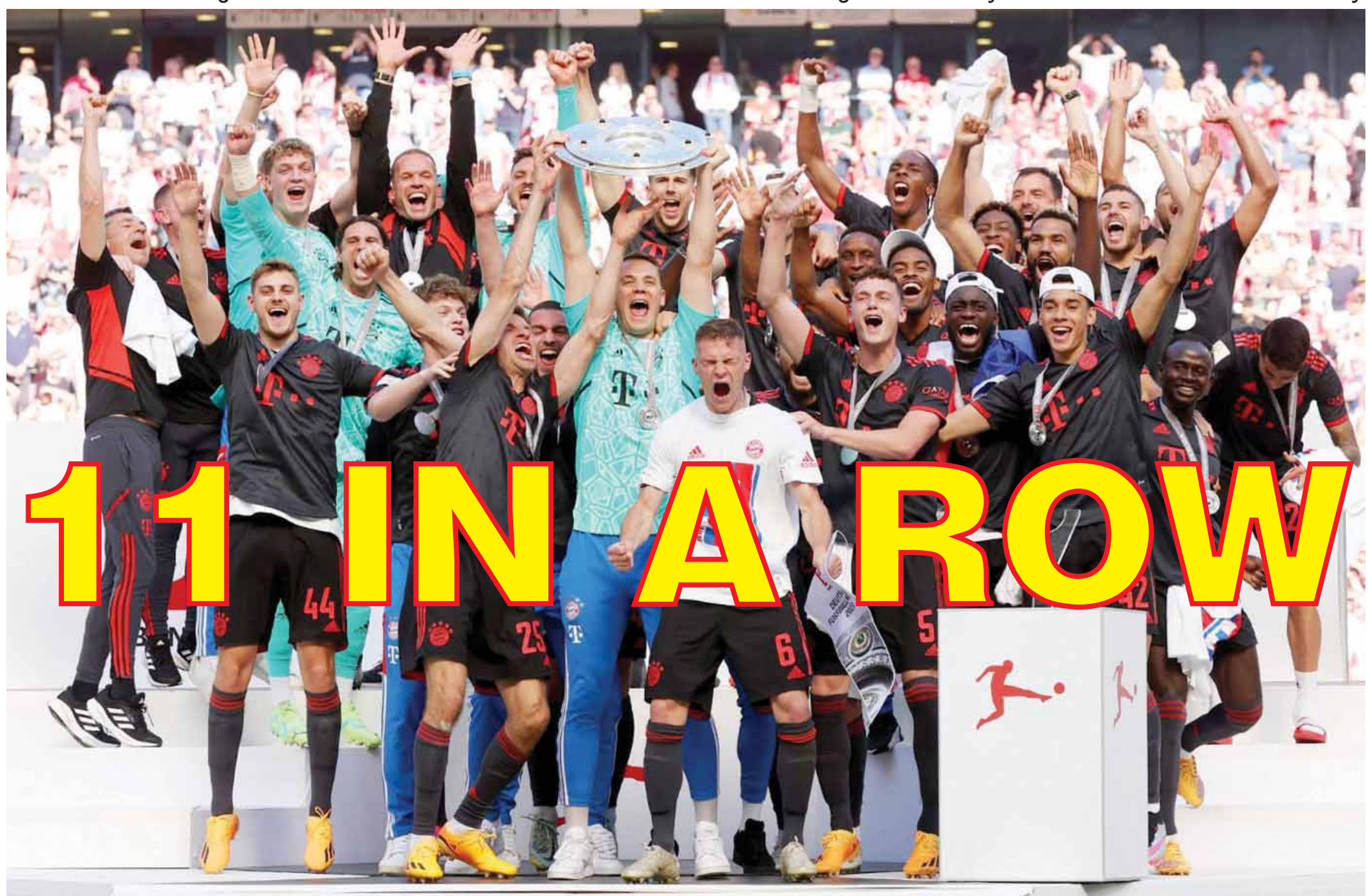
With time winding down, Guerreiro gave the home side hope, scoring with 20 minutes remaining.

### SCHALKE RELEGATED

Word filtered around the ground that Cologne had equalised with ten minutes remaining, Dejan Ljubicic converting from the spot, but Musiala's strike again took Bayern atop the table.

Niklas Sule added another in the sixth minute of injury time, but Dortmund were unable to conjure the comeback which would have broken Bayern's hold on the German title.

One bright spot for the disap-



# 11 IN A ROW

pointed home side was that arch rivals Schalke were relegated, after a 4-2 loss at RB Leipzig.

Schalke had fought back to equalise from two goals down, but Leipzig scored twice in the final ten minutes to secure Schalke's fate.

Elsewhere, Union Berlin secured Champions League football for the first time with a 1-0 home win over Werder Bremen.

Union captain Rani Khedira scored a goal with nine minutes remaining, ensuring victory for the

home side and keeping alive a remarkable fourth season in the top division.

Also on track for a first ever Champions League berth but needing Union to slip up, Freiburg lost 2-1 away at Frankfurt. Leading 1-0 after

a Vincenzo Grifo strike, Freiburg conceded two goals in the last 10 minutes and will instead play Europa League next season.

Stuttgart's 1-1 draw at Hoffenheim means they finish third last, ensuring a shot at staying in the

second division through the relegation playoff.

Bochum's 3-0 win at Leverkusen also ensures they will play top division football for another season, taking them from second last to the safety of 14th.

A ten-man Augsburg lost 2-0 at Borussia Muenchengladbach but will also stay up, having finished 15th.

Relegated Hertha Berlin won 2-1 away at Wolfsburg, denying the hosts a chance at leapfrogging Leverkusen into Europe.

## Replacing Busquets is key to Barca success: Xavi

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said Saturday it was key for his side to replace the departing Sergio Busquets if they want to compete for silverware next season.

The 34-year-old pivot is leaving at the end of the season after making over 700 appearances for the club, winning three Champions Leagues and nine La Liga titles.

"We have to find this piece, if we want to compete well next year, we have to find it," Xavi told reporters ahead of Busquets' final home game, on Sunday against Real Mallorca in La Liga.

"For me it's fundamental as a coach. Busquets has been fundamental for us, and very important in winning the Spanish Super Cup and La Liga this year.

"A player who has been so important for us, on and off the pitch, is leaving, so we have to find a very important player to replace Busquets.

"For me, it's the key to competing next year."

Barcelona have been linked with several players, including Real Sociedad midfielder Martin Zubimendi, but the Catalans are still struggling financially and may be limited to cheaper options.

Along with Busquets, Jordi Alba is also leaving the club in the summer, and fans have sold out the clash with Mallorca to give them a warm farewell, as well as the stadium itself.

Sunday's match is the last to take place at Camp Nou before it is rebuilt, with



Barcelona set to play in the city's Olympic stadium in Montjuic next season.

"Tomorrow (we are) saying goodbye to Camp Nou, which is a lot of years of history, passion, emotions, great games, it will be an emotional day," continued Xavi. "Add to that Busquets and Alba's goodbye, and it's extra motivation for us to play a great game, to show our best, for fans to come to the stadium and have an excellent goodbye."

Xavi said his favourite Camp Nou memory was his own goodbye, in 2015, after the team won the treble, and that it would be sad to play at the stadium in its current guise for the last time.

"It's going to be emotional, with some sadness, we say goodbye to our stadium," added the coach.

"It's for a good cause, the common good of Barcelona — that said, it will be a bit sad."

## Haaland picks up Premier League player prizes

AFP ■ LONDON

Erling Haaland became the first man to win both Premier League player and young player of the year awards in the same season on Saturday.

The 22-year-old has taken just 35 appearances to set a new Premier League record of 36 goals in a single season to help Manchester City retain the title.

"I am honoured to have become the first player to win both awards in the same season - thank you to everyone who voted for me," said Haaland in a City statement.

"It has been an incredible first season in the Premier League and lifting the trophy last weekend in front of our fans at the Etihad was a very special moment for me."

The Norwegian, who was also named the football writers' player of the year this week, has scored 52 goals in all competitions as City close in on a treble.

Pep Guardiola's men face Manchester United in the FA Cup final and Inter Milan in the Champions League final next month.

"These awards would not have been possible without my amazing teammates, the manager and all of the staff at the club who help me perform on the pitch," added Haaland.

"Now we have two more finals to go and we want to finish the season strong."



## Verstappen claims first pole in Monaco

AFP ■ MONACO

Max Verstappen claimed pole for the Monaco Grand Prix with the Red Bull world champion company on the front row after qualifying on Saturday.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc will start Sunday's race on the second row alongside the Alpine of Esteban Ocon although the stewards were investigating an incident involving Leclerc.

"You have to go all out and risk it all," said Verstappen.

"I knew I was behind, I'm very happy to be on pole for the first time here."

Alonso in his flying Aston Martin was denied a first pole since 2012 by just 0.084s.

"Pole position means a lot here in Monaco, but today Max was a little bit faster," said Alonso. The Spaniard added: "First row on the grid is still a big thing for us. We will try to win. It's very short into Turn 1, but this year normally we make good starts."

Leclerc, on pole for the past two races at his home track, said before being summoned to the stewards: "All in all happy, but I would have preferred to be first of course."

The session was red-flagged when Sergio Perez smashed his

Red Bull into a wall leaving last year's winner at the rear of the grid.

With overtaking at a premium on the narrow twisting streets of the Principality, Perez's misfortune could prove costly for his title challenge with the Mexican 14 points adrift of Verstappen going into this sixth race of the season.

Carlos Sainz in the second Ferrari posted the fifth-fastest time to occupy the third row with Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton.

Ocon's Alpine teammate Pierre Gasly, George Russell of Mercedes, Alpha Tauri's Yuki Tsunoda and McLaren's Lando Norris completed the top 10.

## Jarry downs Dimitrov to win Geneva final

AFP ■ GENEVA

Outsider Nicolas Jarry beat Grigor Dimitrov in straight sets in the Geneva Open final on Saturday to bounce into next week's French Open bolstered by a clay court title.

Chilean Jarry, the world number 54, beat Dimitrov 7-6 (7/1), 6-1 to claim only the third singles title of his career.

Bulgarian world number 33 Dimitrov was Jarry's third impressive scalp in three days at the Parc des Eaux-Vives.

He knocked out top seed and world number four Casper Ruud — the 2021 and 2022 defending champion — in the quarter-finals. The Chilean number one then beat Alexander Zverev in the semis. "It was a very awesome week. Since the beginning my only mistake was one game against Casper," Jarry told reporters.

