

OPINION 6 LESSONS IN FORGIVENESS FROM MANDELA'S LIFE

WORLD 8 'GAZA CEASE-FIRE TALKS HAVEN'T PAUSED'

MONEY 10 CONTINUE 45-DAY MSME PAYMENT RULE, INDUSTRY BODY URGES FM

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DONALD TRUMP DUCKS DEATH

PTI ■ CHICAGO/WASHINGTON

Former US president Donald Trump survived an attempt on his life on Saturday when a young shooter fired multiple shots at him at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, injuring his right ear, days before he was to accept the Republican Party's nomination for the presidential election in November. Trump, 78, was speaking at the packed outdoor election rally in Butler town when bullets started flying. Video footage showed him grabbing his ear as shots were fired. The crowd started screaming behind him and then someone yelled "Get down, get down, get down, get down!" as Secret Service agents piled on top of Trump to shield him. The shooting created chaos with people in the back of the venue immediately running to the exits. As blood gushed from his ear, Trump was then rushed off stage. He boldly pumped his fist into the air and told the crowd to "fight!" He was then whisked away in a car to a Pittsburgh-area hospital. "Let me get my shoes," Trump said as he was escorted to the safe place. The shooting, which left one spectator dead and two others critically injured, is being investigated as an attempted assassination. The male attacker was also shot and killed by a member of the



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump is helped off the stage at a campaign event in Butler, Pa., on Saturday

AP/PTI

Secret Service. A spokesperson for the Trump Campaign said the former president is "fine" after the "heinous act." The gunman was identified by the FBI as 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park. He was registered to vote as a Republican. In a post on his Truth Social

social media account, Trump elaborated on what happened and described his injuries, "It is incredible that such an act can take place in our Country. Nothing is known at this time about the shooter, who is now dead. I was shot with a bullet that pierced the upper part of my right ear. I knew immediately that something

was wrong in that I heard a whizzing sound, shots, and immediately felt the bullet ripping through the skin. Much bleeding took place, so I realised then what was happening. GOD BLESS AMERICA!" Trump wrote. The incident happened two days before the start of the Republican National

Convention in Milwaukee, where Trump will formally become the party's nominee for the November 5 presidential election. In a news conference, Kevin Rojek, FBI special agent in charge of the Pittsburgh office, said it was "surprising" the gunman was able to fire multiple shots.

"This evening, we had what we're calling an assassination attempt against our former President Donald Trump," said Rojek. "We're still working through the security apparatus that the Secret Service had in place, what potentially happened," he added. "There's going to be a long investigation into exactly what took place and how the individual was able to get access to the location, what type of weapon he had. All that is really days, weeks, and months of investigation." Bomb-clearing assets were deployed at the scene of the shooting out of an "abundance of caution," said the FBI. "It's primarily standard procedure of any suspicious packages. In this case, there was identification of a suspicious package around where the shooter was and so we deployed, in an abundance of caution, bomb assets to make sure those were cleared for investigators to move safely in the area," said Rojek. Rojek said the crime scene is still active. When asked whether authorities knew what kind of gun was used or how many shots were fired, George Bivens of the Pennsylvania State Police followed up by saying that officials had "a good idea of what the weapon was" but that it was still part of the investigation.

Continued on Page 2



Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath with Dy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya along with party leaders Bhopendra Singh Chaudhary, Smriti Irani, Arun Singh and others during the BJP Uttar Pradesh Working Committee meeting, in Lucknow

PTI

Religious festivals must be observed within rules: Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasised on Sunday that all celebrations must strictly adhere to rules and regulations set by the authorities. He said those unable to comply should refrain from participating and remain indoors. "Remember, during Muharram, the roads used to be empty. Today, Muharram is being celebrated, it is not even known. In the name of Tazia, houses were demolished, peepal trees were cut, wires were removed from the roads. Today it is said no poor person's hut will be removed. "Today it is said the Government will make

rules, if you want to celebrate the festival, then celebrate it under the rules, otherwise sit at home," Yogi said addressing the party workers in the meeting of Uttar Pradesh BJP Working Committee in Lucknow which was led by BJP chief and Union Health Minister J P Nadda. Yogi's statement holds significant weight in light of the upcoming Muharram processions across the State and nation. Last week, during a visit to Gorakhpur, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of preventing the carrying of arms and ammunition during Muharram. He also called for strict vigilance over processions, stipulating that they should only proceed with written permission. Continued on Page 2

Jagannath temple's Ratna Bhandar reopens after 46 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PURI/NEW DELHI

Ratna Bhandar, the revered treasury of the 12th-century Jagannath temple in Puri, was reopened on Sunday after 46 years for an inventory of valuables and the repair of its structure. The members of a committee set up by the State Government for the purpose entered the temple around 12 pm, and after performing rituals, the treasury was reopened, they said. The reopening of the Ratna Bhandar became a major political issue during the recently held Assembly elections in the State. Targeting the then-ruling BJD over its missing keys, the BJP had promised that it would make efforts to reopen the treasury if it won the polls. "On the wish of Lord Jagannath, the Odia community, with the identity of 'Odia Asmita', has started making efforts to move forward," the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said. "On your wish, the four gates of the Jagannath temples were earlier opened. "Today, on your wish, the Ratna Bhandar was opened after 46 years for a greater purpose," it said in the post, which was shared at 1.28 pm, the auspicious moment decided to reopen the treasury.



