

**OPINION 6**  
WORKFORCE MUST HAVE EMPLOYABLE SKILLS

**WORLD 9**  
'ANATOMY OF A FALL' WINS PALME D'OR AT CANNES

**MONEY 10**  
TAX COLLECTION IN INDIA ONE OF THE HIGHEST, REDUCE IT: BHALLA

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# India gets new temple of democracy

The new Parliament isn't just a building, it is a symbol of the aspirations of 140 cr people of India, says PM

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
In a 'tryst with destiny' moment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday delivered his first speech in the new Parliament affirming that the august complex would "witness realisation of our developed India resolution" and the new building will become a means of "realising the dreams of our freedom fighters and will witness the sunrise of a self-reliant India."

Inaugurating the new Parliament, Modi first installed the sacred 'Sengol' in the Lok Sabha chamber, right next to the Speaker's chair, after seeking the blessings of the 'Adheenams' from various temples in Tamil Nadu. Amid Vedic chants by priests from Karnataka's Shringeri Math, Modi performed 'Ganapati Homam' to invoke the gods to bless the inauguration of the new Parliament building. A multi-faith prayer was also held to mark the occasion.

In the second-leg of the event, Modi addressed packed new Parliament receiving a standing ovation from the attendees. He described the occasion as one that is "immortal". In the development journey of every country, some moments come which become immortal. 28th May is such a day," said Modi amidst thunderous applause. "The new Parliament isn't just a building, it is the symbol of the aspiration of the 140 crore people of India. It gives a message to the world about India's determination", he said.

"The new building will become a means of realising the dreams of our freedom fighters and will witness the sunrise of self-reliant India. This new building will see the fulfilment of the resolutions of a developed India", Modi announced amid



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla lights a lamp at the inauguration of the new Parliament building, in New Delhi, Sunday

## Sengol will inspire us in our duty, says Modi

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted the significance of Sengol as a symbol of transfer of power saying that the sceptre will continue to inspire the parliamentarians in their duty. In his address in the Lok Sabha chamber of the new Parliament to mark the inauguration of the building, Modi said the Sengol in 1947 symbolised transfer of power under the guidance of Rajaji and the Adheenams. On the contrary, Congress has been claiming that there has been no documented evidence of Lord Mountbatten, C Rajagopalachari, and Jawaharlal Nehru describing the sceptre as a symbol of transfer of power by the British to India.

"I believe it is our good fortune that we have been able to restore the dignity of the sacred Sengol. Whenever proceedings begin in this Parliament House, Sengol will continue to inspire us all," Modi said. After the Sengol was installed in Lok Sabha Sunday morning, he said, "In the great Chola Empire, Sengol was considered a symbol of path of duty, the path of service and the path of nation service." **PNS**



Photo by PTI

repeated thumping of desks. "New models can be established only by treading new paths", Modi remarked as he highlighted that the "new India" is realising new goals and paving new ways. "There is a new energy, new zeal, new enthusiasm, new thinking and a new journey. There are new visions, new directions, new resolutions and a new trust", Modi said.

Prime Minister said that the world is looking towards India's determination, its citizens' vigour and the life of human power in India with respect and hope. "When India moves forward, the world moves forward", he remarked. He underlined that the new Parliament House will invoke the development of the world from the development of India.

Continued on Page 2

## Insult to tribal Prez, disdain for House procedures: Opp

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Opposition parties on Sunday continued with their criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he inaugurated the new Parliament building, saying a "self-glorifying authoritarian PM with utter disdain for Parliamentary procedures" opened the new complex.

Around 20 Opposition parties, including the Congress, boycotted the event alleging that President Droupadi Murmu has been denied the right to inaugurate the building

and called it an insult to the first woman President from the tribal community. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said democracy does not run from the buildings but functions through the voice of the people. Jairam Ramesh, the Congress general secretary, said, "On this day, May 28: Nehru, the person who did the most to nurture Parliamentary democracy in India, was cremated in 1964. Savarkar, the person whose ideological ecosystem led to the killing of Mahatma Gandhi, was born in 1883." Ramesh also said it is on the

same day that President Droupadi Murmu -- the first woman from the tribal community to become President -- is not allowed to perform her Constitutional duties and inaugurate the new Parliament building. Trinamool Congress said the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the installation of the historic Sengol in the Lok Sabha chamber Sunday showed the tendency of the PM to "hog the entire limelight" during such a solemn occasion.

Continued on Page 2

## BJP raps RJD for 'coffin' dig at new Parl building

**New Delhi/Patna:** The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Sunday likened the architecture of the new Parliament building to a coffin, drawing a sharp response from the BJP which said people will bury the Bihar party in such a coffin in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

As the new building was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the ruling party in Bihar put out a tweet that showed a coffin and the new legislature building side by side and asked, "What is this?" The BJP's Bihar unit responded to the tweet saying, "The first picture is your future and the second is of India. Understood?" Hitting

out at the RJD for the tweet, the BJP's Rajya Sabha MP and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi said nothing could be cheaper and shameful than this.

"They have tweeted two pictures, one of the new Parliament and the other of a coffin. The picture of the new Parliament shows the future of India. Picture of the coffin shows the future of the RJD," he added. Lashing out at the RJD and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for protesting the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Continued on Page 2

## Focus now shifts to VP Enclave, new PM Office

**New Delhi:** With the new Parliament building inaugurated, the focus now shifts to the construction of the Vice-President Enclave, Common Central Secretariat buildings, Defence Enclave, MPs' chambers, and the Prime Minister's new residence and office. Infrastructure firm Larsen & Toubro Ltd is constructing the Executive Enclave housing the PMO, Cabinet Secretariat, India House and the National Security Council Secretariat at an estimated cost of Rs 1,189 crore. **See P2**

## Wrestlers' protest: FIR against organisers, others for rioting

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Police on Sunday removed tents and other installations set up by the protesting wrestlers at Jantar Mantar as they were detained for allegedly breaching the security cordon and not following the directions issued by the law enforcement agency. The wrestlers were trying to move towards the new Parliament building for a planned women's Mahapanchayat.

Later in the evening, the Delhi Police booked the organisers of the wrestlers' protest at Jantar Mantar and their supporters on charges of rioting and obstructing public servants in discharge of duty. The police said 700 people were detained across Delhi, including 109 protesters at Jantar Mantar. According to a senior police officer, the FIR has been registered under Sections 188 (disobedience to order duly



Security personnel detain wrestler Vinesh Phogat during wrestlers' protest march towards new Parliament building, in New Delhi on Sunday, Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

promulgated by public servant), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his

duty) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Sections 352 (assault or criminal force otherwise than on grave provocation), 147 (rioting) and 149 (unlawful assembly) of the IPC have also been invoked. **Continued on Page 2**

## Opp raps Govt over wrestlers' detention

**New Delhi:** The Opposition, including AAP, TMC, DMK, CPI (M) and RLD on Sunday criticised the Narendra Modi Government over the detention of protesting wrestlers by the Delhi Police as former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said with the "coronation" over, the "arrogant king is crushing the voice of the people" on the streets.

The Congress has sought a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the allegations of the wrestlers. Rahul in an apparent reference to the inauguration of the new Parliament building said in a tweet in Hindi, "The coronation is over -- the arrogant king is crushing the voice of the public on the streets!" Along with his tweet, he tagged a video montage of police detaining champion wrestlers. **Continued on Page 2**

## 40 militants killed in violence-hit Manipur since ops began: CM

**PTI ■ IMPHAL**

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday said nearly 40 armed militants involved in torching houses and firing at civilians have been killed by security forces since they began an operation to bring peace to the north eastern State beset by ethnic rioting.

Separately, police officials said on Sunday said at least two persons were killed and 12 injured in different instances of firing upon civilians and clashes between militants and security forces since the early hours of the day. At Phayeng in Imphal West district, one person died and another sustained bullet injuries after being fired at by suspected Kuki militants, police officials said. The latest clashes began after the army and para-military forces

commenced combing operations to de-arm communities in order to bring peace, officials said. The Chief Minister who was interacting with the media persons at the State secretariat, claimed the latest round of "conflict is not between communities but between militants and security forces".

Singh also said there had been cases of Armed militants firing at civilians with AK-47s, M-16 and sniper rifles. These militants were targeted by security forces in counter-attacks. The CM appealed to the public not to hinder the movement of security personnel and urged them to have "faith in the Government and support the security forces." "We have experienced hardship for so long and we will never allow the state to disintegrate," Singh said. **Continued on Page 2**

## Rahul gets new passport, heads for US today

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi received a new ordinary passport on Sunday, two days after a local court granted its "no objection" to the issuance of the same, sources said. They said the passport office had assured Rahul in the morning that the passport would be issued to him on Sunday and he got it in the afternoon.

The former Congress president is set to travel to San Francisco in the United States on Monday evening where he will start his three-city tour. He had applied for an ordinary passport after surrendering the old diplomatic passport issued to him when he was a Member of Parliament. Rahul was disqualified as an MP following his conviction and two-year sentence by a Gujarat court in a defamation case over his Modi surname remark. **Continued on Page 2**

## CAPSULE

### IPL FINAL WASHED OUT, TO BE PLAYED TODAY

**Ahmedabad:** The final of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 was on Sunday moved to the reserved day after relentless rains delayed the toss and subsequently the start of the summit showdown here. The announcement was made at 10:55 PM local time. The title clash between Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings, thus, will be played here at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Monday.