The 27-year-old will move to a career high ranking of number 35.

Former world number three Dimitrov missed the chance to claim his first title since winning the ATP Finals on his debut in 2017.



### DRUGS SUSPENSION COMEBACK BATTLE

Jarry served an 11-month suspension after testing positive for anabolic agent ligandrol and anabolic steroid stanozolol at the Davis Cup in November 2019. He blamed his positive test on "cross-contamination" from "multi-vitamins made in Brazil".

Jarry said it had been a long road back. "I've been doing so much mental work, pushing myself to uncomfortable places to be able to understand myself more, and dealing a lot with tough emotions — so very deep things," he said.

"Last year was very tough because I was doing everything right and I didn't get any results back. But I think it made me stronger for weeks like this."

Jarry's two previous titles also came on clay: Bastad in 2019 and on home soil in Santiago in March this year.

He said his focus this year was "trying to control my mind."

"When I'm able to focus on my work is when I play the best, so I just have to keep mastering this type of mentality. Sometimes my mind gets a little bit crazy."

## Alcaraz wants to play 'dream' doubles with Nadal at Paris Olympics

AFP ■ PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz wants to play alongside Rafael Nadal in a formidable and "dream" doubles team at the 2024 Olympics.

Alcaraz has yet to feature at the Olympics while Nadal won a gold medal in singles in Beijing in 2008 and doubles gold in Rio eight years later.

For world number one Alcaraz, playing with Nadal at the Paris Games would be a perfect farewell as the veteran winds down his career.

"For me, it could be a dream playing doubles with him in the Olympics," said 20-year-old Alcaraz on Friday.

"Let's see how he's doing and how he's going this year. Hopefully he's going great."



Nadal, a 22-time major winner, is absent from the French Open which starts on Sunday with a hip injury. The soon-to-be 37-year-old has already said that 2024 will likely be his last year in the sport.

Alcaraz is now one of the

favourites for the Paris title which his compatriot has swept up 14 times.

"I felt bad when I heard that Rafa was not able to play here in Roland Garros and probably the rest of the year," said Alcaraz.

"As a fan of tennis, I always

watched Rafa playing. I always want to watch the best players in the world playing the tournaments."

"It was tough to understand how it's going to be without Rafa this year. Hopefully we'll see him next year and that he's 100 percent."

Women's world number one and defending champion Iga Swiatek also hoped that Nadal would return in 2024 for a career swansong.

"I don't want to focus on statistics or what he could achieve by playing here this year," said the Pole. "For me, the most important thing is if he's just healthy and happy. Hopefully he's going to play next season and feel better. That's the most important thing for me."

# Gill gets ready to spoil Dhoni's farewell party



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Mahendra Singh Dhoni wouldn't mind a 'Farewell to Remember' but a young Shubman Gill, oozing grace, would do everything under his control to prevent Chennai Super Kings from beating Gujarat Titans to its fifth IPL title, here on Sunday.

Nearly 19 summers back when a young Dhoni was making his first strides in India blue, a four-year-old Gill was taking stance on a vast farmland in Punjab's Fazilka village on Pakistan border, with a handmade customised bat, prepared by his devoted grandfather.

On Sunday, at the 132,000 seater Narendra Modi Stadium, the soon-to-be 42 Dhoni will have one last assignment in his favourite Canary Yellow jersey -- to stop

Indian cricket's megastar-in-waiting and do a 'High Five'. Three hundreds and 851 runs don't happen in every season but on a batting belter at the Motera, what will be Dhoni's strategy to rein in the 'Mohali Marauder'?

Will it be Deepak Chahar's swing or Ravindra Jadeja's wicket-to-wicket bowling? Or will it be Moeen Ali, who could be the 'Joker in the Pack' with his enticing flighted deliveries outside the off-stump which could sharply break back. Can Matheesha Pathirana bowl some incisive toe-crushers?

A technically near-perfect batter against a captain known for thinking out of the box. It can't get more exciting than this.

His die-hard fans might expect him to come back again next year but even Dhoni, who has played the

entire season with a heavily strapped left knee might find it extremely difficult to keep up with the demands of the shortest format.

So for every 'Thala' (elder brother in Tamil) fan, its all about savouring the Dhoni moments till it lasts. In this CSK set-up, he could afford to bat at No. 8 in most games but entering the finals with a bowling line-up that missed Deepak Chahar for the better part of fist half and had to turn a profligate Tushar Deshpande into a dependable wicket-taker.

Turning an inconsistent Shivam Dube into a six-hitting bully or overseeing the return of Ravindra Jadeja, the T20 bowler, the legend of Dhoni will never cease to exist. It will only grow and his captaincy stories will also be burnished with coats of myth decades down the line.

They say familiarity breeds contempt but contempt would be the last word in Dhoni and CSK's mind when they face Hardik Padya's Titans.

The CSK logo features a "Roaring Lion" but they would take the team from Land of Gir Forest lightly at their own peril.

After 73 games, the two of the most consistent teams are pitted against each other in the summit clash.

No team has emulated the structural and team building ethos of Chennai Super Kings as minutely as Gujarat Titans, another team, where cricketing decisions are based on sound logic, consistency and no interference from overbearing owners.

There is a skipper in Pandya, who believes that there is only one way to lead the team. It's called 'The Mahi Way'.

Batters win matches but bowlers win tournaments is an old saying and it couldn't be more apt when one tracks Titans' performance.

Mohammed Shami (28 wickets), Rashid Khan (27 wickets) and Mohit Sharma (24 wickets) have executed plans more often than not and thus it hasn't really effected the Titans that second highest run-scorer after Gill's 851 runs is skipper Hardik Pandya (325), who is more than 500 runs behind.

Wriddhiman Saha, a keeper-par-excellence, would consider himself lucky, that team management never thought of replacing him despite a strike-rate of 127 opening the batting and only one fifty plus score in 16 knocks.

And herein, Dhoni would try to seize the opportunity. If they can get Gill out early, none of the other batters have shown wherewithal to fight hard and bowlers would need a decent total on board.

Under Dhoni, if players like Ajinkya Rahane (299 runs in 13 matches, two fifties) and Shivam Dube have found their groove this season, youngsters bowlers such as Sri Lanka's Matheesha Pathirana (17 wickets in 15 matches) and India's uncapped Tushar Deshpande (21 wickets in 15 matches) have also been able to find their feet at the IPL stage.

In CSK's batting line-up, Devon Conway (625 runs in 15 matches, six fifties) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (564 runs in 15 matches, four fifties) have time and again provided CSK with resolute starts at the top.

The big-hitting Dube (386 runs in 15 matches, three fifties) is the second joint-highest six-hitter for CSK in this IPL with 33 sixes, joined by Gill in the list.

There are no clear favourites and it could be one of the finest finals in history of IPL.



## CSK better prepared for IPL final compared to past: Fleming

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming on Saturday said that the four-time winners are better prepared for the IPL final against Gujarat Titans than any other time in the past, when conditions affected their performance. Fleming said CSK's win-loss ratio remained around 50 per cent because they would usually build and prepare their squads keeping the conditions and pitches at the home venue at Chepauk in mind, but that is not the case anymore.

He said the team would be ready for any conditions - there are rains expected during the final here on Sunday -- and that they have erred in reading conditions and pitches in the past.

"We geared ourselves up so well for Chennai that we did struggle with conditions at times in away games, so the finals were always a little bit of a challenge, and our record is about 50 per cent of winning the final," Fleming said during the pre-match press conference.

"It is maybe due to the style of the game we created

- a victim of being so good at home that we had to make adjustments when we went to a neutral venue."

Fleming said CSK were "a bit more rounded" this year.

"Because of that going back to Chennai (for Qualifier 1), it was hard. I wanted to bowl (first) in the last qualifying game and batting proved to be the right call and MS (Dhoni) was the other way in the last game," he said.

"So we are well off the mark in trying to get the conditions right but the team is rounded enough to put performances together. Come the final, we are not worried as to what conditions we get, there are two pitches to choose from now but we are not too worried. We are a lot better placed than what we had been in the past," he said.

The former New Zealand captain said that making early breakthroughs will be key for his side as GT batter Shubman Gill's red-hot form presents the biggest challenge for CSK.

"He (Gill) is playing really well. It (the plans) does not really change, you hope that you pick him up early, you have enough firepower to

create an opportunity. The only thing that we are looking at is when you have got openers, when they are in such good form, there is an opportunity to get into the middle order.

"If we can get a couple of early breakthroughs then, (just like) in the last game we played there is an opportunity. But we got to get past him, he is playing really well," Fleming said.

For someone who has won IPL title four times with CSK, Fleming said it is not easy winning the trophy back-to-back.

"So hard! It is impossible, it is going to be so hard for them (GT) to do it (laughs). No, they are a good side; you got to say 'really well done' to what they have put together in a short space of time," he said.

"I like the coaching staff a lot, they are really balanced guys. Ashish, for all his talking, has got a really good grasp of the game, his enthusiasm is really high after working with him in Chennai. We have a huge amount of respect for what they have done but it is very hard to go back to back."

## 'Look like it's just breakfast for him': Hardik on Gill's ton

FIANS ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans skipper Hardik Pandya said Shubman Gill hitting centuries consistently in IPL 2023 is making the art of reaching three-figure mark look as easy as having breakfast regularly.

Gill slammed a majestic 129 with the help of ten sixes and seven fours while taking Mumbai's bowlers to cleaners all over the park as Gujarat posted 223/3, which is also his third century of the ongoing season, thus leading the side's 62-run win over Mumbai Indians in Qualifier 2 and set up a meeting with CSK in Sunday's final.

"He's making a habit of scoring 100s and he's making it look like it's just breakfast for him. I have been fortunate to see a lot of T20 100s. But what I saw (in this match), was one of the finest I have ever seen. Every time we saw him play those 55 (60) balls, we were like that's a hell of a shot. Very, very, very proud of him," said Pandya during the post-match interaction with Gill in a video posted on IPL's Twitter account.

Pandya also predicted that Gill, currently the leading run-getter in IPL 2023, will soon become one of the

biggest superstars of the game.

"Sometimes we have to stop this person because he does a lot of batting. I get scared seeing him bat that much. He deserves every success. This man's gonna be an amazing cricketer, not just in franchise cricket but for India as well. He's already one but he's gonna be the biggest superstar," the GT skipper said.

Talking about his stunning turnaround in form, Gill said getting first IPL century against Sunrisers Hyderabad was a turning point.