Devotees during the reopening of 'Ratna Bhandar' at the Jagannath Temple, in Puri, on Sunday. Ratna Bhandar, the revered treasury of the 12th century Jagannath temple, was reopened on Sunday after 46 years for an inventory of valuables and the repair of its structure, officials said

PTI

Among the 11 people present when the treasury was reopened were former Orissa HC judge Biswanath Rath, Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Arabinda Padhee, ASI Superintendent DB Gadanayak and a representative of Puri's titular king 'Gajapati Maharaja', officials said. Also among them were four servitors, Patjoshi Mohapatra, Bhandar Mekap, Chadhaukarana and Deulikaran, who took care of the rituals, they said. Though the treasury was reopened, the inventory of valuables will not be carried out immediately,

Padhee said before entering the temple. The ornaments and other valuables kept in the inner and outer chambers of the treasury would be moved to a temporary strong room in wooden chests, he said. The temporary strong room has been identified and all required arrangements, including installation of CCTV cameras, have been ensured, he said. "The inventory work will not start today. It will be done after getting approval of the government on the engagement of valuers, goldsmiths and other experts. Continued on Page 2



Cauvery River issue takes centre stage

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

It is time for the short term Kuruvai crop in the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu and the Cauvery River issue is back in the forefront. The Kaveri Water Regulation Committee (KWRC) on Thursday asked the Government of Karnataka to release one thousand million cubic feet (TMCF) of water every day to Tamil Nadu from July 12 to July 31 so that the Kuruvai farming operations in the four districts of the lower riparian State of Tamil Nadu (Tiruvavur, Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Tiruchirappalli) could be taken up. But Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah ruled out the possibility of the upper riparian State releasing any water to TN before July 31. "Although normal rainfall has been forecast for Karnataka, there is a 28 per cent shortfall in inflow to all the four dams in the Cauvery river basin. Continued on Page 2

Fraudulent e-notices: MHA alerts users



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The cyber crime unit of the Union Home Ministry on Sunday said on receiving a suspicious e-notice from a Government office on the email, people should check the internet to authenticate the name of the official named in it and get in touch with the mentioned department. According to the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), the users should be aware of "fake emails" sent in the garb of a Government e-notice. This could be a con that can make people "a victim of cyber fraud", it warned. The I4C suggested countermeasures before clicking or responding to such emails: Check if the email has originated from an authentic Government website that ends with "gov.in"; check the

internet for information regarding officials named in the email; and call the mentioned department to verify the email received. Early this month, the Union Finance Ministry had issued a public advisory alerting email users about fraudulent e-mails bearing names, signatures, stamps and logos of Delhi Police Cyber Crime and Economic Offence, Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB), the Intelligence Bureau and Cyber Cell of Delhi. A letter attached to these emails, as per the advisory issued on July 4, made allegations of child pornography, pedophilia, cyber pornography, sexually explicit exhibit etc. Against the receivers of the said e-mails, the fraudsters, it said, use different e-mail addresses for sending such fake e-mails with attachment. "Receiver of any such email should be aware about this fraudulent attempt. It is informed to the general public that any such e-mails with the attachment should not be responded to and such cases may be reported to the nearest police station/cyber police station," it said. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), an organisation under the ministry of home affairs (MHA) to deal with cyber crimes in a comprehensive manner, had issued a similar advisory in August last year cautioning users against such counterfeit emails impersonating the name of its CEO bearing subject titles like 'urgent notification' and 'court notification'. "These misleading emails are targeted to various Government offices, individuals and falsely accuse them of cyber crimes, urging them to respond," the I4C said. The logos of I4C, IB and Delhi Police used in these emails are "intentionally fake, deceptive and created with malicious motives," it said. Several officers in the national Capital's Central Secretariat received such suspicious emails last week which were falsely stated to have been issued by a person working at "MEA Messaging Team NIC High Commission of India."

Spain eyes record fourth Football win at EURO 2024

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

Spain's journey to the Euro 2024 final has been nothing short of remarkable, and a large part of their success can be attributed to the breakout performances of their young players on Sunday, as they face England at the Olympiastadion in Berlin, all eyes will be on whether this new generation can top their names with Fernando Torres along with Jordi Alba, pique and in history by clinching a record breaking fourth European Championship title for Spain. Leading the charge is 17-year-old winger Lamine Yamal, who became the youngest player ever to score in a Euro match during Spain's dominant run. Yamal's electrifying pace and

trickery on the left flank have caused havoc for opposing defenses throughout the tournament. Alongside him, Nico Williams has provided a constant threat on the right wing, his direct style and powerful runs offering a perfect counterpoint to Yamal's flair. Spain has been dominant throughout the competition, winning all six of their group stage and knockout matches. Their impressive performance has made them the clear favourites for the final. England, on the other hand, has had a more challenging journey, with some close calls along the way. However, they have shown great determination and will be looking to cause an upset



against the Spanish giants. Spain's teenage sensation Lamine Yamal stole the show in the Euro 2024 Semi Final against France, overshadowing the experienced Kylian

Mbappé. Yamal, who just turned 17 on Saturday. When France was leading, on the 21 minute Yamal scored a phenomenal long-range goal that equalised for Spain. His

performance was widely praised by fans and former players, with many drawing comparisons to football legends. After the Semifinal dominance

by Spain Kylian Mbappe requested Lamine Yamal's jersey after the Euro 2024 Semi Final match between France and Spain. This sportsmanship gesture highlighted the mutual respect between the young talents despite the competitive nature of the encounter. Veterans like Alvaro Morata and Rodri provided stability and leadership at crucial moments. Their experience helped guide the younger players and ensure composure under pressure. Coach Luis de la Fuente infuses a clear tactical approach that maximised Spain's strengths. Their focus on ball control and patience in attack proved difficult for opponents to break down. While England under the

Gareth Southgate who's been in the roller coaster patch of his tenure in this tournament. He faced criticism for a perceived negative approach early on, with some fans even throwing cups at him after a goal less draw. However, England reached the Final, and Southgate's emotional response to their semifinal win showed a turnaround in fan sentiment. This infusion of youthful exuberance breathed new life into the Spanish national team. Their fearless approach and technical quality have been a joy to watch and now they stand on the brink of glory. Their dominant run has sent a strong message in world football, placing Spain in among the front runners in the next FIFA World Cup 2026.