### COUNTDOWN BEGINS FOR GSVL LAUNCH

**Sriharikota:** Scientists at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday at 7:12 AM commenced the 27.5 hour countdown for the launch of a navigation satellite on board a GSVL rocket here on May 29. The Bengaluru-headquartered space agency is all geared up to launch the second-generation navigation satellite series, a significant launch which would ensure the continuity of Navigation with Indian Constellation services, a regional satellite navigation system.

### CENSUS UNLIKELY BEFORE LS POLLS

**New Delhi:** The decadal Census, which was postponed for an indefinite period due to the Coronavirus pandemic, is unlikely to be held before the next Lok Sabha elections that are due in April-May 2024, officials said. Access to smartphones, Internet, laptops, computers, cars, two-wheelers, main cereal consumed are some of the 31 questions to be asked in the Census.

### DAMODAR MAUZO GETS JNANPITH AWARD

**Panaji:** Goan writer Damodar Mauzo Goa has received the prestigious Jnanpith Award, the country's highest literary honour, from Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai. Addressing a gathering after presenting the award the Governor said Mauzo is "epitome of Konkani literary culture."

## Old art adorns new Parliament

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The new Parliament building is home to nearly 5,000 artworks, including paintings, wall panels, stone sculptures and metal murals. The artworks on display in the new building narrate the stories of India's democratic traditions from the Vedic period to the present day.

The growth of democracy in the country is depicted through a series of exhibits in the Constitution Hall on the new Parliament building, which itself is inspired by the Sri Yantra, used for worship in the Hindu traditions and considered a source of pure energy. The Constitution Hall,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives standing ovation as he arrives in the Lok Sabha chamber of the new Parliament building, in New Delhi, on Sunday

which has a digitised copy of the Indian Constitution, has a touch of modernity as it also houses a Foucault's Pendulum to demonstrate the rotation of the earth. The Foucault's Pendulum hangs from a large skylight from the triangular roof of the Constitution Hall

and signifies the idea of India with that of the universe. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha chambers boast of a digitised voting system, well-engineered acoustics, and state-of-the-art audio-visual systems to ensure effective legislative proceedings. **Continued on Page 2**

## Twitterati rave about 'Akhand Bharat' mural

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

A mural in the new Parliament building depicting the influence of ancient Indian thought in its immediate neighbourhood went viral on social media on Sunday with many claiming it represents the resolve for an Akhand Bharat, described as a "cultural concept" by RSS.

The mural marks important kingdoms and cities of the past, and shows the influence of ancient India. **See P5**

## Prannoy wins Malaysia Masters title, breaks jinx

**PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR**

Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy ended a six-year long title drought with a three-game win over China's Weng Hong Yang in a pulsating men's singles finals at the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament here on Sunday.

The 30-year-old Indian showed great composure and resolve during a 94-minute battle to notch a 21-19 13-21 21-18 victory against China's world number 34 Weng Hong Yang, a 2022 Asian Championships bronze medalist. **See P12**



India's HS Prannoy poses on the podium with runner-up China's WH Yang after winning the men's singles finals match against Yang at Malaysia Masters badminton tournament in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Sunday





# Modi chairs meeting with BJP CMs

## Discusses 'effective implementation' of Central schemes



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BJP National president JP Nadra and others dignitaries during 'Mukhyamantri Parishad' meeting, at BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Sunday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday held a meeting with the Chief Ministers of the BJP-ruled States at the party headquarters here discussing 'effective implementation' of the Central schemes in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls.

The meeting which lasted several hours was part of the BJP's good governance agenda with chief ministers sharing their best practices in governance and implementation of various welfare schemes in their respective States.

Chief Ministers gave

feedback to the Prime Minister about the development work in their states, some of which, including Madhya Pradesh, are to go to polls this year.

There was a discussion with all the Chief Ministers regarding the preparations for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, sources said.

BJP national president JP Nadra, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, Goa CM Pramod Sawant, Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar, Assam CM Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath, Uttarakhand CM

Pushkar Singh Dhami, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Nagaland Deputy CM Yanthung Patton, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivrang Singh Chouhan, and Tripura CM Manik Saha were present at the meeting.

UP deputy-CMs Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak and Maharashtra Deputy-CM Devendra Fadnavis were also present at the meeting.

The meeting stated after the inauguration of new Parliament and the first address of the Prime Minister before the parliamentarians and other invitees.

# PM hails Savarkar in 'Mann Ki Baat'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday spoke about the contribution of Veer Savarkar on his birth anniversary recalling his 'sacrifice and courage' as also about 'Yuva Sangam' initiative and construction of 75 'Amrit Sarovars' in each district in the country for water conservation.

Addressing the 101st episode of his monthly radio broadcast, 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi touched on a range of issues, including his visit to Hiroshima. He stressed that the latest edition was the beginning of its 'second century' of his radio programme.

Marking Veer Savarkar's birth anniversary, the Prime Minister recalled his "sacrifice and courage".

"Veer Savarkar's personality was one of firmness and magnanimity. His fearless and self-respecting nature did not like the mentality of slavery at all. Not only the freedom movement, whatever Veer Savarkar did for social equality and social justice is remembered even today," said the Prime Minister.

He also hailed late Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and Telugu actor NT Rama Rao on his 100th birth anniversary, saying that "Rao left an indelible mark on Indian cinema and politics."

He went on to note that

June 4 is commemorated as the birth anniversary of poet Sant Kabir Das, who "showed us a path which is still relevant today".

The Prime Minister spoke about the new initiative of 'yuva Sangam' unifying the country and spoke with two youngsters one each from Arunachal Pradesh and Bihar who participated in it.

"The first round of Yuva Sangam, about 1,200 youths toured 22 states of the country", said Modi.

"Recently, we talked about Kashi Tamil Sangamam in Mann Ki Baat. Talked about Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam. Kashi Telugu Sangamam was also held in Varanasi some time back. One such unique effort has been made in the country to give strength to the great spirit of Ek Bharat. This is the effort of Yuva Sangam," the Prime Minister said.

Modi appreciated the large audience attracted by 'Mann ki baat' programme.

"When 'Mann Ki Baat' was broadcast, at that time in different countries of the world, in different time zones... Somewhere it was evening and somewhere it was late night. Despite this, a large number of people made time to listen to the 100th episode," said Modi.

Modi again emphasised on the need for water conservation. Reminding that water is very basic to every one's life.

# LS Speaker calls for discipline, decorum in new Parl building

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Sunday urged fellow lawmakers to establish new standards of parliamentary discipline, decorum, and dignity in the new parliament building and become idols for democratic institutions across the world.

"The newly built Parliament House is an amazing amalgam of our rich culture, ancient heritage and our modern aspirations," Birla said addressing the inauguration of the new parliament building.

The Speaker said unity in diversity was the strength of the country which found expression in Parliament.

"It is in the Parliament, where members speak in one voice in national interest despite regional and ideological differences. This is the strength of our democracy. Parliament is the custodian of this proud democratic heritage," he said. Birla said the existing Parliament building was witness to many historic events, including India's independence and framing of the Constitution.

"It is our responsibility to take care of our precious heritage," the Lok Sabha Speaker said, adding that this was precisely why several parliamentarians had felt the need for a new Parliament House and urged the Prime Minister to build it.

"Parliamentarians will be able to utilise the new engineering and technology in the new Parliament building to improve their skills," Birla said.

# Min Meghwal slams Opp for boycott, calls it cheap politics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Sunday dubbed the decision of various political parties to boycott the inauguration of new Parliament building as an example of 'cheap politics' and also slammed them for questioning the relevance of 'Sengol'.

The law minister said representatives of several opposition parties who had not supported the boycott call attended the event.

Several Supreme Court judges and those holding constitutional posts also attended the programme in Lok Sabha chamber of the new building, he pointed out.

"We kept on requesting them (to attend). Even senior leaders requested. They ignored our requests and boycotted the event. This is an example of cheap politics," Meghwal told PTI Video.

The minister recalled that when Meira Kumar was the Speaker during the UPA rule, there was a discussion on having a new Parliament building. But the idea was rejected and it was said a call will be taken when the next census takes place.

"Now, delimitation is near. The number of members of Parliament will go up. Where will they sit?" he questioned.

Responding to a question, he said those who boycotted the event will also appreciate the building when they see it, though they may not do so openly due to political compulsions.

He said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was making statements out of political compulsions. He also questioned Congress leaders doubting the role and significance of Sengol sceptre when the British transferred power to India.

# 'India faces very complicated challenge from China'

## EAM: Govt has taken steps to ensure no attempts made to change status quo

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said India faces a "very complicated challenge" from China, and the Narendra Modi Government has taken steps to ensure no attempts are made to change the status quo in the border areas unilaterally. This challenge was "very visible" in border areas in the last three years, Jaishankar said on Saturday, adding that both the countries have to find an equilibrium in relationship, but it cannot be on the terms of the other party.

If peace and tranquillity between the two nations is disturbed, their relationship will not remain unaffected, the minister



said, delivering a talk on 'Modi's India: A Rising Power' at the Anant National University here.

"When I talk about big powers, of course we have a particular challenge from China. That challenge is a very complicated challenge, but in the last three years it has been particularly visible in the border areas," Jaishankar said, apparently referring to China's incursions in eastern Ladakh.