"In the first half of the IPL, I was getting those starts. But I wasn't able to convert them so I knew it was all about getting that one hundred and I knew when I'll get that one hundred it's all about mental switch and then you start thinking and playing differently, and that's what worked for me," he said.

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

In the midst of a golden run, Shubman Gill feels working on specific technical areas and a minor tweak before a T20 series in New Zealand post the T20 World Cup in Australia, has worked wonders for his game.

For the record, Gill wasn't picked for the global event in the Rahul Dravid coached team went with Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul and Virat Kohli as its Nos 1, 2 and 3 in the batting line-up.

Gill, who has been panned for his strike-rate during earlier editions of IPL, has confirmed an 'Orange Cap' with 851 runs and three hundreds in the 16th edition, which has taken Gujarat Titans to its second successive IPL final.

On Friday, Gill sent Mumbai Indians bowling attack on a leather-hunt, hitting 129 off 60 balls as Titans comfortably won the second Qualifier by 62 runs.

"From the last West Indies tour (2022), I think I have shifted a gear, I got injured before the last IPL but I have been working on my game. I have worked on a few areas and made technical changes ahead of the NZ series after the T20 World Cup," he said at the post-match presentation.

Three hundreds in a single IPL edition is only second to Virat Kohli's four in the year 2016 when RCB last played the finals. The former skipper had scored 973 runs, which is still a record.

"I think this was probably my best innings so far in the IPL," the 23-year-old Punjab man said.

Asked how he deals with the expectations, Gill said:

# I made few technical changes ahead of NZ T20 series : Gill



FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Gujarat Titans have qualified for the 2023 IPL Final after beating the Mumbai Indians in Qualifier 2 by 62 runs at the Narendra Modi stadium in Mumbai.

The Titans put in a stunning performance with the bat, scoring 233 runs in the first innings. Shubman Gill had a spectacular 129-run knock (60b, 7x4, 10x6) that opened the floodgates for GT.

Mumbai tried hard with several batters getting a good start but were eventually bowled out with 10 deliveries remaining, scoring 171 runs. Suryakumar Yadav top-scored with 61 runs (38b, 7x4, 2x6). A rematch against the Chennai Super Kings beckons, as CSK beat Gujarat in Qualifier 1

"Expectations are something that follow you outside the ropes, but once you step on the field it is all about trying how to contribute for the team."

Gill said starting well is the key for him to score big.

"For me, it is playing ball to ball, over to over. The over where I hit three sixes gave me the momentum to go big. That's when I realised it could be my day."

"It was a good wicket to bat on as well. Not a conscious decision,

you keep inventing as a batter but for me the belief is more important. I am coming off a good international season as well. Had a good season last time as well. When I start well, I feel confident I can score well."

Whenever we have big games, Gill will perform as Virat: Raina

on Tuesday to solidify their spot in the Finals.

Shubman Gill set the ground ablaze with his electric 129-run performance in the first inning that helped the Titans put up a formidable total.

JioCinema IPL expert Suresh Raina heaped high praise on the young opener.

"The calmness we saw. In such a big match, body language is very important. The sixes he hit later in the match, ones we call pick-up shots. He hit one off Kartikeya, and after that, he realized that he can come into the line and just hit pick-up shots. I loved his body language, his self-confidence, self-belief, and he's gotten a habit of playing in big matches. Just look at Virat Kohli, as we saw last year with Jos Buttler. But the performance we saw tonight, whenever we have big games, he will perform as Virat, Rohit, and MS Dhoni have.

The Titans are on the verge of retaining their crown as IPL Champions after their win last season in their debut as a franchise.

JioCinema IPL expert Anil Kumble lauded the continuity of the Gujarat side from last season to this.

"This season, they have just continued from where they left off last year. In that sense, credit to Hardik, credit to Ashish, and the rest of the players as well. The players have done really well. The addition of Josh Little, the addition of Noor Ahmed, I think these two have really helped them and the impact player rule as well, with the addition of Sai Sudarshan and Vijay Shankar coming in and doing their respective roles. Mohit Sharma was brilliant in the back-end, he'll take the five-wicket haul, but Suryakumar Yadav's wicket was the critical one."

# WC schedule to be announced during WTC final

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The schedule and venues for the upcoming 50-over World Cup in India is expected to be announced during the final of the World Test Championship in London, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Saturday after the board's Special General Meeting (SGM) here.

A decision on the Asia Cup 2023, to be held before the World Cup, will also be taken in the coming days as representatives of some

of the Asian Cricket Council members are here for the IPL final, to be played on Sunday between Chennai Super Kings and Gujarat Titans.

"The venues for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 will be decided at a press conference during the ICC World Test Championship Final. The complete schedule for the tournament will also be revealed," Shah said.

"The future of the Asia Cup 2023 will be decided once we have

a meeting with the ACC members (Test playing nations), Shah added.

The BCCI secretary informed that 15 stadiums have been short-listed for improvement in basic facilities for the fans, keeping them in mind and more stadiums will be added at a later stage. Grant Thornton has been given the task for this purpose.

The BCCI will also be announcing specific committees in a week's time, which will handle the 2023



World Cup in India and the Women's Premier League, along with a committee to draft the POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) policy.

Shah informed, "As far as the venues for the ICC Cricket World Cup are concerned, each office-bearer will be responsible for each venue. We are looking at all the metros as venues for the tournament."

"We will create a committee to structure the POSH policy. The draft is ready, it will be presented before

the AGM for ratification and necessary approvals," he added.

Additionally, the proposed limited-overs series between India and Afghanistan will be held before the World Cup, but the dates and venues are yet to be worked out.

Shah added that the impact player rule in this IPL has been appreciated by all teams and players, which has resulted in a record number of totals in excess of 200, with the boundaries and sixes also crossing the 1,000 and 2,000-mark.

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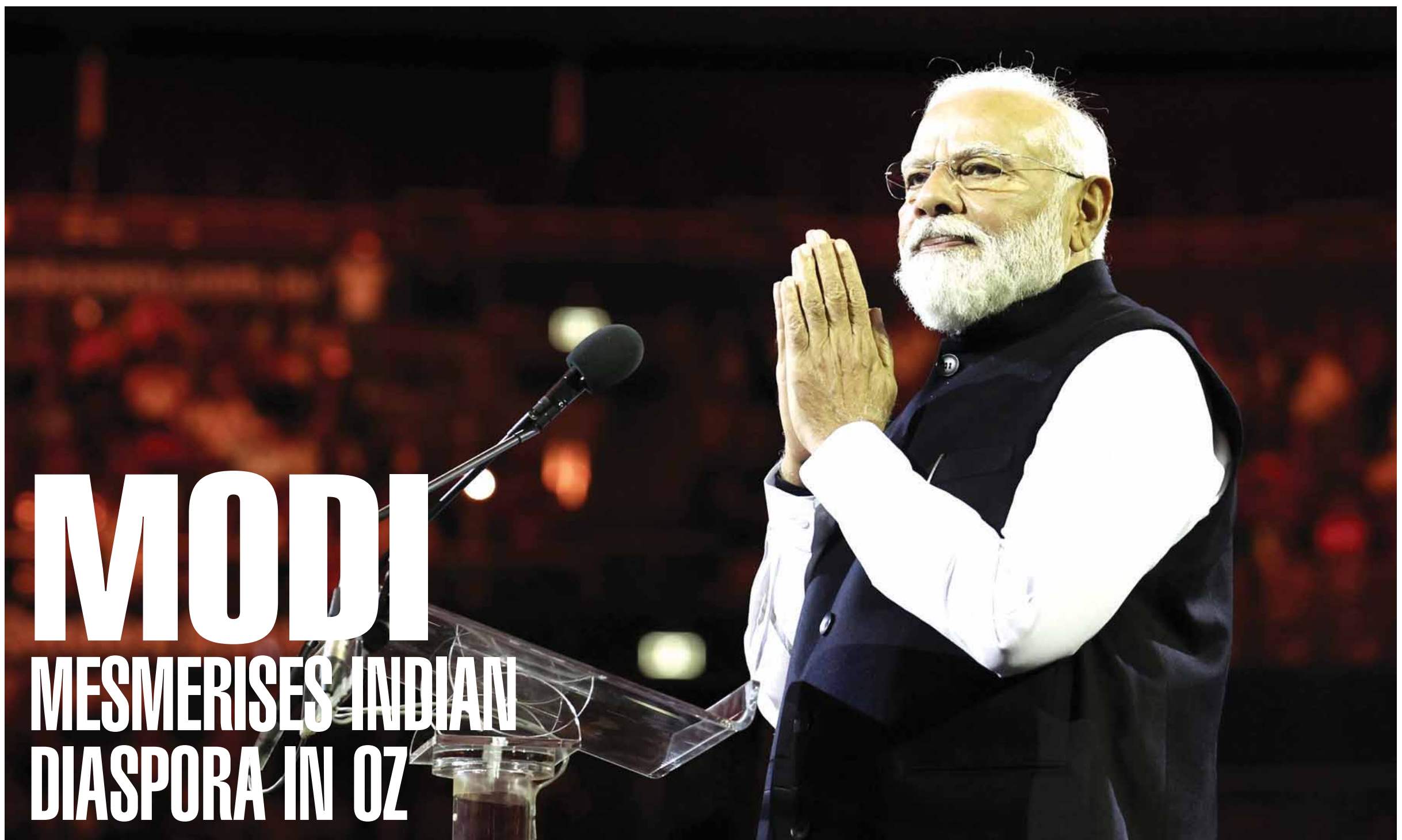
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I always want to stay focused on who I am, even as I'm discovering who I am  
— Alicia Keys



# MODI MESMERISES INDIAN DIASPORA IN OZ

The Indian diaspora in Australia, like in the other parts of the world, has come of age. Indians were the largest source of skilled migrants in 2019-20 and the second largest source of international students in 2019-20 in Australia. The rise of the Indian diaspora in the Australian political milieu, especially Daniel Moohkey, MP and New South Wales Treasurer, who took his oath on the Bhagavad Gita, is well documented, writes Dr ASHUTOSH MISRA

When the world's largest democracy's prime minister, riding a 76% global approval ratings as the 'most popular world leader' descended upon Sydney—the city, social media and the mainstream media were awestruck by 'Modi mania'.

It was a much-awaited visit for both, Australia as well as the 800,000 strong Indian diaspora. In front of the 20,000 plus mesmerised Indian diaspora at the Sydney Olympic Park, Prime Minister Narendra Modi began his speech by reminding, "I had promised you during the 2014 visit that you won't have to wait for 28 years for the next prime ministerial visit".