Rare honour for late Karunanidhi from BJP

₹100 coins issued on DMK founder's birth centenary

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Though late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi (1924-2018) was not honoured with any civilian awards during his lifetime, the BJP-led Central Government has issued commemorative coins of Rs 100 denomination in connection with the birth centenary of the most colorful politician of the country. Though the late leader had no love lost for the Hindutva party, he had no qualms in being an alliance partner of the BJP during 1999-2003. Karunanidhi also served as the president of the DMK from 1965 to 2011. The decision by the union finance ministry to release the commemorative coin follows the request made by Chief Minister M K Stalin who took over as party president in connection with his late father's birth centenary. The question being asked is how many people in Tamil Nadu would be able to afford to own the commemorative coin priced at Rs 100 as the DMK is known as the party of poor and downtrodden. The word has gone around the State that the possession of the coin would bring wealth and prosperity to the people who keep the coin in



Karunanidhi with his third wife Rajathi

File photo

front of the late leader's picture, said Arjun Sampath, foudner president, Hindu Makkal Katchi. Grapevine is that leaders like Vaiko and K Veeramani, who are known rationalists have ordered dozens of commemorative coins to be kept in their houses and offices as they believe the "collectors' item" could lead to prosperity. The release of commemorative coins at this juncture assume significance as Karunanidhi was a victim of the internal emergency declared in 1975 by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The DMK government led by him was dismissed by the President of India under Article 356 of the Constitution. Karunanidhi, a master tactician in making political moves to protect his party and the extended family (consisting of three wives and six children. Hailed as a stickler of democratic values, Karunanidhi ensured that there was no chal-

lenge to his sons, daughters and nephews from any sources in the DMK. Though his tenure as chief minister came to an end in 2011, Karunanidhi was given a State burial at Chennai's Marina Beach, an honor reserved for persons dying in office. CN Annadurai, M G Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa breathed their last while in office and they have their last resting place at the Marina Beach. When the SAIADMK government led by Edappadi Palaniswamy refused permission for the Karunanidhi clan to intern him at the Beach, Stalin approached the Madras High Court and made the Court deliver a verdict granting permission to bury the former chief minister along the Bay of Bengal shore. Sources in the DMK said that the party would approach the President of India to bestow the Bharat Rathna, the country's highest civilian honor on the late leader.

Modi's followers on X cross 100 millions mark



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The number of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's followers on his X handle crossed the 100-million mark on Sunday, registering an impressive growth of nearly 30 million in the past three years, officials said. He is already the most followed head of government on the social media platform globally. Officials noted that his followers are quite a few times more in number in comparison to most followed opposition leaders like AAP's Arvind Kejriwal and Congress' Rahul Gandhi who have 27.5 million and 26.4 million followers respectively. Among other heads of government with a large following are US President Joe Biden (38.1 million) and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Eedogen (21.5 million). In a post, Prime Minister Modi said, "A hundred million on

@X! Happy to be on this vibrant medium and cherish the discussion, debate, insights, people's blessings, constructive criticism and more. Looking forward to an equally engaging time in the future as well. An official said, "PM Modi has more followers even compared to active global athletes like Virat Kohli (64.1 million), Brazilian footballer Neymar Jr (63.6 million) and American basketball player LeBron James (52.9 million)." "He is ahead of even celebrities like Taylor Swift (95.3 million), Lady Gaga (83.1 million), and Kim Kardashian (75.2 million)," the official said. He said world leaders often eagerly engage with Modi on social media because connecting with him significantly boosts their own follower base, engagements, views and reposts. This was seen recently in Italy as well as Austria, the official added.

Don't believe in fake narratives on Constitution: Ajit to NCP workers

PTI ■ BARAMATI (MAHARASHTRA)

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Sunday asked NCP workers to trust him and not to believe in fake narratives, including about attempts to change the Constitution, spread by opponents. "Till we are alive no one will dare to change the Constitution," he said addressing workers of his Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) at Baramati in Pune district.

Pawar said he believes in using power for the welfare of the poor, farmers and women and the state budget presented by him (last month during the monsoon session of the legislature highlights this objective. "Poverty alleviation and development is my party's agenda while my opponents have focused on spreading fake narratives," he said and asked his supporters to trust him. The deputy CM said he has asked Union minister Amit Shah to increase the MSP (minimum support price) of sugar, and added that one should not believe the "fake propaganda" that milk powder and onion were being imported. He said the NCP and the ruling Mahayuti allies (which also comprises BJP and Shiv Sena led by CM Eknath Shinde) will ensure no injustice is meted to anyone from any caste or reli-



gion. "Being emotional will not ensure development but we have to work tirelessly," he said adding that as national president of the NCP, he will be touring the state till the assembly polls, which are due in October. Pawar said the Ladki Bahin scheme (for financial assistance to women), and measures like three free LPG cylinders, free college education for girls, free electricity for farmers and skilled entrepreneurship for youth were included in the budget with an aim to ensure the welfare of all sections of the society. Speaking on the occasion, senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal claimed that on the day (July 9) an all-party meeting was convened by CM Shinde to discuss the reservation issue, there was a call from Baramati at 5 pm and all opposition lead-

ers boycotted the meet. Baramati is the bastion of opposition NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar. Bhujbal said, "Shouldn't senior leaders take a stand on resolving caste tensions. We are witnessing caste divisions among Marathas and OBCs (Other Backward Classes). We want Marathas to get reservations but not at the cost of OBCs." The all-party meeting on the Maratha reservation issue was convened by the government ahead of the assembly polls due in October to discuss the community's demands, including quota under the OBC category. Last month, OBC activists Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare went on a hunger strike demanding that the draft notification that gives Kumbi certificates to Marathas to avail quota benefits under the OBC category be scrapped.

Infiltration bid foiled, three terrorists killed along LoC in Kashmir



MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Alert troops of the Indian Army Sunday foiled a major infiltration bid by neutralising three heavily armed terrorists along the line of control in the Keran sector of the North Kashmir district of Kupwara. According to reports the operation was still going on in the area. Srinagar-based Chinar Corps headquarters in a post on X (earlier Twitter) confirmed three terrorists have been eliminated in the ongoing anti-infiltration operation along the LoC in the Keran sector. The troops have also recovered war-like stores and sophisticated automatic weapons, the spokesman of the Chinar Corps stated in the post. Meanwhile, the security forces remain on their tenterhooks

across the Jammu region amid reports of sightings of suspected persons coming from the border areas of Akhnoor and Kathua regularly. Search operations continued in Badnota, Machedi, Lohai Malhar and surrounding areas of Billawar in Kathua district in search of terrorists responsible for the attack on two Army vehicles in which five soldiers were martyred and five others were injured on Monday. Several suspects have been picked up by the police for questioning to reach the guides who helped terrorists carry out the attack. To instill confidence among the local population, the security forces have started deploying more troops in vulnerable areas, especially along the traditional infiltration routes, to check fresh infiltration bids from across the border.