"There are clearly responses that are required, and those responses have been undertaken by the government. And a lot of it to ensure that no attempt is made to unilaterally change the status quo in the border areas," he said.

The two countries will have to find some kind of equilibrium, and all the past

governments in their own ways tried to find a balance, the External Affairs Minister said.

"But that balance cannot be on the terms of the other party. Then it is not a balance. There has to be something mutual," he said. Mutual respect, sensitivity and interest have to be the basis of the relationship, Jaishankar said.

"How can we get along long term if you don't respect me, if you are not sensitive to my concerns, if you ignore my interest?" he said, adding that if India sees respect, sensitivity and recognition, it can think of a better relationship with China. "But if we do not, I think we need to stand up for our rights, and we need to be firm in asserting opposition. And that, unfortunately, currently is the situation," he said.

Talking about India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jaishankar stressed on the strengthening of relationship with immediate and extended neighbouring countries. Neighbours like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, which have always been close to India, are today linked with us through roads, railway, waterways and electricity grid connections, he said.

# Modi to flag off Assam's 1st Vande Bharat today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off Assam's first Vande Bharat Express at 12 noon on Monday via video-conferencing, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The state-of-the-art train will provide the people of the region the means to travel with speed and comfort. It will also boost tourism in the region, the statement said.

Connecting Guwahati with New Jalpaiguri, the train will help save about an hour of journey time, compared to the current fastest train connecting the two places. Vande Bharat will cover the journey in five-and-a-half hours, while the current fastest train takes about six-and-a-half hours to cover the distance.

Modi will also dedicate 182 route kilometres of newly-



electrified sections. This will help provide pollution-free transportation with trains running at a higher speed and

reduced running time. It will also open the doors for trains running on electric traction to enter Meghalaya.

The Prime Minister will inaugurate a newly-constructed DEMU/MEMU shed at Assam's Lumding. This new facility will be helpful for maintaining the DEMU rakes operating in the region, leading to better operational feasibility.

The Indian Railways is currently running 34 services of the train, covering 21 states. It has set a target of running at least one service in seven more states by June.

# GS Entertainment, directors, CA booked in IDBI bank fraud

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked Mumbai-based firm GS Entertainment Pvt. Ltd., its directors Jaspreet Singh Walia and Guneet Singh Walia and Chartered Accountant Stany Saldanha in a case of bank fraud involving IDBI Bank that had financed 2009 Hindi film Lamhaa.

The case refers to sanction of foreign currency loan to the tune of USD 2.35 million (Rs 10 crore) and term loan of Rs 4.95 crore in June 2008 under the film financing scheme for production of Hindi film 'Lamhaa'. Later, the loans turned into non-performing asset (NPA).

The outstanding principal and interest to the principal borrower GSEPL stood at Rs 119.05 crore as on June 1, 2021.

The film was directed by Rahul Dholakia with lead actors Sanjay Dutt, Bipasha Basu and Kunal Kapoor as star cast.

Besides principal borrower GSEPL, the company's directors Jaspreet Singh Walia alias Bunty Walia and Guneet Singh Walia alias Jassi Walia, and Chartered Accountant and Statutory Auditor Stany Saldanha as also unknown public servants have been



named as accused in the case of bank fraud, misappropriation of funds and criminal breach of trust among others.

The firm and the individuals have been booked under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) relating to criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery besides relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The CBI registered the case on a complaint dated February 24, 2022 by the IDBI Bank.

As per the original schedule, the film was to be released in May 2009. However, the release of the film got delayed seemingly due to a dispute between promoters and exhibitors from March 2009. The loan account turned NPA on September 30, 2009, according to the IDBI complaint which is part of the FIR.

# After complaints in Australia, Japan, Hoya recalls all units of IntraOcular Lens in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking cue from customer complaints in Australia and Japan with reports of damage (such as scratches) and fragment adhesion on the IOL optic surface. The company also submitted the recall action notification for the lenses from the Department of Health, Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA), Australian government, along with the alert recalling the product in India. The company has its Indian arm as Hoya Medical India Pvt Ltd, in New Delhi.

Hoya, the global med-tech company in Tokyo and a leading supplier of innovative high-tech and medical products, informed the DCGI that the

recall is being made following customer complaints received in Australia and Japan with reports of damage (such as scratches) and fragment adhesion on the IOL optic surface. The company also submitted the recall action notification for the lenses from the Department of Health, Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA), Australian government, along with the alert recalling the product in India. The company has its Indian arm as Hoya Medical India Pvt Ltd, in New Delhi.

In its filing with the TGA, the company said that it has asked customers to place all impacted devices on hold in their inventory system and

quarantine them for collection by its responsible entity in the country. It also recommended that the patients involved, that is the cases where lenses with PP adhesion have been left in the eye, be monitored for the need for any future medical treatment.

Hoya says that Vivinex is made from a novel hydrophobic acrylic, using a proprietary manufacturing process that includes a unique, active oxygen posterior surface treatment. Combined with its square edge design and smooth, regular IOL surface, it has been demonstrated to provide a low incidence of Posterior Capsule Opacification (PCO) in several studies.

# Ground water with arsenic harmful for farm products: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Groundwater should not be used for farming purposes to prevent arsenic (As) exposure for farm products, especially in the case of rice, a team of researchers has said citing the case of West Bengal where arsenic has been found in high content in groundwater. Large-scale arsenic (As) poisoning, mainly through food chain contamination, is deemed to be a lethal problem in the rice-growing areas of the

Bengal Delta Plain (BDP) and other parts of the world.

The study paper by scholars and researchers from the School of Environmental Studies, the National Institute of Biological Genomics and Australia's University of Newcastle pointed out that since groundwater is more prone to arsenic exposure, farm products produced by using that water also become prone to the same exposure.

To prevent this, the report has suggested stressing on rainy season farming so that rain-

water can be used. This remedy is extremely important considering that West Bengal is among those states which have extremely high arsenic concentration in groundwater. Historically as many as 83 blocks scattered over seven districts in West Bengal have arsenic levels in groundwater higher than the permissible limits.

The report, published in science magazine "Environmental Science & Pollution Research", suggests if rice is cooked using arsenic-



free water equivalent to three times of the quantity of rice being cooked, the level of arsenic exposure in that cooked rice comes down substantially. It has also suggested that

sence selenium acts as instruments for combating arsenic, selenium fertilisers should be extensively used while paddy farming.

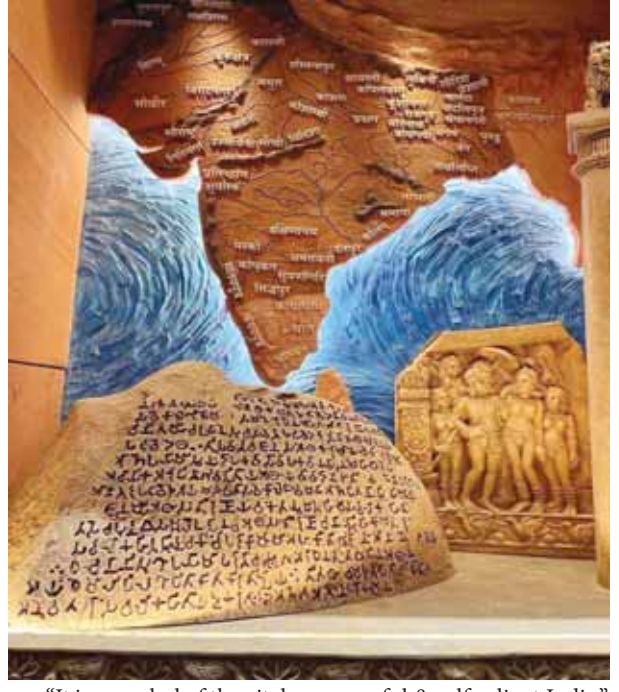
The research on this count was conducted on paddy varieties collected from Kolkata, North 24 Parganas, and West Midnapore. The research has revealed that of these varieties collected, the danger of arsenic exposure is maximum and also alarming in North 24 Parganas. While that from Kolkata is prone to moderate exposure, the one from West Midnapore

is relatively safer on this count.

Yet another study noted that West Bengal, the largest rice producing state in India, is heavily devastated by the chronic and acute health hazards associated with As. "More than 26 million people across 2600 villages in this state ingest this toxicant from food and water on a regular basis. Residents of rural Bengal consume, on average, 450 g rice per capita per day to meet 73% of their daily caloric needs which, in endemic regions, is found laced with As, it said.

Twitterati rave about 'Akhand Bharat' mural in new Parl

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
A mural in the new Parliament building depicting the influence of ancient Indian thought in its immediate neighbourhood went viral on social media on Sunday with many claiming it represents the resolve for an Akhand Bharat, described as a "cultural concept" by the RSS. The mural in the new Parliament building, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, marks important kingdoms and cities of the past, and shows the influence of ancient India in the then Taxila, in present-day Pakistan. "The resolve is clear - Akhand Bharat," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Twitter. The BJP's Karnataka unit shared photographs of the artworks inside the new Parliament House, including the murals of ancient India, Chanakya, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and B R Ambedkar and the cultural diversity of the country.