The visit transpired despite the Quad summit cancellation due to US President Joe Biden's last minute pull out. It symbolised the deep value and respect that India under PM Modi attaches to the Australia India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which is now promisingly progressing from ECTA to CECA. But above all, it was a powerful message of gratitude to the 800,000 Indian diaspora for their unending support for India and him.

It would not be wrong to surmise that the speeches of the two prime ministers were odes tempered with soft power references and the diaspora at the core, and in recent years such references have only gotten richer with new achievements of the diaspora, cultural events and increase in people-to-people engagements.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese flagged his Indian connection as a back-packer 30 years ago and knowledge of India, Indians and their culture based upon travels in trains and video buses. Much to the delight of the crowd, he admired Sameer Pandey, the newly elected Lord Mayor of the City of Parramatta, where he announced the upcoming Centre for Australia India Relations will be based.

Not many knew that he had already met PM Modi six times, and that he was completely blown away by the warmth, generosity and energy of the Indian people during his visit to India in March to attend the 4th Border-Gavaskar test in

Ahmedabad. The Queensland Cricket delegation attending the event was overwhelmed by the reception accorded to them and the prime minister Albanese, especially the deafening cheer that greeted his lap of honour with prime minister Modi in a specially designed vehicle.

At Sydney Olympic Park prime minister Albanese returned the favour. He lauded the role of students living in both countries and augmenting country literacy on both sides and deepening people-to-people ties. He won the hearts of the Indian diaspora when he said, "You have made our democracy stronger and more inclusive...strengthened the Australian society and enriched it with such a beautiful and diverse culture". He added, "Glad you have made Australia your home...and you make our nation and our shared communities better and Australia stronger".

These are powerful words and sentiments on which bilateral relations now rest. Prime minister Modi captured these sentiments well in noting the rise of the Indian diaspora in the Australian political milieu, especially Daniel Moohkey, MP and New South Wales Treasurer, who took his oath on the Bhagavad Gita.

From an ontological perspective, scholars including myself are delighted to see prime minister Modi move beyond the narrow confines of 3Cs (curry, commonwealth, cricket), 3Ds (democracy, diaspora and dosti), 3Es (energy, economy, education) to a much deeper and fundamental level of understanding of bilateral ties based upon mutual trust and respect. And in this new paradigm, the Indian diaspora again is at the core, just as prime minister Albanese had articulated.

If prime minister Albanese applauded the Indian diaspora, prime minister Modi acknowledged the Australian people for their large-hearted embrace of India's soft power characterised by Indian food, cultural festivals, and street names such as Delhi Street, Bombay Street, Kashmir Avenue and Malabar Avenue, and also a suburb called Lucknow in NSW. Queensland too has embraced names such as Ganges street, Jumna street and Hoogly Street and become



MUCH PUBLICITY HAS BEEN ACCORDED TO PRIME MINISTER ALBANESE'S REFERENCE TO PRIME MINISTER MODI AS THE BOSS, BUT THEIR SPEECHES REVEAL CLEAR THAT THE DIASPORA IS THE REAL BOSS!

one of the most preferred destinations of the Indian diaspora.

As expected, no summit can be complete without mentioning cricket. Prime minister Albanese shared his 4th test experience in Ahmedabad, and prime minister Modi made drew attention to Australian women having played in the inaugural women Indian Premier League. He also shared that Indians were heartbroken at the demise of Australian cricket legend Shane Warne.

Cricket has become more than just a game. In February 2020, when Australia was engulfed in one of the most devastating bushfires in its history, Indian cricket legends Sachin Tendulkar and Yuvraj Singh flew in to play in the Bushfire Cricket Bash alongside other Australians legends such as Matthew Hayden, Brett Lee, Adam Gilchrist and others.

Cricket is a compelling ice-breaker and not only builds inter-community bonds, but also creates a conducive atmosphere for diplomats and leaders to negotiate complex issues. Again, the diaspora plays a key role in this context, and every time India tours Australia and vice versa, stadiums are packed to the rafters,

generating more revenue and entertainment.

Although prime minister Modi enthralled the audience by listing India's global leadership in leading covid vaccination, smart phone data consumption, fintech adoption rate, milk production, internet usage, grain production, automobile market, startup ecosystem and forming 40% of the world's real time digital data transaction — his reference to India's *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* philosophy underpinning its G-20 Presidency based upon *One World, One Family, One Future*; environment conversation based upon *One Sun, One World, One Grid*; and International Day of Yoga initiative based upon *One Earth, One Health* received an even louder cheer from the audience.

He referred to the Indian diaspora as cultural and brand ambassadors of India and urged them to bring Australian friends to India during their next trip, a gratifying thought for some of us who have been taking Australian friends and delegations to India over the past 15 years. The rationale is well founded: the more we engage, deeper we understand and better we connect.

Many scholars over the years examined what impeded stronger bilateral ties? Now it becomes clearer that diaspora which was barely engaged by the previous political dispensations on both sides.

The role of Indian diaspora in Australia, like in the other parts of the world has come of age. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 census 783,958 persons declared their ancestry as Indian constituting 3.1% of the Australian population. According to the 2021 Orbis database of company information collated by Bureau van Dijk, a Moody's Analytics Company - people of Indian heritage are employed in at least 996 Australian organizations of which an estimated 2,840 (13%) as directors and managers (12.5% women), constituting 3% of the Australian population. The report says that 964 of these 2,840 could potentially drive bilateral business and trade engagements in health, tourism, ICT, and resources, across companies with a gross \$250 billion annual turnover.

Indians were the largest source of skilled migrants in 2019-20 and the second largest source of international students in 2019-20 Australia. The DFAT report estimates that the diaspora's role in senior academic positions roles at the lecturer level and above has increased from 1.75 per cent in 2016 to 1.92 per cent in 2020. Of the 721,000 Indians (2016 census) approximately 88% are of working age and 61% are in full-time and 27% in part-time employment making them the second highest tax-paying migrant community after the UK-born migrants, contributing over \$12 billion to the Australian economy. Concentration of the Indian diaspora in Harris Park constitutes 45%, in Westmead 32%, and Parramatta overall 24%.

Much publicity has been accorded to prime minister Albanese's reference to prime minister Modi as the boss, but their speeches reveal clear that the diaspora is the real boss! This was the spark that Australia-India ties lacked for a long-time. Not anymore.

(The writer is CEO, Institute for Australia India Engagement, Project Leader Multicultural-Queensland Cricket and Editor-in-Chief Australia India News)

# TB VACCINES R&D CRY FOR FUNDS

In an open letter to world leaders, an assorted group of 1,188 entities comprising tuberculosis survivors, advocates, researchers, and organizations from across the countries, have made the case for increased investment in TB vaccine R&D to tackle the deadly but preventable and curable disease, reports ARCHANA JYOTI

According to an analysis by the Graduate Institute's Global Health Center in Geneva, between direct funding of vaccine development and advance purchases of vaccine doses, more than USD 51 billion—majorly from public investments—was directed in the first year alone toward having an effective covid-19 vaccine, quickly—and it worked.

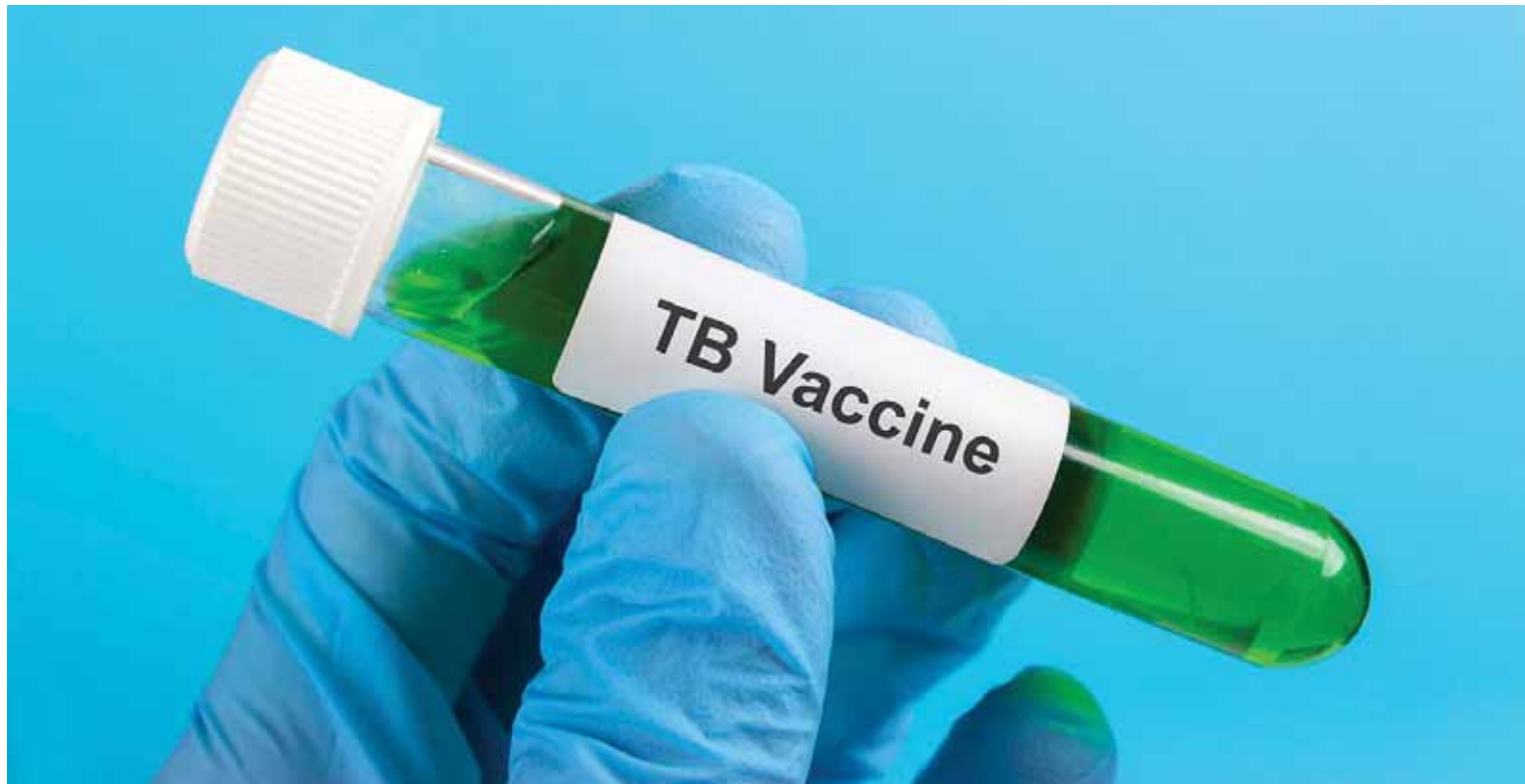
However, unfortunately, this fast track investment and subsequent roll out of vaccines is not happening in the TB sector. Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG), the only vaccine available for TB has been around for a century, but it is not widely used nor highly effective. In other words, it provides protection against childhood TB but is not effective in adult pulmonary TB. As a result of intense research in understanding TB vaccinology, there are many new vaccine candidates in clinical development and many more in pre-clinical trials which aim either to replace or boost BCG vaccine.