Suvendu stages dharna outside Raj Bhavan against post-poll clashes



PTI ■ KOLKATA

Senior BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari and party workers staged a dharna outside the Raj Bhavan here on Sunday against alleged post-poll clashes in the state. Adhikari, the Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly and other BJP leaders like Tapas Roy, Rudranil Ghosh and others participated in the protest along with 300 saffron party workers. The Calcutta High Court had allowed the BJP to stage a dharna outside the Raj Bhavan on July 14 for four hours starting from 10 am. Adhikari had moved the high court seeking permission to hold the protest outside the Raj Bhavan citing an instance that Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee had staged a similar protest at the same spot on October five last year.

Gaurav Gogoi to be Congress' Deputy leader in Lok Sabha



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Congress' Gaurav Gogoi will be the party's deputy leader in the Lok Sabha and a letter about the decision has been sent to Speaker Om Birla. Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi has written to Lok Sabha Speaker Birla informing him about the appointment of the deputy leader, chief whip, and two whips for the Congress party in the Lok Sabha, AICC general secretary organization K C Venugopal said on X. While Gogoi will be the party's deputy leader in the Lower House, eight-time MP from Kerala Kodikunnil Suresh will be the party's chief whip, he said. Virudhunagar MP Manickam Tagore and Kishanganj MP Mohammad Jawed will be the party's whips in the Lok Sabha, he said. Earlier, the party had named Rahul Gandhi as the Leader of Opposition who was subsequently appointed to the post. "Guided by LoP Rahul Gandhi ji, the Congress and INDIA parties will energetically champion the people's causes in the Lok Sabha," Venugopal said.

Jagannath temple's... CRPF jawan martyred in...

From Page 1 "Our first priority will be to ensure the safety of the structure of the treasury. After the completion of the repair works, the valuables will be brought back and then, the process for inventory will be carried out," he added. Padhee said three keys of the outer chamber were available -- one was with the Gajapati Maharaj, another one was with the SJTA and the third one was with a servitor. After the opening of the inner chamber, the original key of which was missing, it will be sealed and the new key will be kept in the district treasury under the supervision of the collector, he said. Six wooden chests with brass interiors were brought to the temple for moving the valuables. The chests, made of teak wood, were 4.5 feet in length, 2.5 feet in height and 2.5 feet in breadth, an official said. "The temple authority on July 12 had asked us to build 15 such chests. After working for 48 hours, we have completed six chests," said one of the workers who made them. The treasury was last opened in 1978. In the morning, Justice Rath and Padhee offered prayers before Lord Jagannath and his siblings at the Gundicha temple for the smooth completion of the works.

From Page 1 A vehicle belonging to security personnel has been damaged in the gun attack, he added. Manipur has been rocked by ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities since May last year, which has claimed more than 200 lives. Separately Manipur police seized arms and ammunition from Imphal East and West districts, an official statement said. One AK 56 rifle, one SLR, one locally made SLR, one .38 pistol, four 9mm pistol, one .32 pistol, two hand grenades, and 25 round of ammunition were seized by security forces during search

operations and area domination conducted in Heingang Ching in Imphal East district on Saturday, the statement issued by Manipur Police said. Police during an operation at Khuyathong and Nagamapal area of Imphal West district seized one excalibur rifle, 7.62 mm Ar (GHAATAK) and one MA-3, MK-II rifle with ammunition on Friday, it said. Meanwhile, police arrested two persons involved in theft of a vehicle and seized one .45 pistol and one 9mm pistol along with live ammunition from their possession in Imphal West district on Saturday, the statement said.

Religious festivals must be observed within rules...

From Page 1 He stressed on the need to preserve existing traditions and cautioned against initiating any new ones and simultaneously said same kind of decorum and discipline should be exhibited in the forthcoming month long Kanwar Yatra. The Sunday's meeting was also the first major meeting of the state BJP unit after the Lok Sabha polls, in which the party won 33 seats, down from 62 it clinched in 2019. Uttar Pradesh sends 80 members to the Lower House of Parliament. Former Union Minister Smriti Irani, who lost her constituency - Amethi - was also present at the meeting. Boosting the morale of the party workers Nadda said results of the 2024 general elections have shown that whatever parties are there, if they are capable in the Northeast, then they are zero in Central India. "If some party is capable in North India, then it is not

seen in South India. If it is capable in West India, then there is no one to even take its name in the East, and if someone is capable in the Center, then there is no one to take its name anywhere in the North, East, West, South. BJP is the only all-India party, it is everywhere be it East, West, North or South India..." said the BJP chief. The Union Minister said only the BJP is working on the 'mantra' of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas'. "We have to be confident and we also have to keep introspecting within ourselves. There are 1500 big and small political parties in India. None of them have internal democracy. Most of them are 'parivarvadi' parties and they are nurturing themselves and their family," Nadda said. "...90 times Congress has toppled elected governments. BJP imposed President's rule in Jammu and Kashmir for 10 years

and that too by saying in the Parliament that it is temporary and will be removed. Today, they (opposition) have started crying for democracy and have become protectors of the Constitution...It is written in the Constitution that there will be no reservation on the basis of religion. By flouting it, an attempt is being made to give reservation on the basis of religion not once but four times in Andhra Pradesh," said the party chief. Sources said issues such as public resentment against the party, leaders and workers not being heard, OBC and Dalit votes slipping away, ending the infighting within the party, removing the confusion about changing the constitution were discussed in the meeting. The saffron party, which has been on brainstorming mode after facing humiliating results in the

UP, started working on the strategies for the state assembly elections due in 2027. Uttar Pradesh state president, Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary, said BJP-led NDA will win the upcoming bypolls to 10 assembly seats. The Election Commission is yet to announce the schedule for the assembly bypolls in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh. Of the 10 assembly seats in the state were bypoll is due, nine fell vacant after the MLAs were elected to the Lok Sabha in the recent polls. The Sisma assembly seat fell vacant following Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA Irfan Solanki's disqualification after he was sentenced to a seven-year term in an arson case. By-elections are to be held in Uttar Pradesh's Karhal, Milkpur, Katehari, Kundarki, Ghaziabad, Khair, Meerapur, Phulpur, Majhawan and Sisamau assembly seats.