"It is a symbol of the vitality of our proud great civilisation," the Karnataka BJP said on its Twitter handle. "Akhand Bharat in New Parliament. It represents our powerful & self-reliant India," Manoj Kotak, Lok Sabha member from Mumbai North-East, said on Twitter. A number of Twitter users welcomed the depiction of

'Akhand Bharat' in the new Parliament building and wondered whether it was the reason for the Opposition boycott of the function. "Our idea was to depict the influence of Indian thought during the ancient ages. It extended from the present day Afghanistan in the north-western region to south-eastern Asia," Adwaita Gadanayak, Director General, National Gallery of Modern Art said. Gadanayak was involved in the selection of artworks displayed in the new Parliament building. According to the RSS, the Akhand Bharat concept refers to the undivided India whose geographical expanse was very wide in ancient times -- present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand. However, the RSS now maintains that the Akhand Bharat concept, in the present times, should be seen in the cultural context and not political given the partition of India on religious lines at the time of Independence.

Rituals performed show country being taken backwards, says Pawar

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Sunday said that various rituals performed at the inauguration of the new Parliament building in New Delhi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi show that the country was being taken backwards by decades. He said the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru had envisaged a society having a scientific temperament, but what happened at the new Parliament inauguration ceremony was opposite to that. PM Modi inaugurated the new building this morning at a grand ceremony which included a havan, a multi-faith prayer ceremony and the installation of the Sengol in a special enclosure in the Lok Sabha chamber. Speaking to reporters in Pune, Pawar said, "There is a huge difference between the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru talking about the concept of modern India



and a series of rituals performed at the new Parliament building today in New Delhi. I fear that we are taking our country backward by decades." "One cannot compromise on science. Nehru was persistent about his wish to form a society with scientific temperament. But what is happening today at the inauguration ceremony of the new parliament building is exactly the opposite of what Nehru had envisaged," he said. The NCP was among the 20 opposition parties that boycotted the inauguration of the new Parliament building over the prime minister and not the president inaugurating the complex.

Census unlikely before LS polls; citizens to be asked about smartphones, internet, cereals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The decadal Census, which was postponed due to the pandemic, is unlikely to be held before the next Lok Sabha elections that are due in April-May 2024, officials said. Access to smartphones, internet, laptops, computers, cars, two-wheelers, main cereals consumed are some of the 31 questions to be asked in the Census, whenever it is held. The house listing phase of the Census and the exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR) were scheduled to be carried out across the country from April 1 to September 30, 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Census operation continues to be on hold and the government has not yet announced a new schedule. In January, the Election Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India conveyed that the date of freezing of administrative boundaries -- creation of new districts or sub-districts -- has been extended to June 30, the officials said. According to the norms, the Census can be conducted only three months after (post September 30) freezing of boundary limits of administrative units such as districts, sub-districts, tehsils, taluks and police stations. Two to three months will also be required to train the entire 30 lakh government employees/teachers across India who will be engaged as enumerators for the Census. Meanwhile, the Election Commission will kick start the process for the next general elections such as revision of voter lists, etc.



Taxpayers' money wasted on Parl: TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA
The Trinamool Congress on Sunday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for wasting thousands of crores of taxpayers' money in constructing lavish buildings like the new Parliament house when crores of his fellow citizens were fighting against unemployment and price rise. Comparing the Prime Minister to the ancient Roman emperors Nero, TMC second-in-command Abhishek Banerjee said, "He (Prime Minister) is behaving like Nero who played flute when Rome was in fire otherwise what explains expenditure of so many thousands of crores in wasteful architectures like the new parliament house while people of the country are starving." Raising the issue of petro-price hike he said, "had he not spent these crores of rupees to construct big buildings then the price of the cooking gas



would have been around Rs 700 and petrol ... similarly petrol and kerosene prices too would have come down." Instead of spending billions for constructing a lavish Parliament building or a Prime Ministerial or the Vice Presidential palaces, the Prime Minister should have released the MNREGA funds and other dues of Bengal so as to feed the mouths of thousands of poor job card holders who had not been paid despite having worked in the hundred days work scheme. Contrasting the BJP Government's penchant for setting up tall monarchical architectures and its alleged refusal to provide small space

temples and other religious places ... their presence in parliament in overwhelming numbers only proves towards what direction he (Prime Minister) wants to take the nation." Saying that "this Sunday" would be remembered as a day marking the "BJP's arrogance" in not inviting President Droupadi Murmu to inaugurate the new Parliament House, Banerjee who, like many other Opposition MPs boycotted the inauguration programme said "for the sake of elections they nominated a tribal woman candidate as the President of India but when it came to honouring her today he (Prime Minister) refused to let her inaugurate Parliament building ... by doing so he has insulted the tribal people, the women and also the President of India." Referring to Modi's call for Acchhe Din (good days) and Parivartan (change), Banerjee said "I (the name of change he (Prime Minister)

changed names of roads and institutions instead of changing the system ... he changed notes ... whereas he should have changed his conduct, his mindset towards looking at things," adding, "tomorrow if they come to power once again then they will change the Constitution." Alleging that in spite of 63 percent people voting against the BJP in 2019 the Prime Minister was imposing his will on the people Banerjee said, "this time however the people will change you and your political career will witness a big change in the form of people ousting you from power." On the Prime Minister promise to instill integrity and honesty, Banerjee said "when he came to power he spoke of na khaunga ... na khane dunga (I will neither steal nor anyone to steal) ... but today we see how you have awarded people like Hemanta Biswa Sharma, Narayana Rane or Sudendu Adhikari with big posts."

Stalin rides bullet train in Japan, bats for 'equivalent' service in India

PTI ■ CHENNAI
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, who is on an official trip of Japan, on Sunday undertook a 500-km bullet train journey to its capital city Tokyo and said such a service could benefit the Indian citizens as well. He also addressed Tamils living in Japan, while highlighting the link between the Tamil and Japanese languages. On his train journey, he tweeted: "Traveling from Osaka to Tokyo on #BulletTrain; will cover a distance of about 500 km in less than two and a half hours," and shared some related pictures. "A railway service equivalent to #BulletTrain not only in design but also in speed and quality should come for use in our India as well. The poor and middle class people should benefit and their journey should become easier! #FutureIndia," he added.



The Chief Minister had earlier embarked on a two-nation official trip of Singapore and Japan to attract more investments to Tamil Nadu. Later in the day, he addressed a meeting of the Tamil diaspora living in Japan and highlighted the various initiatives of his government aimed towards the welfare of such non-resident Tamil people. Inviting them to his home state, he also extended his support to the Tamil people.

Rapist, woman peddler among seven hardcore criminals held in J&K's Samba

PTI ■ JAMMU
Seven people with criminal history including a rapist and a woman drug peddler were arrested in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, police said on Sunday. Parvaz Ahmed, accused of abducting and raping a minor girl, has been arrested from Rakh Amb Talli, a police officer said. Police have also arrested one Saleema Bibi, who was wanted in a case registered under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he said. She was arrested from the Bari Brahmana area. "Bibi had been supplying heroin to addicted youths and was also involved in an attack on a Police party," the officer said.



Another criminal, Badroo Din alias 'Badaru', was arrested from Vijaypur for his involvement in an attack on a police party recently, he said. He was the fifth accused arrested in the case. Roshan Lal and Mohit Ram Patel were arrested from Bari Brahmana after they were named in a theft case, while

Bengal mango exports this season to start from early June

PTI ■ KOLKATA
Mango exports from West Bengal are expected to begin from early June with shipments to Middle East countries, an official said on Sunday. There have also been inquiries for export orders from Europe, which are currently being finalised, the official said. "Exports are expected to commence from early June, as we are finalising the last shipments from some orchards. Orders have already been received from the Middle East," said Ujjal Saha, president of the Malda Mango Association, in an interview with PTI. Saha also mentioned that despite the economic challenges faced by Europe, there is a growing interest in Bengal mangoes, and exporters are



actively engaging in negotiations. In the previous year, Malda exported 10 metric tonne of mangoes to Europe and 24 metric tonne to Middle East countries. Officials from both the Union and State governments are working collaboratively to promote mango exports from West Bengal, as stated by the horticulture department. Deputy Director of the

Azad: DPAP will fight for restoration of J&K's statehood, land rights

PTI ■ JAMMU
DPAP chief Ghulam Nabi Azad on Sunday said he would fight for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and the job and land rights of its people if the party wins the Assembly elections. He said a progressive Jammu and Kashmir is possible only if people stand united and defeat the politics of hate as he called for unity and harmony among all communities. "The people of J&K must rise above personal beliefs and find a common path to usher a new dawn of peace and prosperity as the Union Territory is lagging far behind due to divisive and petty politics by successive regimes," Azad said addressing a party function in Akhnoor sector here. Aam Aadmi Party leader Rattan Lal joined the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) along with his supporters on the occasion. Welcoming the new entrants, Azad said a lot more needs to be done for the development of Jammu and Kashmir. "When I was the chief minister, relief was provided to people and the speed of



Siddaramaiah gives Ministers target of winning 20 seats in LS elections

PTI ■ BENGALURU
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who has formed a full-fledged government, has fixed targets for all his Cabinet colleagues, saying they should all strive to win at least 20 of the total 28 seats in the Lok Sabha elections. The Chief Minister on Saturday filled all 34 seats in his Cabinet by inducting 24 new ministers. Noting that the Lok Sabha elections are coming in a year, Siddaramaiah said, "We should win at least 20 Lok Sabha constituencies as a gift to party national president Mallikarjun Kharge and seniors Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi." The chief Minister has instructed the ministers to carry out their respon-



sibilities by keeping this goal in mind and with commitment, honesty and agility, a statement from the chief minister's office said. "We should strive sincerely to ensure that the guarantees assured by us reach the people. The mistakes of the past should not be repeated this time," he was quoted as saying in the statement. Siddaramaiah assured the ministers that portfolio allocation

people administration according to their expectations." He added, "Take steps to solve problems locally and prevent them from running pillar to post even for small works. People should not be made to come to Vidhana Soudha (the seat of the state legislature and secretariat) to get their work done." "Through our pro-people work, we have registered an unprecedented victory in the Lok Sabha elections again," he instructed the ministers. The situation is just right to end the misrule of the Centre through Karnataka, he said. "We must not forget this. Therefore, the ministers should travel to their districts extensively. The problems should be solved at the district and taluk level," Siddaramaiah said.