But unless investment is expedited, vaccine candidates will not be able to see the light of the day.

Various reports show that, the funding for TB vaccines is abysmal compared to Covid-19. Out of the USD915 million invested in TB-related research in 2020—or less than half the USD2 billion target indicated by the World Health Organization—only 13%, or less than USD120 million, went toward vaccines. That means that it would take about 500 years for efforts to develop a TB vaccine to receive the same amount of funding that Covid-19 got in one year, as per the reports.

Similarly, after making tall promises at the United National High Level Meeting (UNHLM) on TB in 2018 by pledging to invest USD 2 billion annually in the R&D in the contagious disease, including USD 550 million for developing TB vaccines, by 2021, only 30% of the pledged amount had been invested, with TB vaccine R&D receiving a meager 15% of its target.

The Global Plan to End TB 2023-30 now estimates that an annual investment of USD 1.25 billion in TB vaccine R&D is needed to achieve the 2030 End TB goals. Cutting corners will have major repercussions on the global TB response and world



economy, the Stop TB Partnership has said as it shot off an open letter to the world leaders, urging them for increased investment for developing the TB jabs.

TB is one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases. Each day, nearly 29,000 people fall ill with TB and almost 4,400 people die from this preventable and curable disease. New and effective vaccines are essential to tackle this global health crisis," said the letter written on behalf of the STOP TB Partnership.

The sector needs new TB vaccines to end the scourge, mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the global TB response, and control the spread of drug-resistant TB, a key driver of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). "With five promising vaccine candidates currently in phase 3 trials, new TB vaccines can be developed and deployed this decade. However, we need greatly increased support to make this possible. Failure to act now would result in immense human suffering," it said.

New and effective TB vaccines can help achieve the 2030 End TB goals, which could prevent up to 23.8 million deaths and USD13.1 trillion in economic losses by 2050. In fact, every USD1 invested in a TB

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## FACT FILE

a) On average, a TB vaccine for adolescents and adults could avert about 37.2-76.0 million cases and 4.6-8.5 million deaths by 2050. A vaccine for infants could avert approximately 5.8-18.8 million cases and 0.8-2.6 million deaths during the same period. A vaccine that is 75% effective could avert 54-110 million new TB cases and 6.7-12.3 million TB deaths.

b) Currently, at least 16 candidate vaccines are under active clinical development. There is, however, little antigenic and immunological diversity among the current candidates, whereas novel antigenic targets that can induce different immunological characteristics are necessary to improve the chances of efficacy. Furthermore, few of the candidates will advance through late-stage product development because of the high level of attrition inherent to vaccine development and insufficient investment in late-stage clinical research.

Preliminary results only for the M72/ AS01E vaccine meet the WHO preferred product characteristics, and larger studies are planned to confirm the findings. It is therefore imperative that funders continue to invest in both early- and late-stage research to ensure that candidates advance

Source: WHO report 'An investment case for new TB vaccines'

vaccine for adolescents and adults could generate USD7 of economic returns over the next 25 years.

The letter also noted that rapid development and roll-out of multiple Covid-19 vaccines contributed significantly to controlling the pandemic. "We require a similar response to end TB.

Importantly, investing in TB vaccine R&D can also fortify pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPPR) against existing and emerging infectious diseases, and contribute to the global AMR response and attainment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC)," said the letter.

Now they are pinning hopes on the UNHLM meet on TB to be held on September 22, 2023. It would set the global TB response agenda for the coming years – new TB vaccines must be a central component of this.

The STOP TB is pitching for immediate action and prioritizing TB vaccine R&D, through increasing and sustaining investments in TB vaccine R&D in line with the Global Plan targets, Strengthening partnerships between governments, research institutions, private and multilateral organizations, and pharmaceutical

companies for coordinated TB vaccine development; ensuring TB vaccines are universally available and accessible as soon as they are ready, especially to those most vulnerable to developing TB disease; including TB R&D as a central element of agendas on PPPR, AMR, and UHC to improve global public.

Geographically, out of the six high-burden countries from south-east Asia region, India accounts for 28 per cent of the global TB burden.

The letter has been written by a cohort of TB advocates, community members, and early career researchers from India, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe as part of the 2023 TB Vaccine Advocacy Fellowship.

The fellows are Keyuri Bhanushali from, Survivors Against TB Mumbai, India, Mbali Mkhonza, Stellenbosch University Cape Town, South Africa, Charlton Muchemwa, Programme Officer, Pangaea Zimbabwe Aids Trust, Harare, Zimbabwe, Bakul Piplani, Molecular Biologist, Indian Institute Of Technology, Delhi, India, Zethu Sonyoka, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa and Bello Abdussalam, 5th year medical student, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.

## Menstrual Health And Climate Crisis

On Menstrual Hygiene Day (May 28), UNFPA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, BJORN ANDERSSON, says more needs to be done to destigmatise menstrual health and hygiene to help communities prepare for climate disasters

Menstruation is too often treated as a taboo topic and this stigma is pronounced in emergencies, where the challenges of managing menstruation are amplified. Asia and the Pacific is especially vulnerable to climate change, with droughts, floods and extreme storms that will continue to devastate critical infrastructure. In disaster responses across the region, menstrual health is under-resourced, with dire consequences for the health of women and girls.

The World Bank estimates that more than 500 million women and girls around the world lack access to menstrual supplies and adequate facilities for menstrual hygiene management, a number expected to increase as the climate crisis intensifies.

From the flooded fields of Pakistan to the cyclone ravaged islands of Vanuatu, women struggle to manage their menstruation safely, comfortably and with dignity. In emergency situations, the lack of access to basic menstrual supplies can lead to a range of health problems including urinary and reproductive tract infections.

One of UNFPA's core missions is to uphold women's and girls' dignity and protect their sexual and reproductive health and rights in any crisis. We work with partners on the ground to deliver dignity kits before and after emergencies, to help women maintain their fundamental right to health. The kits are a vital connection point that brings women into a network, with information about menstrual health, rights and raises awareness about gender equality.

During my recent visit to Vanua Levu in Fiji, I met families who were displaced by the devastating Tropical Cyclones Yasa and Ana in December 2020 and they were still living in temporary tents. Mothers spoke about how grateful they are for the UNFPA-supported midwives who talked to their daughters about menstruation, how to manage it safely, and they provided much-needed supplies of sanitary pads along with other items as part of the dignity kits.

These cyclones in Fiji were yet another reminder of how extreme weather events damage water and health infrastructure, making it harder for women and girls to



Björn Andersson

access clean water, sanitation facilities and basic social services.

In emergency response plans, too often menstruation is not taken into account, which leaves women and girls even more at risk of diseases and infections. Before disasters hit, plans need to be in place so that the supplies are distributed or accessible in a way that is sensitive to the needs of women and girls, while working on destigmatizing menstruation, addressing harmful social norms, and making sure that communities have accurate information about menstrual health.

Forward-thinking governments recognize that investing in menstrual health and hygiene is crucial for promoting good health, gender equality and ensuring that women and girls can participate fully in society. To do this, we must listen to the needs of women and girls whose voices are central to disaster planning, humanitarian action and resource allocation. For this reason, to help prepare for disasters, UNFPA customizes dignity kits through consultations, including with persons with disabilities. We also ensure that solutions are community-led and that privacy is protected when distributing menstrual supplies.

Climate-related disasters are increasing in scale and frequency. UNFPA is committed to continue working with governments, partners and communities to strengthen health and social service infrastructure to face the impacts of the climate crisis on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including menstrual health. With a resilient and well-equipped network of health facilities, schools and water and sanitation infrastructure, communities will have the resources to cope with what is coming, as the climate crisis intensifies.

## HEALTH NEWS

### CSIR-NIScPR and IWSA Camp on 'Mental Health and wellbeing'

Spike in carbon dioxide (CO2) level in the air has impacted our hormones, metabolism, and overall emotional balance and therefore mental health conditions like stress, depression, anxiety have become a routine now, according to Prof. Ranjana Aggarwal, Director, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (NIScPR).

Prof Aggarwal was sharing her thoughts during the inaugural session of the half-day camp focused on mental health and wellbeing, organised by CSIR-NIScPR in collaboration with Indian Women Scientists Association (IWSA).

Stressing that need of the hour is to address the mental health of ourselves, family, and friends, she said, "We usually discuss our physical health, but social stigma stops us from talking about mental health. Ignoring mental health, can impact our physical health adversely."

Dr Rina Sharma, Chief Scientist at CSIR-National Physical Laboratory and President of IWSA too stressed the need of spreading awareness towards mental health while Dr Amit Madan, Research Officer, Central Ayurveda Research Institute delivered a special talk on "A balanced lifestyle and mental health". Dr. Kanika Malik, Sr. Principal Scientist, CSIR-NIScPR and Coordinator of the mental health camp proposed a vote of thanks. A health check-up session was also conducted after the mental health programme where staff members of CSIR-NIScPR visited the doctors, shared the health issues, and took consultations.

### Lord's Mark Industries and IIT-Bombay join hands to launch Sickle cell testing with POS tech

In a bid to do its bit to the Government's efforts to eliminate Sickle cell disease (SCD) in India by 2047, Lord's Mark Industries and IIT-Bombay have joined hands to embark on the blood disorder testing in India with POS (Point of Screening) technology. The first-ever AI-enabled POS equipment in the country, patented by IIT Bombay, will address challenges associated with sickle cell testing, making it more accessible and convenient with cent per cent accuracy. The announcement was made at a conference in Mumbai recently.

SCD is a chronic single gene disorder causing a debilitating systemic syndrome characterized by chronic anemia, acute painful episodes, organ infarction and chronic organ damage and by a significant reduction in life expectancy.