Cauvery River issue takes centre stage

From Page 1 There is only 60 TMCFT of water in all the four reservoirs," Siddaramaiah said immediately after the KWRC directive. The Karnataka Chief Minister has convened an all-party meeting for Sunday evening to take stock of the situation as farming community in Tamil Nadu is agitated over the issue. At the time of going to Press, the meeting was in progress and sources in Karnataka Government told The Pioneer that the State would approach Kaveri Water Management Authority against the KWRC directive. Karnataka deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar, told media persons that the State has lot of issues to be addressed as there is water shortage in the four main reservoirs. "We have to

resolve the water shortage in Mandya district and there is severe shortage of drinking water in the State," said Shivakumar. As on date, the chances of Karnataka releasing more water to Tamil Nadu look bleak. The opposition BJP and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu has pulled up the DMK government led by M K Stalin for its callous attitude towards the problems faced by the farmers in the State. Arupathi Kalyanam, Kaveri Delta Farmers Welfare Association told The Pioneer that Karnataka has sufficient water to spare but the State is "playing politics". During the KWRC meeting, Karnataka stated that its cumulative inflow into its four reservoirs from June 1 to July 9 was 41.651 tmcft and the shortfall was 28.71%.

Shivakumar, who holds the department of water resources said the State does not have water to spare. "We do not have water. There is no water, no rain, let us pray for rain," said the Karnataka strongman. Shivakumar said Karnataka does not have water even to fill its tanks. The inflow into the reservoirs in its Kaveri basin is poor, he added. The Delta region, as these districts are known, has an area of 14.5 lakh hectares of farm land and is dependent on water from Kaveri River, the lifeline of Tamil Nadu. According to the final verdict of the Kaveri Water Dispute Tribunal, Karnataka has to release 192 TMCFT water every year to the latter's irrigation requirements.

ED posts two dozen officers across country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has posted over two dozen newly inducted and recently promoted cadre officers at various posts across its country-wide offices. A total of 29 officers have been posted in the Assistant Director, Deputy Director and Joint Director ranks over the last week by the federal probe agency. This includes the posting orders for nine ED cadre officers who were recently promoted by the Union finance ministry, making it the first time that these many officers from within the organisation were promoted to the Joint Director (JD) level. The cadre officers have been posted as JDs at ED zonal offices in Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Bhopal, Chennai, Guwahati and at the ED headquarters in Delhi.

DONALD TRUMP DUCKS DEATH

From Page 1 Bivens said that they plan to release information on what caused delays in identifying the shooter. Rojek added that the FBI has not yet identified the shooter's motive. Authorities said they believe there is no other threat. The FBI has deployed investigative agents, evidence response teams, and other personnel from across the country. The suspect fired from between 200ft and 300ft away on an elevated shed with an AR-style rifle, multiple law enforcement officers told CBS News. "As was communicated earlier this evening, President Trump is doing well and grateful to law enforcement and first responders for their fast

action," his campaign said. "President Trump looks forward to joining you all in Milwaukee as we proceed with our convention to nominate him to serve as the 47th President of the United States. As our party's nominee, President Trump will continue to share his vision to Make America Great Again," his campaign said. US President Joe Biden spoke to Trump, his November election opponent, a White House official said. The White House official did not say what the two spoke about. Biden also talked with Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro and Butler Mayor Bob Dandoy, the White House said. Biden was scheduled to be in

Delaware for the weekend but changed his plans to return to the White House. Biden earlier said that "everybody must condemn" the suspected assassination attempt. Addressing the nation about two hours after the shooting, he said "We cannot allow this to be happening," Biden said. "The idea that there's violence in America like this is just unheard of." Vice President Kamala Harris and former presidents, Barack Obama, George W Bush and Bill Clinton have condemned the attack on Trump. Harris says she is "relieved" Trump was not seriously injured. "We are praying for him, his family, and all those who have been injured and impacted by this senseless

shooting," Harris said in a statement. "Violence such as this has no place in our nation. We must all condemn this abhorrent act and do our part to ensure that it does not lead to more violence," she said. Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, also issued a statement. "Thank you for your love and prayers for my father and for the other victims of today's senseless violence in Butler, Pennsylvania," she said in a statement on X. "I am grateful to the Secret Service and all the other law enforcement officers for their quick and decisive actions today. I continue to pray for our country. I love you Dad, today and always." Republican and Democratic leaders have condemned the attack on Trump.

Man shot dead inside GTB Hospital ward

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old man was shot dead by a teenager inside a ward of the GTB Hospital in Delhi's Shahdara area on Sunday.

Taking note of the matter, Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj has blamed the Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena for deteriorating the law and order situation in the national capital. "LG sahab, in the last two years since you came to power, the law and order situation in Delhi is going from bad to worse. Criminals have lost all fear of the law. People barge into hospitals in broad daylight and shoot people. Sometimes a murder takes place inside Tihar Jail in front of the police and the police personnel just watch," he tweeted on X (formerly Twitter).

Further, Bharadwaj stated, "Sometimes a lawyer is shot in front of the court. In Jangpura, an elderly person is brutally murdered by barging into his house in broad daylight. Murders in broad daylight in



front of CCTV are now becoming a common thing in Delhi. The criminals are fearless. Delhi Police has been ruined due to its political use." The victim, Riyazuddin, who is a resident of Delhi's Khajuri area, was admitted to the hospital on June 23 and he was

undergoing treatment for abdominal infection. DCP Shahdara Surendra Choudhary said, "On Sunday, a PCR call regarding firing in ward No.24 was received at Police Station GTB Enclave. On reaching the spot, it was found that one patient namely Riyazuddin,

resident of, Khajuri, Delhi and age about 32 years was admitted on June 23 in the hospital for treatment of abdominal infection." He added that there was one shooter. Riyazuddin was injured and was later declared dead, police said.