Eviction drive in Assam's Orang National Park to clear animal corridor

PTI ■ TEZPUR
A four-day-long eviction drive to clear an "encroached" animal corridor in Assam's Orang National Park was launched by the government on Sunday amid heavy security, a senior official said. The operation will be carried out in Sonitpur district for the first two days while the exercise will be conducted for the remaining two days in Darrang district. The Orang National Park is spread over an area of 89 sq km in Sonitpur and Darrang districts and the eviction exercise is being carried out to clear "encroached" land for an ani-



mal corridor to Kaziranga National Park. Sonitpur deputy commissioner Deba Kumar Mishra said all the areas to be covered by the eviction drive are 'char' (riverine) areas in the district. "Eviction drive was carried out in five char areas today and it will be done in another four such spots on Monday. The drive went off smoothly today," he said.



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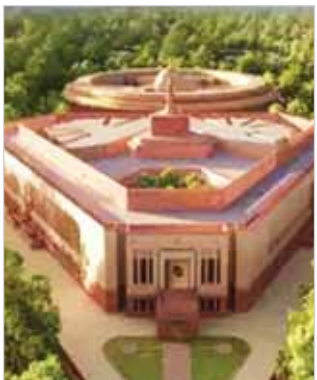
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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Respect the temple

Leaders say Parliament is the temple of democracy, so they should not desecrate it with pandemonium

The inauguration of the new parliament building and installation of a historic sceptre 'Sengol' near the Lok Sabha Speaker's chair by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with other related activities on Sunday, will continue to be debated for some time. Supporters and members of the Government and Bharatiya Janata Party will reiterate grandiloquent statements, lauding the very idea of getting a new Parliament, its symbolism-heavy architecture and furnishing, and so on. The Opposition, on the other hand, will continue to make barbed remarks about the entire affair, as it has been in the last few days. Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor had earlier quoted Articles 60 and 111 of the Constitution, claiming that as head of Parliament, the President should have inaugurated the building. The TMC's reaction was a mix of condemnation and ridicule: the Prime Minister inaugurating the new Parliament building was akin to "I only love myself day," party MP Derek O'Brien said on Sunday. It is indubitable, however, that the country needed a new Parliament. The need was felt not just by this Government but also earlier. In 2012, Lok Sabha speaker Meira Kumar had constituted a high-powered committee to recommend an alternate complex to the old Parliament building. But the need was just on the grounds of functionality, though these were sufficient enough for the alternate building. The old structure, made a century ago, could not cope with the requirements that have arisen in this period. The Prime Minister rightly said that the new Parliament is not just a building but a reflection of the aspirations and dreams of 140 crore Indians.



"This is a temple of our democracy that gives a message of India's resolution to the world," he said. "This new Parliament building connects planning to reality, policy to realisation, willpower to execution, and sankalp to siddhi," he added. He went on to say, "India is not only a democratic nation but also the mother of democracy." For, he asserted, democracy is not just a system that is practiced in India but it is a culture, thought and tradition. The roots of democracy in our country, he correctly said, go back to the Vedas and Vaishali in modern Bihar. Parliament has been called the temple of democracy by many people, both from the Government and the Opposition. So, it is the duty of all political parties and leaders to ensure that the sanctity of this temple is upheld by everyone in every circumstance all the time. This temple should not suffer any desecration. It means that business is conducted in both Houses in the best traditions of democracy. Senior leaders should ensure that when an opponent is speaking, he or she is allowed to say whatever they want to, that they are not shouted down. Also, all parliamentarians should respect the chair, speak within the timeframe that is provided to them, and so on. This will strengthen our democracy.

### PICTALK



Kashmiri Pandit devotees light earthen lamps during the Kheer Bhawani Mela, at Tulmula in Ganderbal district. PTI

## Battling cultural taboos in Uttarakhand

The need for comprehensive menstrual education, access to hygienic sanitary products, and an end to discriminatory practices is paramount

Although menstruation is a natural process for women and girls, it continues to be associated with deep-rooted stigma, imposing daily challenges, and hindering their growth. Lack of scientific menstrual awareness and management pushes adolescent girls in most parts of India to seclusion and torment within their own homes, making it a harrowing experience. In villages that are tucked away in the hilly states, the situation is quite shocking.

Disha (name changed), a 16-year-old from Pothing village in Bageshwar district, Uttarakhand, shares her distressing experience, "At times, I hide from my parents while I menstruate because it's a torture to stay in a cowshed. Often, I go through severe cramps, but as I don't inform my parents about getting periods, I refrain from sharing my pain. But I cannot put up this act every month because my mother ends up suspecting pregnancy."

Culturally in India, women and girls still face discrimination and inhumane treatment during menstruation, and Uttarakhand is no



exception. The practices around menstruation differ in each village but there are certain rules across the region that menstruating girls and women have to follow.

In Pothing village, for instance, when a girl gets her period for the first time, she is banished to a cowshed outside the house for 21 days. Consequently, these girls spend a total of 60 days each year eating, sleeping, and studying with cattle. During this time, they not only stay away from their homes but are also forbidden from using the household toilet. "The most dreaded times are the bitterly cold months of December and January when we have to go to the river at 4-5 AM in the morning to take a bath. We try to use fewer blankets during winter

nights as washing them every day is quite laborious," reveals Nisha Gadiya, another adolescent girl from the village.

Aside from the unsanitary conditions, the girls lack essential support during their periods. "During this time, we do not even receive timely meals, which leaves us feeling weak. Because of this, we can't study properly. Moreover, sanitary pads are not readily available even at the chemist shops located quite far away from our village, and affording them is another challenge. We resort to using clothes during our periods," adds Nisha.

These practices have turned the menstrual cycle into a traumatic experience for adolescent girls as they fear staying alone outside their homes. "Younger girls are usually afraid to sleep alone away from home in the cowshed at night. When we were young, we dreaded being imprisoned for a few days each month, as if we had committed a crime. We would cry alone at night, thinking how good it would have been if our period had never come at all," expresses 17-year-old Maya.



DOLLY GADIYA

The villagers firmly believe that menstruating women are impure, and any physical contact during this period will make the other person fall sick. Purification rituals involving cow urine are performed to counter such perceived impurities. While highlighting the deep-rooted nature of these superstitions, Chandra Gadia, a teacher from the village, shares, "There is an urgent need to challenge these 'man'-made laws. It is imperative to put an end to any form of violence inflicted upon women and adolescent girls in the name of customs and rituals," emphasizes Chandra. The need for comprehensive menstrual education, access to hygienic sanitary products, and an end to discriminatory practices is paramount. Advocacy and awareness programs should be implemented, not only in Pothing Village but throughout the region, to combat these deep-seated taboos and foster a society that embraces menstrual health and dignity.

(The writer is a recipient of the Sanjoy Ghose Media Awards 2022) Charkha Features

# Workforce must have employable skills

The world of work is changing faster than the workforce. To survive technological developments and automation, workers must upgrade their skills



DINESH SOOD

India surpasses China as the world's most populous country in demographic composition, with a staggering 65 per cent working-age population having an average age of 28 years old. This population has the potential to propel the nation towards remarkable socio-economic progress and has the ability for transformative global impact. To reap the benefit of demographic advantage, it is imperative to equip our working population with employable skills and knowledge that meet the requirements of the globalized labour market. Skill development in educational institutions is the critical enabler for improving employment outcomes and higher productivity leading to faster and more sustainable economic growth.

There is a significant gap between the skills imparted in educational institutions in India and the skills required for jobs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has projected that India will face a 29 million skill deficit by 2030. Still, India's education system is unable to provide the necessary skills to its growing workforce. Many young people lack the required qualifications and vocational training to find suitable jobs.

India Skills Report 2023 reveals a rise in employability of 52.8% with women and men at 47.2%. Women surpassed men in employability because, in the post-covid era, nursing, beauty and wellness and other soft skills showed the highest employability rates among the women. Not only for women but for men also the beauty and wellness sector has unlimited potential in terms of domestic and global markets. The beauty and wellness market in India was valued at Rs 901.07 billion in 2018 and is forecast to reach Rs 2,463.49 billion by 2024, expanding at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 18.40 per cent during 2019-2024. There is an extra advantage in the employability of women because the companies have also adopted new recruitment strategies centred around soft skills like communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. However, institutes haven't adopted the



norm of educating their students on as of now employable skills, thus hurting the freshers entering the job market.

The Department of School Education and Literacy is executing the rationalization of the School Education initiative under 'Samagra Shiksha' (holistic education) to integrate vocational education with general academics in secondary and senior secondary schools. The goal is to enhance youths' employability, entrepreneurial skills, work environment exposure, and career awareness. The ideal employee in the 21st century embodies a diverse set of skills which includes a perfect blend of technical and soft skills.