Sachidanand Upadhyay, founder, Lord's Mark Industries said, "Through this collaboration with IIT-B, our company is committed to providing innovative and effective solutions to sickle cell testing across India, especially in rural regions.

"We are also investing in the establishment of 1000 pathology labs across the country, with an initial investment



of Rs. 50 crores, to provide easy access to sickle cell testing and other healthcare services. With the support of the Central Government, we aim to make equipment and testing available across government healthcare centers and hospitals," he added.

The microscopy-based test developed by Prof. Debjani Paul and her team from the Dept. of Biosciences & Bioengineering at IIT-B can distinguish between healthy, sickle trait, and sickle anemia blood samples at the point of care.

This is the only microscopy test that can actually distinguish carriers from

individual who have sickle anemia within 30 minutes. Typically it would take 24 – 48 hours to identify the carriers.

Lord's Mark Industries will invest Rs 25 crores to develop and distribute the technology-enabled POS equipment, targeting revenue of Rs 100 crores by FY 2026-27.

Lord's Mark Industries, through its subsidiary Lord's Mark Biotech will take this screening to gynecologists and obstetricians across the country for early detection pre and post pregnancy. Lord's Mark Biotech is already present in the women's wellness therapy

area through a dedicated team of 200 sales professionals to accelerate this testing and screening at the point of care.

Lord's Mark Industries will use its in-house R&D team to manufacture the sickle cell POS instrument at its IVD manufacturing facility in Vasai. The equipment will be available in government healthcare centers, pathology labs, and Lord's Mark Industries' pathology labs throughout the country.

"Our technology is a game changer in tackling sickle cell screening challenges in the affected regions. We believe that our technology combined with Lord's Mark Industries capabilities will make a significant impact on improving the lives of millions of patients suffering from sickle cell anemia in the country," said Dr. Oshin Sharma, Researcher, IIT Bombay.

The Government has initiated steps to improve sickle cell anemia detection and treatment in central and southern regions such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Telangana. Measures include newborn screening, a national eradication campaign, clinical trials, and premarital counseling protocols.

### Woman having cricket ball-sized brain tumour operated successfully

Neurosurgeons at the Primus Hospital, Delhi have successfully operated on a 37-year-old woman who had a cricket ball-sized silent tumour in her brain.

The patient visited the hospital with complaints of mild headaches and no other sign that could point out a tumour this big, the hospital said in a statement. It took eight hours to decompress or excise the tumour from the brain and remove it completely. The tumour was located in the occipital lobe, above the tentorium.

Dr Ravindra Srivastava, Director, Neurosurgery at the Hospital who led the operation said that, "Usually there are silent signs associated with this brain tumour which includes frequent headaches, reduced vision quality, weakness, seizures, loss of balance and infertility, that are witnessed in a patient with meningioma tumours." Surprisingly, the patient did not complain about any of the above and just mild headaches with no difficulty in walking or seizures which are usually noticed in tumour patients," he said. An MRI of her brain showed a lesion-sized 4.6 x 4.1 x 3.7cm rising from the tentorium cerebelli, said the doctor.



# Sengol a symbol of Tamil legacy & Indian Freedom

Scepter ("sengol" in Tamil) has, of late, been trending in mainstream media and social media, engendering endless debates over it. The Union Government, helmed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has discovered the "sengol" and its underpinning Tamil tradition and heritage.

That the "sengol" will be the cynosure of eyes in the new Parliament building to be inaugurated today (May 28, 2023) is a matter of honour and pride for the Tamil civilisation whose antiquity and amazingly timeless glory are understood by India and the world as well, thanks to the excavations apace at Keezhadi, Adichanallur and other places. The ageless Tamil tradition was revived through the sengol to coincide with the new dawn of Indian Independence on August 15, 1947.

Consequently a surge of interest has been kindled across the country in knowing the sengol's history and glory and its rich semiotic and symbiotic connection with the Tamilistic monarchy and its mighty magnificence. How the "sengol" has grabbed the limelight as it does now is a question worth exploring. For that, we have to travel back to the midnight of August 14, 1947, when India woke up to its new avatar of a free nation as the world was asleep.

## Sengol's August connection

On the eve of Independence, India's last British Governor-General Lord Mountbatten asked Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister-designate, what was the Indian ceremony to mark symbolically the transfer of power, guessing that there must be one followed for ages, given that India is a historically old and great civilisation. Educated mainly in London and agnostic to the core as he was, Nehru could not come up with a ready answer instantly. So, he diplomatically left the question to Rajaji aka C.Rajagopalachari, the first and the last Indian Governor General.

Soaked in the Hindu scriptures, mythologies and philosophies, Rajaji cracked the nut, saying that "sengol" used to mark the ceremonial acquisition of authority in the Chola times. He further explained that a "sengol" was an "ayudh", a device which signified power and authority of the ruler. An outgoing ruler or his representative presented the sengol to the incoming ruler at a ceremony where the divine beings were invoked to shower their blessings on the state and its people.

Then the task of locating a sengol was assigned to Rajaji, who, for his part, reached out to one of the oldest surviving mutts in India, the Tiruvavaduthural Aadheenam in Tamil Nadu.

This mutt located in the Mayiladuthurai district, then part of the composite Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, has the motto: "Let Saivism and Tamil scale greater heights" (Saivamum Thamizhum Thazhathini Ongkuga).

The mutt's head Sri La Sri Ambalavana Desika Swamigal agreed to get a sengol made by a reputable jeweller of Chennai with a "Nandi" image atop it. Nandi, part and parcel of the Saivist lore, represents strength, patience and service.

A special plane carried the "sengol", along with escorts to Delhi. On August 14, 1947, the Aathenam people, including oduvars (holy singers rendering Saivite hymns) took out a solemn procession to Nehru's residence in New Delhi.

According to the newspapers of the day, Nehru was wrapped by the priest in the peethambaram and the "sengol" handed over to him amid chanting of hymns. The scepter was a semiotic reminder that Nehru should head a government fair, transparent and just. After the ceremony was over, he drove to Parliament to deliver his famous "Trust with destiny" speech.

This generation does not know anything about the historic and ritualistic transfer of power to India from the British because historians have made no mention of this very important event though it was duly documented in a number of newspapers like *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express*, *Time*, etc.

Now harking back to the august event of passing the baton from the British to India, Prime Minister Modi is set to re-create and relive the event on May 28, 2023, by getting the historic "sengol" ferreted out of the Prayagraj Museum and installed in the new Parliament buildings. All roads now lead to New Delhi.

## Controversy over sengol

For the past two days, an unpleasant controversy has been apace with a political party dismissing the whole sengol-related event as bogus.

The critics can recall that the coronation of Charles III held at Westminster Abbey on May 6 was performed with all royal regalia by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was centered around the holy communion held by the Church of England. All this in a country, the mother of Parliamentary democracy.

The critics should also keep in mind that a "sengol", though part of the old monarchy's royal paraphernalia, is still used as an emblem of power by the Mayors in our country also.

The Tiruvavaduthurai Aathenam helmed by Seer Vala Seeri Aathenam Ambalavana Desikar has now



deplored the controversy over the sengol, saying it "deeply pained us". The Aathenam has categorically said it was involved in the episode in which Nehru was presented with the sengol as a symbol of self-rule. The current attempt on the part of some to profane the holy importance of the sengol is highly sad and unfortunate, the Aathenam said in a press release.

The Thiruvavaduthurai Aathenam was started in the 12th century and had Meikandaar (1125-1175) as its first guru who had written the book "Sivagnana Botham". Such a glorious institution is the Thiruvavaduthurai Aathenam. But unfortunately some people are trying to detract from the credibility and name and fame of the institution, the press release said.

Incidentally I personally got a similar confirmation of the sengol-related transfer of power, from the then Aathenam Sivaprakasha Pandarathar when I visited Tiruvavaduthurai in connection with some legal case in 2009. In fact, I had been in touch with the aadheenam from 2006 to 2012.

Similarly the Perungulam Sengol Aathenam in Thoothukudi district is over 1,500 years old with a rich tradition.

## Sengol in Tamil literature

The resurrected glory of the sengol bears testimony to the Tamil pride that resonates with the Indian culture. Tamil literature, right from the Sangam era, has all along been teeming with allusions and references to the sengol which is engraved in the

popular Tamil consciousness as a symbol of a good, fair, and unfalteringly honest rule even in the days of monarchy. A bad and corrupt government is denoted by the phrase "dictatorial scepter" (kodungkol).

That is corroborated in one of the ancient Tamil woman poet Avviyar's lines: "As the boundary (of paddyfield) rises, so water water rises; as water rises, so paddy (crop) rises; as paddy rises, so the citizens rise; as the citizens rise, so the scepter rises; as the scepter rises, so the king rises."

In these lines, the word scepter ('kol' in Tamil) refers to the archetypal wooden rod symbolic of the royal rule called "sengol" in Tamil.

## Slices of Tamil political life back in the day

Kannagi, an ordinary woman citizen, who felt a great injustice was meted to her by the Pandya king Nedunchezhan who had, in a wrongful administration of justice, got her husband Kovalan executed, rushed into the king's court with guns blazing. The king sitting majestically in the throne, wearing the gorgeous crown and holding the sparkling sengol was at last, so shocked by Kannagi's in-your-face eloquence and firebrand narrative that he fell down from the throne, his scepter rolling down symbolic of his failure of rule, and laid down his life.

This is the most cathartic climax described in a dazzling poetic diction by Ilango Adigal in his immortal epic "Silappathkaram".

Similarly, the story of how Chozha king Manuneethi Chozhangot his son crushed by the wheels of a chair by way of punishing him for having killed a cow's calf hits home the message that most Tamil kings held in high esteem the "sengol" they held symbolically in order to provide a good and fair administration.

Ancient Tamil poets differentiated between a good scepter (sengol) connoting good rule by a king and a bad scepter (kodungol) connoting bad rule by a king. The poets used the word "kol" (scepter) as a poetic metaphor and a simile in their compositions. For instance, Sangam poet Perungkadungko has written the following: "The sun in its fiery and ferocious ire beats down the desert like a badly ruling king's dictatorial scepter." (Palaikkali).

Another poet Uruthirangannanar made use of the scepter (sengol) metaphor in a romantic context and the spear metaphor in the political context: "The forest is as hot as Tiruma Valavan's spear and the shoulders of his ladylove are as cool as his scepter" (Pattinappalai).