"On reaching the spot, police found that a patient, namely Riyazuddin, received injury. He was later declared dead by doctors," he said. The officer said around 4 pm, an 18-year-old man came inside the ward and fired at Riyazuddin. "Case is being registered and teams have been formed to nab the culprit. Prima facie, the matter seems to be of personal enmity," the DCP said. Reacting to the incident, a doctor took to X and shared his concerns over the security of hospitals. "Health status in Delhi Government is a land of lawlessness and no administration. All doctors please be careful. One of the patient shot dead in a ward of GTB by strangers just now. None of them got caught," he tweeted. Further he said, "They dragged the pg resident who was assessing the patient and shot patient dead, the pg escaped somehow. In the feud between Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, patients and doctors are suffering. We need help in Delhi."

Human skeleton in car found in Bawana after Munak Canal water recedes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has recovered a damaged car with a human skeleton in it after the water decreased from the Munak Canal on Friday days after one of the branches of the canal was breached and led to flooding in the outer District's Bawana area. The officials on Saturday said that a damaged car could be visible on Thursday and Friday midnight. "The car was recovered on a stretch of the canal falling under the jurisdiction of Samai Pur Badali area," a police officer said.



The skeleton is suspected to be belonging to a man identified as Vinod, who was missing from Budh Vihar in Vijay Vihar since September 2020. Vinod was a taxi driver by profession and the Swift Dzire car in which the skeleton was recovered was registered under his name, police said. Vinod's son Ravi, who was called for the identification, identified the car and suspected that the body was of his father. Ravi said that he last conversed with his father on the night of September 30, 2020. "In the call, he told us that he was going to drop a passenger

in Dwarka and after that he would return home. But later his mobile phone went unreachable," he said. Ravi said that they approached the local police station in Vijay Vihar and lodged a missing complaint but the police could not trace him. He said that he received a call on Friday morning following which the police took them to the spot. The car belongs to us which my father bought in 2019 but I still can't believe that it was my father's body, Ravi said. He said the police has given the skeleton to them after conducting the post-mortem examination and added they will conduct

the DNA test to ascertain it was my father. "We have conducted the last rites after the post-mortem examination today. But I still hope that my father is still alive," he said. He said that it may be someone else's body, though they conducted its last rites. When contacted, a senior police officer said on the basis of circumstantial evidences it is suspected to be the body of Vinod. "But we are not ruling out any kind of possibility in the matter. Further investigations are underway," the officer said. The police said that they have preserved a sample from the body for the DNA test.

AAP raps LG over felling of trees

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP on Sunday alleged conspiracy between the BJP and the Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena to push the people of Delhi into air pollution by illegally felling hundreds of trees and called the LG a 'killer of trees'. AAP's Chief Spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar said, "He has put an end to the efforts of the Kejriwal government to make Delhi air pollution free by getting 1100 trees felled in the Satbari ridge area without the permission of the Supreme Court." Addressing a press conference, she said, "On one hand, there is the AAP government, which is planting trees, is constantly



trying to make Delhi pollution free and on the other hand, there is the LG of Delhi who secretly goes to an eco-sensitive zone and orders tree felling in contempt of the Supreme Court." "An order of the Supreme Court is required to cut even a single tree there. Without the order of the Supreme Court, cutting even a single tree in that eco-sensitive zone, in the ridge area of Satbari is not allowed," Kakkar said.

BJP to protest against power bill hike

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Sunday announced demonstrations across all 14 districts in the national Capital to protest against the imposition of the Power Purchase Agreement Charges (PPAC) and other surcharges by the AAP supported discoms resulting in excessive electricity bills. During the press conference, Sachdeva released a copy of a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) Retd. Justice Shri Jayant Nath seeking his intervention on the issue of hefty PPAC, Pension

Surcharge, Meter Charges and Load Surcharge which he claimed total up exorbitantly to make the electricity bills of consumers too hefty. The state BJP accused the Delhi government and electricity distribution companies of failing to pre-purchase electricity for peak summer and winter demands, forcing residents to bear the burden of these additional costs. "Power Discoms & Delhi Government share a mutual relation to loot the common man and share kickbacks," he alleged. Sachdeva said, "People of Delhi are facing dual hardship today, on one hand after a long summer they are facing humid monsoon weather while on the



other hand they are forced to pay up hefty electricity bills." He added that the electricity bills are too hefty not just because of summer consumption, they are hefty due to imposition of exorbitant PPAC and other charges. "Since April-May there has been

an public outcry over the bill amounts and a BJP team studied it in tandem with some power charges experts and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs)," he stated. He accused the AAP led Delhi government and power dis-

coms of doing no planning in advance. "Unfortunately the Power Discoms do no planning to meet the excessive summer or humid weather demand or the demand of deep winters. The result of this is that Delhi suddenly faces a power supply crisis around mid April and then the Delhi Government and Power Discoms wake up to buy extra power needed from the power grids or surplus states which obviously come at a premium," Sachdeva said. Calling for a judicial inquiry, Sachdeva claimed that the PPAC was not part of the approved Business Regulatory Plan for power distribution companies until 2015. He alleged that its

imposition is a result of corrupt practices between the Arvind Kejriwal government and power distribution companies. "1.5 per cent PPAC were first levelled in Delhi in 2011 illegally by the then Congress Government. The same were withdrawn in 2014 after an BJP led delegation met the then Power Minister Piyush Goel who made the Power Discoms withdraw it. The charges remained withdrawn between August 2014 to September 2015. In 2015 Arvind Kejriwal government came to power in Delhi and it supported the Power Discoms demand for reimposition of PPAC and Pension Surcharge," he alleged.