India has a unique opportunity to capitalise on its 48 per cent population under the age of 25, and the working-age population is forecast to hit more than 1 billion in the current decade. An IMF report suggests that demographic dividend could add up to 2 percentage points to per capita GDP growth per annum. But the question remains, how can India capitalise on its demographic dividend?

Developed countries like Singapore and South Korea demonstrate the potential for leveraging the demographic dividend to achieve remark-

INDIA HAS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO CAPITALISE ON ITS 48 PER CENT POPULATION UNDER THE AGE OF 25, AND THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION IS FORECAST TO HIT MORE THAN 1 BILLION IN THE CURRENT DECADE

able economic growth by implementing forward-thinking policies and programs that empower the youth in education and skill development.

Various job roles across multiple sectors are included in these modules to cater to students' aptitudes and aspirations. Apart from this, under the Skill India Mission, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship offers skill training through schemes like PMKVY, JSS, NAPS, and CTS via ITIs. These demand-driven initiatives aim to improve youth employability by continuously adding industry-relevant courses.

The world of work is changing faster than the workforce, with technological developments, automation, changes in consumer behaviour, and widespread remote working patterns rapidly changing how and where we work. To bridge the skills needs of businesses and governments, boosting employability and career success for individuals, India should further strengthen its Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) programs. For instance, Finland's TVET system is known for its high-quality education, strong connection with industry needs, and emphasis on practical skills. One of the critical

aspects of Finland's TVET system that India can learn from is its strong collaboration between educational institutions, the private sector, and the government. This cooperation ensures that the curriculum is tailored to meet the current and future needs of the market, thereby enhancing the employability. India can benefit from adopting a similar approach, encouraging stronger ties between educational institutions and industry players to develop curricula that are aligned with market demands. The workforce stays competitive and adapts to the rapidly changing demands of the global economy by promoting a culture of continuous learning and up-skilling, supported by government policies and incentives. This would not only help to bridge the skill-employability gap but also enable India's workforce to remain agile and prepared for the ever-evolving job market. Skillfully leveraging the demographic dividend can pave the way for elevated living standards and sustain the country's economic growth.

(The writer is co-founder and MD, of Orane International, a training partner with the National Skill Development Corporation. The views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### RAMDEV SUPPORTS WRESTLERS

Sir — As per the report, Delhi's political quarters are abuzz with questions about the relationship between self-proclaimed 'godman' and 'Yoga guru' Baba Ramdev and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Ramdev recently spoke out against the sexual assault accused Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh and demanded his immediate arrest. Ramdev who hogged national headlines during the UPA-2 by projecting himself as a "black money crusader" has conspicuously gone silent on the issue after BJP came to power in 2014. He either remained silent or defended the BJP regime on crucial issues. He said that the BJP MP Brij Bhushan was not being arrested even after FIRs were registered against him, Ramdev said, "He (Brij Bhushan) spews nonsense every day about mothers, sisters and daughters. This is an extremely condemnable evil act, a sin".

The Delhi Police has filed two FIRs against the WFI president. While the first FIR relates to allegations by the minor wrestler and has been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the second is related to outraging modesty.

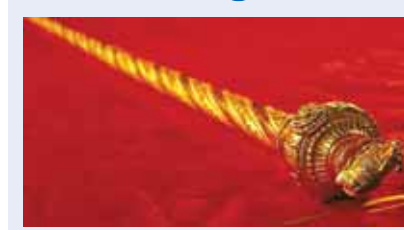
Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

#### AGENDAS FOR A NEW PARLIAMENT

Sir — As India enters a new era with its new parliament, there is a profound opportunity to introduce a fresh wave of legislation that addresses the needs and challenges of our diverse country. With a focus on fostering social progress, economic growth, and environmental sustainability, inter alia, the new parliament should prioritize the development of comprehensive and forward-thinking laws that promote inclusivity, protect human rights, encourage innovation, and ensure sustainable development.

One of the primary areas of focus for the new parliament should be strengthening laws that promote social justice and

## The 'Sengol' controversy rages on



The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) IT cell and well supported by government-controlled media houses, Sengol has suddenly become the talk of the town and the main question of 'why New Parliament Bhavan was not inaugurated by the President' has gone into the background. This is also not a big issue as the Sengol is going to be moved from its archive to the centre of the Parliament in a ceremonial function- 'Sengol Saatchi' is a common term in Tamil which means

good government- Unnecessary daily debates on this issue is getting to be tiresome as we have seen photographs of the first Prime Minister (PM) of India Jawaharlal Nehru accepting the Sengol. Ultimately all events planned by the government are going to happen on 28th May (though some parties are still hanging on to this presidential narrative).

Seers have already arrived and I understand that a mock ceremony has also been conducted. But the big question, one side, Sengol was originally used by kings to signify the transfer of power. Kings did not rule a democracy. The Sengol is out of place here. It was never used by subsequent PMs to hand over the reins of the government. Unable to understand how an astute politician like PM Modi should not have been able to gauge what the public sentiment would be in this situation

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

inclusivity. It is crucial to develop and enforce stronger protections for marginalized communities, ensuring that they have equal access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare, and housing.

In the digital age, the protection of individual privacy and responsible use of technology is of paramount importance. The new parliament should introduce robust data protection laws that safeguard citizens' personal information, establishing clear guidelines for data collection, storage, and usage by both government and private entities.

To strengthen democracy and ensure transparency in the electoral process, the new parliament should focus on electoral reforms. Measures can include enhancing campaign finance regulations, promoting political party accountability, and adopting technology-driven solutions for voter registration and election monitoring.

Shivanshu K Srivastava | Lucknow

#### PLIGHT OF WORKERS

Sir — The article "Tragedy for workers..."

depicts the exact picture of the workers in the present economic scenario. Contract, contingent, casual, outsourced, daily wages, employees on honorarium and so many such exploited categories are seen working in various departments and fields and all the more in government services also.

Directive principles expect the government to be a model employer but it has turned out to be a model exploiter. The minimum wage declared is meant only for employees in the Schedule. In most of the States, upward revision of minimum wage is not done after 2007 and the worst is that even the Minimum Wage Board is not there to look into this matter. The Union government's Labour Codes added oil to the fire by introducing Fixed Term employment and removing 47 labour laws which were giving some sort of protection at least. But the sacrifice of workers goes unrecognised.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### 'SENGOL' GETS ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE

The 'Sengol' has been installed next to the Speaker's chair by the PM in new Parliament



THIRUVANNATHAPURAM S RAMAKRISHNAN

'Sengol' has been quoted in Tamil literature very extensively for the various attributes it presents. The essential meaning of righteousness for SENGOL refers to a ruler's dispensation of justice to his citizens, even if it is detrimental to the King or the King's family. If the King fails in his duty either due to failure to cross-verify the facts, deliver justice in haste, overlook the facts before him, or due to circumstantial evidence or sheer human error, he is bound to fall from the grace of people, and he is also expected to face the punishment for failing to give justice, which must be imposed on him by himself.

This is where the King is expected to have the grace of the Almighty in acquitting himself well while delivering justice in extremely complicated cases. There were times when to know the truth, the King prayed to the Almighty to give a clue of what went on at the crime scene, and when he got the clue, he gave the right judgement. A lady was pierced with an arrow and died when she was under the tree with her husband.

The husband noticed a hunter with a bow and arrow in the surroundings, and he accused the hunter of killing his wife with his arrow. But the hunter firmly denied that he did not shoot the arrow. The King came to know the truth with the Divine Grace: the arrow had been pierced in one of the leaves of the tree earlier, and when the couple was resting under the tree, it fell on the lady, and thereby the lady lost her life.



When the King delivers a wrong judgement, even an ordinary citizen may reach out to him in his assembly and raise the wrongdoing of the King with evidence. When Kannaki's husband was wrongly executed by the then Pandya King for stealing the anklet of the Queen, she proved before him that her anklets were made of rubies, whereas the Queen's anklets were made of pearls. The Pandya King realised his mistake of delivering wrong justice, fell from his seat, and expired instantly after uttering, "I am not the King, and I am the thief". The SENGOL also gave dutiful power to the King to punish those who disturb the peace in society and those who resort to heinous crimes of theft, robbery, and murder.

The lyrics written by SANGAM lady poet Avvaiyar indicate the prosperity angle of Sengol. In her lyrics, she said, "When the paddy field embankment height increases, the water level in the field raises, thereby the paddy crop grows well, resulting in a high yield, and that will raise the economic condition of the citizens (farmers in particular), and as a result, the Sengol will raise, and ultimately it will result in the increase in the status of the King himself. In a democratic setup, we rule ourselves; the King refers to the citizenry, and hence, as the paddy field embankment rises, the SENGOL rises, and the country and its citizenry will prosper.

The Sengol embodied the good governance, prosperity, justice and fairness, unity, safety, security, and well-being of the citizens, as well as the authority, might, legitimacy, unity, integrity, and sovereignty of a nation. It is befitting on the part of the Indian government to bring back the Indian pride from Prayagraj Nehru Museum and install it as Sengol next to the Lok Sabha speaker in the new Parliament Hall.