Tamil scholar A Chidambaranathan Chettiyar in his

book "Sengol Vendhar" says that Pandiya king Nedunchezhan said as part of a pledge that if he did not defeat his enemies, let the people curse him "as a king with a bad scepter" (kudipazhithoortum kolaen aakuga').

The iconic Tamil sage-poet Tiruvalluvar has spoken about the diabolical scepter (kodungkonmai) in 10 verses (kurals) captioned as "Kondungkonmai" in his immortal work "Tirukkural". One of the verses compares a heavily taxing king levying excessive taxes on the subjects to a robber with a lethal stick (Tamil word "kol" used in the line to mean the robber's stick refers not to the king's scepter but to the weapon the robber wields).

By the way, CN Annadurai, DMK founder, in the newspaper *Nam Naadu* wrote an article about the glory of 'sengol'.

## Democracy in TN akin to Athens and Rome

Though the Tamil civilization was, by and large, monarchic, features of democracy and republic were also practiced in the Tamil kingdoms.

Historians say that Athens was the cradle of democracy and Rome held aloft republican ideology. John Thorley in his book "Athenian Democracy" says that "The citizens of Athens... did feel involved in government." Plato's book "Republic" had several ideas on republican form of the government, which had lots to do with the republican system in Rome.

But what is generally ignored historically is that the Tamil civilisation was not unfamiliar with the people-oriented political system. For instance, the "kudavolai" system was in vogue to elect the grassroots-level civic rulers during the Chozha period. It followed a sort of democratic ballot system wherein the names of the candidates were written on palm leaf manuscript and put in a pot. The successful contestants would be elected to the village posts. The Uthiramerur and Palaru inscriptions bear testament to the old civic administration prevalent in Tamil political culture.

## Religious scepters

Apart from the secular and royal connotation, scepter or "sengol" has also got religious significance. For instance, the Tiruvavaduthurai has got its own scepter with an image of Nandi engraved atop it. In fact, it was this model which was sent all the way to Delhi on the eve of the country's Independence. Similarly, the Sringeri and Kanchi mutts also have their scepters.

(The writer is an advocate, political activist and the editor of *Kathaisoli*)

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K.R. RADHAKRISHNAN

## PERSPECTIVE

# No endgame in Putin's assault on Zelenskyy

**By retaking Bakhmut, Wagner Group has emerged as a silver bullet for Russia's war on Ukraine. But its outspoken chief Prigozhin, a Putin loyalist, has warned the Russian elite of a potential popular uprising against Putin if he fails to conclude the military campaign successfully**

As Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy have dug in their heels, not ready to meet halfway for a possible truce, the bloodshed has continued unabated. The war has hit the blind alley. There is no hope for an immediate resolution. And herein, the Wagner Group is playing a serious role in fighting on the front in Ukraine on behalf of the Russian Federation. Now the moot question is whether the Wagner support is critical to Russia's final victory over Ukraine?

It has been seen in recent years that Wagner Group, comprising thousands of trained mercenaries providing military and security support, has become one of Putin's most powerful foreign and defence policy tools.

And the spy veteran Putin knows how to exploit these forces to keep his hyper-nationalist and anti-Western agenda afloat. For long, since the demise of Boris Yeltsin in 1999, the first leader of the Russian Federation after the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, Putin very well knows how not only to survive but also to keep the ever-expanding US-led NATO at bay in his neighbourhood. Washington's impe-

rial designs are very well known to him for decades. So he plans and acts accordingly, whether with the help of the Wagner Group or with any other Kremlin allies.

It is a fact that the Wagner Group is extending vital support to the Russian Army in Ukraine. The Wagner Group, popularly known as Wagner PMC (Private Military Company), was founded by Russian business tycoon Yevgeny Prigozhin, a Kremlin-linked organisation. Besides Ukraine, it also operates in various other war theatres, including Africa.

When Putin annexed Crimea in the year 2014, the Wagner Group first emerged in public. It had gone on to fight for the embattled regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who has been facing an upheaval of the anti-establishment groups and radicals since 2011.

This week, Moscow witnessed an attack on Belgorod by the anti-Putin protesters. It is sending a completely confusing signal not only to the whole world, but also to Putin and his Army, that is fighting in Ukraine. It's a cross-border attack from Ukraine. The Russian fighters by aligning with the Ukrainians have crossed the Russia-Ukraine

border and occupied a few positions in Belgorod region. The images of this new turn in the war are arresting and baffling. It's highly embarrassing for the all-powerful Putin. It is a puzzle as to who is behind this incursion. Or is it a larger game plan orchestrated by the Ukrainian military with the help of the Western intelligence agencies to divert the war efforts of the Russian Army? For now, claims and counter-claims are on, but the murkier force behind this sudden surge is not clear.

However, a group of anti-Putin nationals supported by the Ukrainian Army have claimed responsibility for the attack. Precisely, the South-western region wherein Belgorod borders north-eastern Ukraine.

At a time, when Moscow is working tirelessly to regain territories and to boost the sagging morale of its regular Army, such an episode of attacks back home is absolutely devastating.

However, the current battle at Bakhmut wherein Moscow has won a decisive victory is very significant. It's all because of the support of the Wagner Group. But unfortunately, the battle for Bakhmut has taken almost a year. All these months, the city of

Bakhmut in Eastern Ukraine has seen only devastation and loss of both human lives and material from both sides of the warring groups. Wagner Group chief Yevgeny Prigozhin stated that around 10,000 prisoners whom he had hired to fight the battle in various fronts of Ukraine have lost their lives in the bloody war.

In fact, at the very beginning of the last year, he visited many of the prisons across Russia and persuaded the inmates to join the Wagner Group for fighting in Ukraine. Instead, he had promised them amnesty in return provided they come home alive. Sadly, many of them who have fought on the frontlines have already died.

Above all, the capture of Bakhmut is a rare and costly victory for Russia. It shows how Moscow is highly reliant on the Wagner Group. Those Russians who support the country's invasion of Ukraine feel that the harsh discipline and agility that characterises the Wagner Army must be reflected in the Russian Army. It should be a model for the Russian regular soldiers. Today, the huge Russian Army is seriously plagued by cumbersome bureaucracy leading to indecisiveness in times of emergency.

Meanwhile, the outspoken Prigozhin has warned the Russian elites of a potential popular uprising if it fails to put the country on a real wartime footing. Already, Putin is facing challenges both from within and outside. And it may be serious. The top Russian military strategists do not want to rely on the Wagner Group, but lack of sufficient forces might force the country to bank on the group in Ukraine.

After seizing the Bakhmut city after a long and brutal fight with the Ukrainian Army, the Wagner mercenaries are handing over the ground to the Russian Army. The Wagner boss is making it clear to the Russian Army that now it is their duty to hold on to the embattled city. But this could be testing time for Moscow as the regular army is almost tired of the long battle since February 2022. Another serious concern is that the Ukrainian forces with advanced western weaponry are simply waiting on the outskirts of the city to launch further attacks. Maybe they are waiting for the Wagners to leave!

The Russia-Ukraine war has now completed more than 457 days. It's considered one of the most devastating wars in post Second World War

Europe. It has once again threatened the collective security system once predominant in Europe under the tutelage of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). But for now, NATO has remained forceful and united in pushing back Putin to a substantial extent. Truly, this is not the permanent solution for the US-led NATO to prevent Putin-like madness in future.

The irony is that the end game is not clear. People on both sides are wary about the long war. The world must know that Putin is not a myth maker, but he is a realist. The US is fighting a proxy war in Ukraine.

The world knows very well. And Washington is equally aware about it. But then, when Putin is pulling more forces, either from Iran, China and drawing professional groups like that of the Wagner, Biden needs a clear statement of strategic purpose which can really be implemented on the ground. Working with lockstep with its allies simply to display American superiority in Ukraine will neither clear the mess in Europe nor prevent Putin from creating another mess somewhere in the continent.

Barely a week after Russia invaded Ukraine in February

2022, while delivering the State of the Union address Biden said, "Now is the hour: our moment of responsibility, our test of resolve and conscience of history itself. And we will save democracy."

But to be precise, such commitments demand sacrifice, and involve hard choices like the ones today America is making in Ukraine simply to guard its allies in Europe by spending billions of dollars. But such word salads hardly make any difference, because the real issue has remained undressed. Russia under Putin should have been handled cautiously. It's too late now.

So the engagement of the Wagner Group is as critical as ever in Russia's madness in Ukraine. Putin will keep claiming victory as usual, whether real or unreal. At the same time, Zelenskyy will continuously receive Western aid till Russia's war campaign continues. Clearly, he will see nothing but the destruction of his country in the coming days. But then he has a responsibility to defend and more specifically to bolster his forces to continue fighting.

(The writer is currently the Head of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Geeta University, Panipat)



MAKHAN SAINI



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week will be full of wonderful surprises for you. Spiritual energy is infiltrating your awareness, and you sense a brilliant glow all about you. Your inner voice and heart will guide you. There will be an abundance of love, joy, celebration, inspired creativity, creative brilliance, and an unexpected blessing. You must have the experience of falling in love for the first time or giving and receiving unconditional affection. After you have achieved all your goals and objectives, you will be filled with delight. You prove to be as fortunate as you are talented. You will hold the situation in an unbelievably fantastic way, whether in the realms of love, friendship, or career. This is the time to polish your talents in the many arts and sciences.

Lucky number 7  
Lucky colour Yellow  
Lucky day Tuesday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

The week begins with relationship setbacks. You have great hopes, yet your spouse's behaviour will make you emotional. There are obstacles and life is not easy throughout the week. To achieve your objectives, you must be focused and have an eagle's eye. You may have to travel to make money. The serene and collected attitude will transform into a flaming and thrilling one, and you will begin your life all over again. You will be kind and concerned at home, as well as active at work. You are fair and kind to your co-workers, and you respect your superiors. Harmony and balance will prevail in all aspects of your life. By the end of the week, your financial situation will improve, and you feel and spend like a king.

Lucky number 6  
Lucky colour Purple  
Lucky day Sunday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

You are a person who is eager to learn new talents. A new company and a new project are on the horizon. Your feeling of obligation and patience will heighten your awareness. Some of you may be overjoyed when you get your first paycheck. A commission, assignment, or offer of employment is on the cards for you during the middle of the week. At this period, a new source of money, a new opportunity, and a relationship are also predicted. You must be cautious at the end of the week. Things will not move as smoothly as they could, and you will have arguments or clashes of will with others in business, which will irritate you. If a medical test is performed, the results will be positive.