Danger to Kejriwal's health in custody, alleges AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP on Sunday alleged that there was an "acute" danger to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's health in judicial custody, alleging that it is the conspiracy of BJP. Addressing a press conference, senior AAP leader and Delhi cabinet minister Atishi said Kejriwal, who is a severe diabetic, has had his sugar levels falling dangerously low. "If Arvind Kejriwal gets a stroke or suffers brain damage then who will be responsible for it? The day the ED arrested Kejriwal, his weight was 70 kg and today his weight is 61.5 kg. Sudden weight loss is also a sign of dangerous diseases," she said, claiming the AAP chief is unable to get proper medical attention as he is in jail. Further she stated that his life in jail is in danger and alleged, "Today Arvind Kejriwal's life is in danger in jail and if anything happens to him then even God will not forgive BJP." Attacking the BJP, Atishi said, "The BJP has conspired to put Kejriwal in jail in a fake case. There is an acute danger to his



health. His weight has declined by 8.5 kgs and his sugar levels have fallen below 50 five times in sleep. This is a worrying situation especially for a diabetic." When the minister was asked whether they would approach court over the matter, she said they are consulting their lawyers and doctors over the issue. "Arvind Kejriwal has been elected as the Chief Minister of Delhi thrice. Kejriwal has provided free electricity-water, better health facilities and free bus travel to women to the people of Delhi. The BJP people cannot get the public welfare work of the

Arvind Kejriwal government done in their states, hence they have put Kejriwal in jail," Atishi said. Calling the BJP dictator, she stated, "BJP has hatched a conspiracy to attack Arvind Kejriwal's health. There is a conspiracy to kill him in jail. Even earlier, dictators used to try to kill their opponents by imprisoning them and ruining their health. The BJP central government first stopped Arvind Kejriwal's medicines and insulin. He was not allowed to meet his doctor. Only after going to the court, Arvind Kejriwal got insulin and was allowed to consult a doctor."

AAP singing same tune everyday: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Sunday took a jibe at the AAP leaders for 'singing the same tune everyday' and alleged that they are desperate for the bail of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. "The AAP leaders, desperate for Kejriwal's bail, sing the same old tune every day, what Sanjay Singh said on Saturday, Atishi has repeated it on Sunday," he alleged. Hitting out at the AAP leaders, Sachdeva said "Arvind Kejriwal and his fellow leaders are well aware that amid the increasing allegations of corruption, the AAP is losing its political relevance, in such a situation, if Arvind Kejriwal stays in jail for more days, his party can also disintegrate." Sachdeva claimed that the statements by AAP leaders are

trying to influence the opinion of the public and the court. He stated, "All the 'AAP' leaders are trying to influence not only the public but also the courts by publishing their statements in newspapers everyday but now they will not succeed in their campaign of spreading confusion and ruling." He alleged that the statements by the AAP leaders are part of 'ill health drama campaign'. "People of Delhi are witness that Kejriwal, who was out on bail before the elections, campaigned every day and no one saw him going to the hospital even for a single day but when the day of going to jail came, he again started pretending to be ill," the state BJP chief stated. Further, he added, "Kejriwal's current ill health drama campaign is also only an attempt to get bail by misleading the CBI court."

Delhi Metro to begin tenth customer satisfaction survey from today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The lifeline of the national Capital Delhi Metro will conduct its tenth customer satisfaction survey starting Monday to collect feedback from the commuters on its services and various facilities at metro stations. DMRC's Principal Executive Director of Corporate Communications Anuj Dayal stated, "Delhi Metro will be conducting the '10th Online Customer Satisfaction Survey - 2024' from July 15 (Monday) to August 14 (Wednesday). The main objective of the survey is to collect feedback from the commuters on various components of metro services and facilities." "In the month-long online survey from July 15 to August 14, detailed feedback will be obtained from participating commuters on individual topics with a comprehensive questionnaire," the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said in a statement



on Sunday. The survey will also seek suggestions for improvements if any, it added. Commuters who wish to participate in the survey can visit DMRC's official website www.Delhimetrorail.com and submit their inputs by clicking on the links mentioned on the home page. The survey, which is available in both English and Hindi, includes seven topics on which the feedback is sought, the statement said. The commuters will be able to give their feedback on important aspects of metro func-

tioning such as availability and accessibility, facilities offered to customers, information, quality of services, customer services, facilities outside metro stations, security, and comfort, among others. The DMRC said it is conducting the survey to find out what passengers think of the services being provided to them. The results of the survey will be helpful in assessing and making necessary improvements in various components of the metro facilities and services, the corporation added.

50-year-old man dies of electrocution in Dwarka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 50-year-old man died of electrocution while repairing an electric pole in the Dwarka area in Delhi. According to the police on Saturday, the deceased has been identified as Ram Naval and was an employee of Bombay Suburban Electric Supply (BSES). DCP Dwarka Ankit Singh said, "The incident took place in Dwarka's Mohan Garden area and upon receiving a PCR call from ESI hospital in Basai Darapur, the police staff of Mohan Garden reached there." Naval died due to electrocution followed by head injury as he fell from an electric pole of height of 15 feet,



the doctors of the hospital said. "Doctors said that Naval fell from a pole about 15 feet high, after he got electrocuted, on Saturday at 9.30 am. He was then referred to Ayushman Hospital in Dwarka Sector 10, where he was declared brought dead," a senior police officer said.

Singh added, "After reaching at Ayushman Hospital, police staff collected the death summary of deceased Ram Naval on which doctor had stated that Final Diagnosis at the time of death:- A/H/O electric burn injury followed by fall from height with head injury." Investigation is underway and his body has been shifted to Delhi's Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Hospital for postmortem, the officer said. A case under section 287 (Negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter) and 106(1) (Causing death by negligence) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) has been registered and investigation is underway.

Man acquitted of rape charges after nine years

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over nine years after a man was charged with rape, a court here has acquitted him, saying the testimonies of the alleged victim were not clear, cogent, credible or trustworthy, nor were her allegations corroborated by other material evidence. Additional Sessions Judge Priyanka Bhagat of Tis Hazari district court was hearing a case against Mahender, against whom the Subzi Mandi police station had lodged an FIR under penal provisions of rape and criminal intimidation. According to the prosecutrix, in 2014, Mahender took her to Nainital where he spiked her food, raped her after she fell unconscious and filmed the act. After the woman returned to Delhi, the accused



threatened to circulate the video clip and raped her again at an under-construction building after keeping her in confinement, she claimed. "...The testimonies of prose-

cutution witness 12 or victim are not clear, cogent, credible and trustworthy and the same are not corroborated by other material evidence," the court said in its verdict dated July 9.