(The author is a Public Policy Analyst)

# Ever increasing threat of transnational terrorism



DR SUDHIR HINDWAN

The purpose of terrorism is to create an state of extreme fear among target groups to alter their behaviour and bring about a radical change



The recent attacks by terrorists in Rajouri that killed 4 soldiers and a few days earlier ambushed an Army vehicle in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir in which 5 Army Soldiers have been martyred ahead of G 20 meeting have confirmed that terrorists were down but not wiped out. The purpose of these attacks is to destabilize security and create a vulnerable atmosphere in the region. This is not an isolated incident but just an addition to the long saga of terrorist violence in the region. Earlier the series of terrorist attacks in Sopore, Budgam, Chadoora, Noorbagh and Dooru Shahabad raised serious concerns for security agencies.

Both the Central and State Governments have done an excellent job to resolve the issues but terrorists are deliberately creating problems as they work to the tune of outsiders. Besides, to a large extent, clinging to terrorism provides livelihood to terrorists who have nothing to lose except their lives for some money and self-generated fake popularity among their masters as a bonus. Be it the case of Ajmal Kasab and a few others who were misled and driven to commit a most heinous crime in Mumbai. Although the central government has made efforts to find a solution to the problem plaguing the region by initiating talks with Pakistan and addressing the grievances of the separatists yet insurgent activities against the government and clashes between terrorists and the Army have continued unabated.

The region provides an excellent base for the rebels to carry out guerrilla activities. Several security officials have died in controlling the terrorist onslaught for many years. World over, the new breed of terrorists seems to be reasonably confident of their access to vantage points.

Moreover, their strategies have become more sophisticated and they are successful in acquiring more lethal weapons from across the border. The rapid international transportation and use of sophisticated weapons like assault rifles and plastic explosives (RDX) have helped to facilitate the expansion of terrorist networks around the world. Besides, the new suicide squads of terrorists have left the entire security apparatus of the affected states in a state of shock.

The recent incidents in Europe and Asia and Africa need to be understood properly. History bears testimony to various such tragic events.

Mr. Alison Jamieson, a British analyst on organized crime and political violence commented that the distinction between terrorism and organized crime has become very blurred recently. Italian organised crime expert Professor Ernesto says "The goal is different.

The terrorist's goal is an ideological one, while organized crime's goal is financial, but the instrument is the same. They both need money and arms". In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers engage in drug trafficking to finance their struggle, in north-eastern India guerrillas kidnap tea planters and hold them to ransom to help fund their fight for independence. In Chechnya, the secessionists were heavily involved in drug distribution. These days terrorists are more confident than ever before of their access to vulnerable points before carrying out any of their attacks and they plan their attack in a heroic manner for the

justification and fulfilment of a cause that they think is just.

Thus, they attempt, by their acts, to inspire and manipulate fear to achieve a variety of purposes. William Henry once explained the problem of international terrorism and commented that "some politically motivated acts are rooted so deeply in dedication to a cause that no sanction can deter them, other acts of terrorism spring from frustration of legitimate means, caused in turn by acts of government repression and terrorism." It is basically a self-created perception of misled people to give an ideological fervour to their misdeeds. Terrorist groups are generally too small and weak to operate successfully against governments.

Therefore, violence is not their immediate goal and that's why they insist upon psychological rather than practical results.

The purpose of terrorism, therefore, is to create an emotional state of extreme fear among specific groups, and thereby, ultimately alter their behavior and bring about general or particular changes in the structure of society and government. Therefore, scholars working on strategic affairs in the international arena need to examine and analyze the genesis and changing nature of the problem of international terrorism and its causes. It is true that present anti-terrorism laws such as extradition treaties, etc are sufficient enough in handling the problem provided they are implemented promptly and effectively. Besides, Intelligence, Interception and close surveillance are the

most effective ways of combating modern terrorism. In this regard the following suggestions may be worth considering:

- (a) Carefully examining important incidents and preparing detailed action-oriented reports on terrorist-affected areas.
- (b) Building a sophisticated communication network as part of a wider modernization drive that gives access to the latest technology.
- (c) Better management of local contacts and sources of assistance. #developing new techniques of security and maintenance of secrecy.
- (d) Developing the capability to anticipate security needs. This is possible by conducting specialized courses for monitoring security situations

Although individual counter-measures have been taken against terrorism, the world is not yet in a position to completely eliminate this curse of human civilization. The important task is to find out the emerging new cause of terrorism or analyze the psychology.

The efforts of the state to maintain security in the face of terrorist threats should go hand in hand with a new international mechanism bolstered by a multi-dimensional and multilayered approach based on coordination and intelligence sharing. The world has got tremendous opportunities and excellent platforms such as G 20 and Quad wherein a lot of sharing and learning can generate a solid combating mechanism.



VIOLENCE IS NOT THEIR IMMEDIATE GOAL, AND THAT'S WHY THEY INSIST UPON PSYCHOLOGICAL RATHER THAN PRACTICAL RESULTS

(The writer is the recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award. He is a Professor and an Expert on Strategic Affairs. Views expressed are personal)

# Transition from road to rail is an opportunity worth exploiting

Chugging along the sustainability track, the railway holds tremendous potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and an opportunity for logistic providers

Transition from Road to rail, a topic of great traction from all quarters, is finally gaining heat with the concerted efforts from all the stakeholders - government, logistics players and the user fraternity. But why is this shift necessary? According to some research estimates, Rail produces 75% fewer CO2 emissions per tonne-kilometre than that of road freight transport. This wake-up call is for the industries to switch to alternative modes of transport.

As per the Boston Consulting Group, "No form of mass transport has more potential to aid in the fight against global warming than rail. It is one of the most energy-efficient transport modes, responsible for 9% of global



NIKHIL AGARWAL

motorized passenger movement and 7% of freight shipping—but only 3% of transport energy use, according to the International Energy Agency.

In fact, a Niti Ayog study found that the transition would help encourage cleaner fuels, India can save 10 Giga tonnes of CO2, 500-kilo tonnes of particulate matter (PM) and 15 million tonnes of nitrogen oxide (NOx) caused by freight transport by 2050.

Despite having the fourth largest network of railways globally, about 71% of inland cargo transportation in the country happens via road, and just about 17% of cargo is moved via rail. Road transportation is not just time-consuming; it also results in



massive greenhouse gas emissions while Rail emits about one-fifth of trucks' GHG emissions.

### THE PROMISING LANDSCAPE

As per the Ministry of Railways, the Government

has set a target of 33% emissions intensity reduction, with the transport sector being one of the key sectors with substantial emission mitigation potential. One of the most vital transportation emissions mitigation strategies agreed to by the

Government of India was increasing the share of Indian Railways in the movement of freight from the current ~35-36% to 45% by 2030. To achieve this, Indian Railways has prepared a National Rail Plan (NRP) for India - 2030.

There has been a massive investment lined up towards the development of Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs), which is touted as the most important step towards increasing the efficiency of this sector. The first phase of the DFCs project alone is estimated to reduce emissions by about 457-million-ton CO2 over a 30-year period. Looking at the promising potential this project holds, in this year's Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated

Rs27,482 crore to the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCC) for the financial year 2023-24 (FY24). As a result, the regular operation of freight trains has been started on the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC), the country's largest railway line for freight and almost 60% of the freight trains operations on the main New Delhi-Howrah (up to Chunar) have switched on to EDFC.

Additionally, modal integration across, rail, road, and sea freight and the investments for better train-port-road integration are also important factors that will reinforce the Indian rail freight industry. To top it all, robust private sector investments and the public-private

partnership for project financing are only accentuating this shift. Railways are also working to improve energy efficiency for both diesel and electric traction to further reduce GHG emissions.

Though capturing a smaller share compared to road transportation as of date, a swift switch from road to rail would mean lesser emissions, lesser congestion on roads, effective utilization of all transportation modes and a highly efficient end-to-end logistical network. With policymakers fast acting to advance the rail infrastructure, a golden opportunity awaits the logistics players to capture major market share by acing their rail freight proposition.

(The writer is President-CJ DARCL Logistics)











# RAIN PLAYS SPOILSPORT IN IPL FINAL



## Rayudu announces retirement from IPL

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

Former India ODI specialist and Chennai Super Kings regular Ambati Rayudu on Sunday announced that the IPL final against Gujarat Titans here will be his last game in cash-rich league.

Rayudu, who had retired from international cricket after being overlooked for the 2019 World Cup in England, had a couple of years back announced his retirement from domestic cricket only to retract his decision later.

However, in a tweet on Sunday, the 38-year-old Hyderabad said that there won't be any U-turn this time around after scoring 139 runs in 15 games.

"2 great teams mind csk, 204 matches, 14 seasons, 11 playoffs, 8 finals, 5 trophies. Hopefully 6th tonight. It's been quite a journey. I have decided that tonight's final is going to be my last game in the IPL. I truly have enjoyed playing this great tournament. Thank u all. No u turn," Rayudu tweeted.

In 55 ODIs for India, Rayudu scored 1694 runs with three hundreds and 10 fifties at an average of 47-plus.

It was in T20 cricket, however, where he made a big name having been a vital cog in the CSK set-up for close to a decade.

Before Sunday's final, he has played 203 IPL games, scoring 4329 runs at a strike-rate of 127 with 22 half-centuries and a single century. The 602 runs in the 2018 season for CSK was his best effort.

However, it is understood that once he retires from Indians domestic scene, Rayudu is free to ply his trade in various franchise leagues as well as veterans' T20 tournaments.

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

The toss for the Indian Premier League final between Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings was delayed due to heavy down-pour here on Sunday.