Lucky number 6  
Lucky colour Cream  
Lucky day Thursday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

You confront the reality, even if it is unpleasant, and analyse the issue swiftly. You have exceptional intuitive abilities to figure out people's underlying intents and desires. You can get to the root of the subject because you are direct, funny, and realistic. You are not interested in nonsense or falsehoods, tricks, or games. However, there is a need for improved inner balance, time for work and activity, harmonising health habits, and emotional management. There is also a need to discern what is best for oneself. If there is a legal problem, you may anticipate an honest decision. There will be times when you will receive praise, recognition, and appreciation for your work. You will be able to control a previously chaotic situation.

Lucky number 6  
Lucky colour Green  
Lucky day Friday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This is the moment to share a personal bond with someone you like. A more genuine relationship is starting to develop, as is more stability and emotional happiness. It is time to let go of fear and uncertainty. Your career is likewise growing. Midweek, your expectations are high, and you want to be the king of your own castle. There is ambition, power, stability, tenderness, control, and discipline, all of which set you on the correct track. This is an excellent moment to make wise investments, earn a good living through hard effort, and enjoy a secure season. You must reconsider the scenario that has arrived unexpectedly and has caused you bewilderment and uncertainty. You will be assisted by one and others at work.

Lucky number 4  
Lucky colour Blue  
Lucky day Wednesday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You will get a new perspective on a topic that has been bothering you. You are determined to pursue your ambitions, no matter how many obstacles, disputes, or wars stand in your way. People at work will not take you lightly; someone will demonstrate an interest in the same task that you perform. The situation at home will be tight, and communication will be strained - so much so that you will want to pack your belongings and leave. Nothing can stand in your way if you have bravery and intelligence. Your activities are governed by willpower and self-control. You may begin to reap the benefits of the constructed framework. You have a higher chance of realising your ambitions if you have the backing of an individual, who might be your father or older brother.

Lucky number 6  
Lucky colour Dark Brown  
Lucky day Saturday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Sharing your job with your spouse will be beneficial, but only if they are as diligent as you. More work, assignments, and projects will keep you occupied. To achieve the objective, the team must devise a strategy, coordinate resources, and rely on their abilities. You have power over your emotions. This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your superior expertise. You will care for others and respond to their needs with compassion, attempting to heal with a delicate touch and gentle word. In any scenario, you remain cool and relaxed. You are willing to take risks to complete your spiritual growth objective. By recognising the process of ritual or tradition, you may transform your life.

Lucky number 4  
Lucky colour Pink  
Lucky day Wednesday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week you are joyful and reaping the benefits of your labour. In a relationship, there is closeness, emotional release, and love at first sight. The accomplishment of all your aims and desires will bring you delight. Much enjoyment will be found in your contentment, as you seek clarity or the truth in a circumstance in which your heart says one thing and your brain says another, yet your concept will succeed. A new concept or creative adventure may occur in your thoughts, and you will be a part of that journey's active efforts. You desire to take risks to complete your purpose. At the end of the week, you rest and enjoy yourself on all levels - financial, emotional, material, and spiritual - with an outstanding social life, satisfaction, and meaningful relationships.

Lucky number 7  
Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Friday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

You are an emotionally balanced, confident, and giving person who looks after others. You are also a diplomat, a romantic, and a fascinating partner, whether in discussions, friendship, or love. You must be careful not to manifest this energy in a bad way. If you push yourself too far into the fiery side, you will be scorched by the inner flame, but if you go too far into the deep sea of your passion, you will be overwhelmed and drowned. At work, there will be rivalry and severe competition. People will take advantage of your efforts. Keep an eye on their actions. Your profession necessitates a great deal of your attention and creative effort. Use diplomacy rather than force and be open to diverse points of view. Do not blame others for your mistakes.

Lucky number 3  
Lucky colour Sky Blue  
Lucky day Saturday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

You are fortunate to find perfection, harmony, and mutual elegance. You will be confronted with a situation that requires your decision or action, and you will want to figure out the best way to proceed or make the right choice. Something will alter your goals or the trajectory of your life, which may appear unpleasant on the surface but will turn out to be a blessing in disguise. You have a lot of creative and fierce energy. You are a charming, self-assured individual who understands what must be done. By the end of the week, there will be positive news. You will have more success than you imagine. Others will recognise your efforts. You will be able to advance in anything that is in your best interests.

Lucky number 8  
Lucky colour Grey  
Lucky day Monday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

Your mind and heart are more focused on achieving your spiritual goals. You would require a teacher, a guru, or a trusted guide to assist you in connecting with the divine. You are preoccupied with professional matters during the week. Dynamic partnership negotiation, confidence, and courage in undertaking will come your way, and you will work hard to achieve your aims. There is advancement in the career, as well as good relationships with co-workers. You are compassionate, giving, and powerful; at this point in your life, you command attention and respect. Your inner voice is gently guiding you to the appropriate result, and because you have a very balanced view on the matter right now, you are in a very excellent position to make the best decision for you. Your life view demonstrates strong control and balance.

Lucky number 9  
Lucky colour Orange  
Lucky day Tuesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

You are lucky and blessed with the love, compassion, and support of family and friends. There is a wonderful energy all around, and the family is in balance and harmony. Those who aspire to be parents will be blessed. In the family, an auspicious celebration may take place. You are more disciplined and follow a rigid programme in the middle of the week to regularise the system at home/office/profession. Your workplace expects your whole dedication. This is the moment to stand up for yourself and take charge of your life. Being single-minded will move you ahead right now; avoid being overly obsessed with your aims. If you lack this energy, you should rely more on facts and cultivate an inner sense of security. Mystical empowerment and leaving of some harmful habits are also indicated.

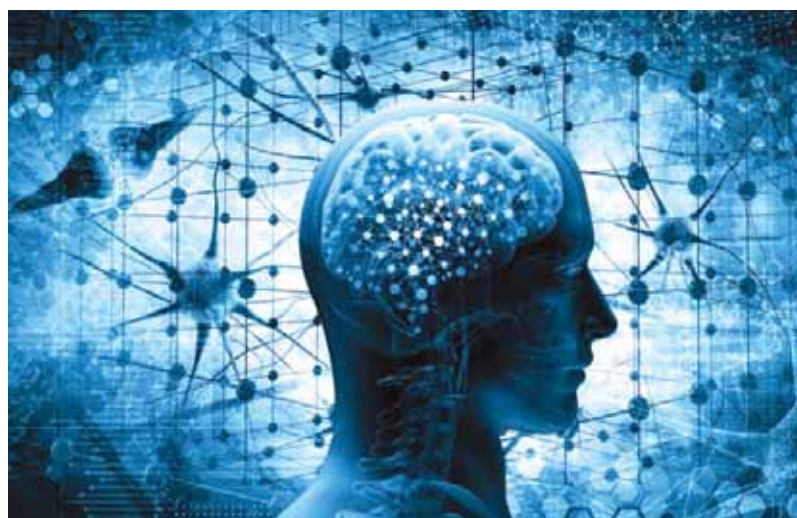
Lucky number 1  
Lucky colour Yellow  
Lucky day Thursday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Nature of mind and its limitations



The fruits of our actions will evidently bear imprints of the character and content of the desires nursed and corresponding thoughts excited thereto. The impression of the fruits of action - enjoying or frustrating - get carried over and added on to the memory store, with relating bearing on mind-trends thereafter. This way, we remain trapped into a vicious circle of one's own thoughts, difficult to escape under ordinary circumstances. So, though we are born with a sense of freedom ingrained in our mind, but in reality we actually remain trapped to the confines of the thought-web of one's own making. So is said:

"Watch your thoughts, they become words;  
Watch your words, they become actions;  
Watch your actions, they become habit;  
Watch your habits, they become character;  
Watch your character, they become your destiny."

Here it needs to be appreciated

that the whole course of nature is so designed and with such precision as to act in a perfected self-automated mode. That leaves no scope for any external agency to adjudicate or administer our destiny. So, "As we sow, so shall we reap" remains the driving spirit of a being operative in autopilot mode. This is the premise on which the "Law of Karma" stands. So, how we conduct in life - be it out of one's own volition free from any limitations whatsoever, or guided by indwelling desire and habit trends, or under external influence - will define what we become due for qualitatively and otherwise. Thus, goes the saying:

"Sayatha kamo bhavati, tata kratura bhavati;  
yat kratu bhavati, tata karma kurute;  
yata karma kurute, tadabhi sampatyate."

It means:  
"You are what your deep driving desire is;  
As your desire is, so is your will;  
As your will is, so are your actions;  
As your actions are, so is your destiny."

To sum up, mind lends ground to thought seeds carried over from the past, or impressions of environmental influences, nurtures them to germinate, sprout, and then put them in working mode.

In so far as instrumentality of a being (body-mind organism) is concerned, human beings are born with immense powers. The wholesome

potential of a being however, won't come into play involuntarily. The instrument of mind is supposed to access and put them to use. The irony, however, is that human mind remains subject to lot of limitations. It therefore usually has a clouded vision, and so fails to access full landscape of mind. It, thus, is unable to access major part of one's indwelling poten-

tial and which remains dormant. Human beings, are therefore invariably born with limitations.

The limitations of mind can be put into two categories. First, elemental limitations, which is intrinsic to human construct, but for which the world with form and names would not be in existence. Next in line are self-acquired individual-specific limitations, coming as they may as a sequel to cause-effect chain that drives our lives.

A being is born primarily with six different types of elemental limitations - limited creativity; limited vision and knowledge; sense of want, craving, desire and lust; limitation of time; limitation of space; and laws of causation. They have related restrictive bearing on our functioning. Consequently human beings, in the first place, lose their sense of fullness. Evidently, with limited creative potential, one is unable to service even existential needs all by oneself. We, thus, are born with a sense of want, which induces a sense of desire, making us self-centric, which further adds to the complexity of mind. For, desire driven people tempted to passionately pursue their self-designated path, often cross

their line and rough feathers with others, and evidently to one's detriment.

Here, it also needs to be appreciated that the world is so made out that all put together would suffice our existential concerns. That binds us into an essentially interdependent unified organism. In this scheme of things all and sundry need to complement and supplement each other's efforts to together sustain our existential needs. This calls for relating well to all and sundry, so as to elicit their due support.

Now, since human beings are driven by a sense of duality, it brings in the scope to make choices. That makes us susceptible to get trapped into conflicting thoughts. Also, people may take varying stance over the same issue, at times playing into extremes. That makes it difficult for us to pick up the right lead in time. Owing to this very reason, often one fails to take initiatives in time. Consequently, one may be left behind in the run of time.

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