It began drizzling just about half an hour before the

toss time and the ground staff was quick to cover the centre with two separate layers of sheets, along with covering the areas of run-ups for fast bowlers.

But the intensity of down-pour picked up heavily, along with thunder and lightning soon, and the fans who had

filled up the stands in large numbers, were forced to look for cover and retreat into the stands.

Huge puddles of water were also seen adjacent to the centre strip which remained uncovered.

The match could be pushed to a reserve day — the

next day that is — if even a five-over game is not possible by the cut-off time of 12:06 AM local time. The cut-off time for start of Super Over is 12:56 AM.

Additionally, no overs would be lost if the game starts by 9:40PM local time.

As per the rules, if the IPL

final is affected by rains or washed out on the day of the match, the game can be played on the next day which is treated as a reserve day.

But if the reserved day is also affected by weather conditions or is washed out, the team which ends at the first position after the league

round, wins the title.

The defending champions Gujarat Titans had topped the points table after the 70-match league round, finishing as the only team to have won 10 out of 14 matches and 20 points. Chennai Super Kings had finished second with 17 points.

## I didn't expect this would happen but Gopisir kept pushing me: Prannoy after win

**PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR**

Sleep-deprived Indian shuttler HS Prannoy had almost given up on winning his next title and breaking a six-year long drought before chief national coach Pullela Gopichand instilled in him the belief that he remains a force to reckon with.

"I think there are too many emotions. The last six years have been too much of a roller-coaster. I didn't expect that it will happen after six years to be honest. I mean if you would have asked me in 2017 I don't think I would have told you that I will win in 2023. So lots of mixed emotions," Prannoy said after the title triumph.

"Thanks to all the coaches, support staff and Gopi sir (chief national coach Pullela Gopichand). He kept telling me that it will happen one day and I should keep believing," he added.

The 30-year-old Prannoy, who is ranked ninth in the world and India's best at the moment, also thanked his former teammate RMV Gurusai Dutt, who turned to coaching after retiring in June last year, for helping him out in his hour of need.

"Thanks to Guru, last four months we have worked really hard and the results finally came out."

The BWF World Tour is divided into six levels, namely World Tour Finals, four Super 1000, six Super 750, seven Super 500, and 11 Super 300 in order. One other cate-



gory of tournament, the BWF Tour Super 100 level, also offers ranking points.

The Super 500 is a Grade 2 (level 4) event in the BWF tournament ranking system.

He said he has not slept well in the last three days.

"I haven't been sleeping well for last three days, my team was a bit worried that I am not sleeping. There was so much emotion, you are excited

to come out and play in front of this beautiful crowd."

Prannoy was instrumental in India's epic Thomas Cup victory last year but an individual title has eluded him since the 2017 US Open Grand Prix Gold.

This week however, Prannoy gave ample display of his fortitude as he outfoxed his opponents -- world number five Chou Tien Chen, All England champion Li Shi Feng and Japan's Kenta Nishimoto -- in three games on way to the title clash.

"The draw was really tough for me, I had tough matches. I had to really dig deep in the four matches. It all went to the wire. It shows how much I was patient and my fitness was also decent.

"To beat such players is not easy. The conditions were slow and I had to hang in there and I did that.

"The first thing is to keep aside the competition within ourselves, the competition is with myself. I think it is really important for me to be consistent whatever I do and results will follow."

Prannoy has battled a series of injuries and health issues before turning his career around in the back end of 2021.

"I need to be smart enough which tournaments to play and which to back out and train in between the tournaments, these are the key points because the number of tournaments are really really high and we have to be smart.

"It (the triumph) gives a lot of insights. When you dig deep and win such matches, that helps you find a lot of hidden gems, you will be discovering those after a long time and realise that you can do that.

"That's what happened in Malaysia, I could discover a lot of things and it will give me confidence to train and be ready for next few events."



## Hard to see past Kohli: Hussey on India's key players for WTC final

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Michael Hussey feels it is "hard to see past Virat Kohli" if India are to win the World Test Championship final against Australia at the Oval in London from June 7.

Besides Kohli, skipper Rohit Sharma will be key to India's chances in the WTC final, the former Australia batter said.

"It's hard to see past Virat Kohli. He (Kohli) is obviously coming back into some great form again in all forms of the game really, so both he and

Rohit Sharma with the bat are going to be important for India," Hussey told the ICC website.

Kohli is back to his best and recently scored back-to-back hundreds in the IPL for Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Kohli has reached the UK along with Mohammad Siraj, and the team is training at Kent Cricket Ground ahead of the final. India recently won the home series against Australia but the WTC final will be a different ball game, reckons Hussey.

"It is going to be played in England, so English conditions will be different to the recent series in India, so I think the fast bowlers are going to be important." Pat Cummins (is a key for Australia) and Josh Hazlewood might be fit again which would be nice for Australia.

"But India have got so many great bowlers as well. You've got (Mohammed) Siraj and (Mohammed) Shami and obviously the spinners with (Ravindra) Jadeja and (Ravichandran) Ashwin as well. It's a world-class attack and the Aussies are going to have to be at their best to beat them."

## Verstappen wins Monaco GP to extend F1 championship lead

**AP ■ MONACO**

Formula One champion Max Verstappen's lights-to-flag victory win at the Monaco Grand gave the Red Bull driver his fourth victory of the season and extended his championship lead on Sunday.

Spanish veteran Fernando Alonso was a season's best second for Aston Martin as he collected a fifth podium in six races, while Frenchman Esteban Ocon secured third place and a rare podium for Alpine.

For most of the race, Verstappen coasted on a dry

and narrow track where overtaking is the hardest in F1.

But an incident-free race in Monaco is rare and heavy rain played havoc with about 20 of the 78 laps left. Some drivers had pitted for the wrong medium tires shortly before the downpour and slid around.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr. Glided sideways into the barriers and was lucky not to damage his Ferrari. Kevin Magnussen lost control of his Haas and Lance Stroll retired after damaging his Aston Martin.

Red Bull had wisely put Verstappen on the versatile



and more suited to the wet conditions intermediates on Lap 56 and they carried him to his second win in Monaco. The first was in 2021.

Lewis Hamilton finished fourth for Mercedes and picked up a point for fastest lap. His teammate George Russell was fifth, having earlier almost slammed into Sergio Perez's Red Bull as visibility worsened. A serious crash was somehow avoided in a hectic few minutes before the rain eased off.

On Saturday, Verstappen just edged out Alonso to deny the 41-year Spaniard his first

pole for 11 years.

Perez, who won the race last year, started from last after a clumsy crash in qualifying and finished 16th.

Verstappen's 39 F1 wins have all been with Red Bull since his first on debut for the team at the Spanish GP in 2016 when he became the youngest F1 winner at 18 years old.

He set a team record for wins as he passed former Red Bull driver Sebastian Vettel's previous tally of 38 victories for the team when he won four straight titles from 2010-13.

## Asia Cup: BCCI unlikely to support hybrid model

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The BCCI will not support Najam Sethi's proposed hybrid model of hosting the Asia Cup wherein four preliminary round and two super four games will be held in Pakistan with India's matches and the final taking place in a neutral country.

It is understood that the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) chairman Jay Shah, who is also the secretary of the BCCI, during an informal discussion with some of the continental body's members in Ahmedabad has made the Indian board's stand clear. For a tournament to happen at a neutral venue, the all-powerful executive body of the ACC needs to take the final call, and therein lies the problem.

"Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan have already told the PCB that they have no

issues playing their games in Pakistan. But India is not keen on supporting the hybrid model. Now, the impasse hasn't been broken and the final decision will only be taken at ACC executive board meeting that Jay (Shah) will have to summon," an ACC board member said.

The ACC executive body has 25 members -- 5 Test-playing nations (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan), 3 with ODI and T20I status and 17 more with only T20 status. The hybrid model does have a logistical issue. What Pakistan Cricket Board chief Najam Sethi has told the ACC is that having the Asia Cup in two countries means double mileage for broadcasters but the BCCI feels that it will be a logistical nightmare considering the UAE might not be the neutral venue.



## India play out 1-1 draw against Pakistan

**PTI ■ SALALAH**

Indians went on the offensive from the word go and kept Pakistan defence under pressure with repeated forays.

However, India broke the deadlock in the second quarter when Sharda Nand brilliantly converted a penalty corner to give his team the much-needed lead.

Desperate to find the equaliser, Pakistan started with an attacking mindset after the change of ends and the move paid off as Basharat scored a field goal a minute from the third quarter to level the scores.

Keen to regain the advantage, India came out all guns blazing in the fourth quarter, while Pakistan relied more on counters.

However, despite both teams coming close to scoring quite a few times, neither side was able to find the back of the net as the match ended in a 1-1 draw.

India will Thailand in their last pool game on Sunday.

India played out a thrilling 1-1 draw against arch-rivals Pakistan in their third Pool A game to continue their unbeaten run in the men's Junior Asia Cup hockey tournament in Salalah here.

Sharda Nand Tiwari (24th minute) gave India the lead in the high-stake match on late Saturday night but it was nullified by Basharat Ali in the 44th minute.

The result means India, with seven points from three matches, stays second in Pool A behind Pakistan (same points) but are ahead on goal difference.

Japan, who beat Chinese Taipei 10-1 earlier on Saturday, are third with six points from three outings.

India had earlier thrashed Chinese Taipei 18-0 before beating Japan 3-1 in their second match.

On Saturday night, the