"For the reasons stated above, this court is of the considered opinion that the prosecution has failed to prove the case against the accused beyond reasonable doubt. Hence, accused Mahender is hereby acquitted," the bench said. Underscoring that the prosecution's entire case was based on the statement of the woman, the court said there were some major contradictions in her version regarding the incident of spiking her food, which affected the credibility of her statements. There were also some improvements in her testimony, it said. "The entire case of the prosecution is that the prosecutrix was repeatedly raped on the blackmailing that accused Mahender would viral the said video, however, the said video was never brought into

evidence by the prosecution," the court said. Regarding the allegations of rape in the under-construction building, the court noted the alleged victim's testimony where she stated that when she went to meet Mahender, other people who were working there were also present. "Thus, the version of the prosecutrix that she was raped in a building where other persons were also working is not probable especially when the prosecutrix was also crying as stated in her complaint," it said. The court said there was no explanation regarding why the woman did not complain to the people working there or immediately file a police complaint and this discredited her version that she was raped under the threat to circulate the said obscene video.

Rahul encouraging violence against Modi: BJP

LoP targetted after attack on Trump

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP on Sunday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of encouraging violence against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as it targetted the Leader of Opposition following the assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump.

Expressing his support to Trump, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said right-wing leaders across the globe were being targeted by the radical left. "Physical or otherwise, right-wing leaders across the globe are now active targets of the radical left. However, these attacks will not be able to defeat the 'nation first' ideology," Sarma said in a social media post.

BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said of Rahul Gandhi's condemnation of the attack on Trump. "Third Time Fail Rahul Gandhi has often encouraged and justified violence against Prime Minister Modi, who he has lost election to, several times



now. How can India ever forget how Punjab Police, then under the Congress, deliberately compromised PM's security, when his convoy was left stranded on a flyover?"

Malviya, who posted some past comments of the Congress leader, added that Rahul has used similar rhetoric against Modi, such as calling him a "dictator", that Trump's critics like Democrat leader and US President Joe Biden have.

Following the assassination attempt, many of Trump's supporters have alleged that his demonisation by his rivals has created an atmosphere of hate against him. Malviya said Trump's critics have

made the argument that democracy is in danger from him, and likened this to India's opposition's "Constitution is in danger" pitch against Modi.

Indian democracy survived the global Left's assault and Modi is back for a third term, Malviya said.

Caste, like race in America, was weaponised to drive a wedge in Indian society. Demonising opponents and calling them dictator is also not a coincidence. In fact, the global money bag, with dangerous ideas, used the term for the first time to describe democratically elected powerful world leaders, who he couldn't control," he said.

PM, leaders express concern over attack on Donald Trump

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leaders from across party lines including Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed deep concern over the attack on former US president Donald Trump, and said violence has no place in politics and democracies.

"Deeply concerned by the attack on my friend, former President Donald Trump. Strongly condemn the incident. Violence has no place in politics and democracies. Wish him speedy recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of the deceased, those injured and the American people," Modi said in a statement.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi too expressed deep concern over the apparent assassination attempt on former US President Donald Trump, and said such acts

must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. "I am deeply concerned by the assassination attempt on former US President Donald Trump. Such acts must be condemned in the strongest possible terms," Rahul said in a social media post. The former Congress president wished Trump a swift and complete recovery.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also condemned the attack on former US President Donald Trump, and said such violence has no place in any democracy and civilised society. "Deeply appalled by the attack on former US President Donald Trump. I strongly condemn this heinous act. Such violence has no place in any Democracy and civilised society. As India stands with the American people, we offer our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased," the Congress chief said.

Meghalaya focussing on climate budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With its ample green cover threatened by climate change, Meghalaya is focusing on its dedicated climate budget and an ambitious forest conservation scheme as it revises the state action plan to combat global warming, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma has said.

Meghalaya is among a few states in India to earmark as much as 16 per cent — Rs 4,501 crore — of the total state budget for sustainability and conservation initiatives in 2024-25; up from Rs 2,456 crore in 2022-23 and Rs 3,412 crore in 2023-24. "We feel that climate change affects every aspect of life and governance. And hence it is important for not just my government but also for all governments to focus on climate change for a better future," Sangma, who is here on a visit, told PTI.

That approach is helping shape the revision of the State Action Plan for Climate Change (SAPCC) with new climate adaptation targets and sectoral climate risk mitigation strategies. According to the India State of Forest Report report of 2021,

Meghalaya has 76 per cent of its land under total forest cover. Harping on both "legacy and futuristic aspect to environmental conservation", the chief minister said Meghalaya is home to a multitude of indigenous communities who have for generations shared an intimate bond with nature.

"This relationship is enshrined in the 10,000 hectares of traditionally protected forests across the state," he said, adding, "Our focus is to involve local communities in protecting the forested areas around their habitation." About two years ago, Meghalaya introduced "Payment for Ecosystem Services" programme called "Green Meghalaya", where the communities are paid an annual grant for conserving forested areas.

"This is India's biggest such programme. In less than two years, Rs 44 crore has been released to 3,403 individuals and community beneficiaries to bring over 54,000 hectares of forests under conservation," he said.

The State now envisions conservation of 1 lakh hectares of forest under the scheme in the

next five years. An additional 6,000 hectares of forest has been conserved in a participatory approach involving communities under the 'Community Led Landscape Management Project', while yet another 22,500 hectares are being brought under afforestation under the MeghARISE project.

Speaking about linkage with the international carbon market, Sangma, the 46-year-old entrepreneur-turned-politician, said his state has made strides in connecting farmers to the international carbon market, which pays for carbon sequestration in new plantations.

"Through this initiative, we expect to conserve another 1 lakh hectares of agro-forestry areas," he added.

But it is not just the forest that gets priority when the state's action plan to combat climate change is being upgraded. Water is going to be a major focus area with the state facing a unique problem: on the one hand, there are areas with the highest rainfall in the country and, on the other, many areas suffer from lack of water.

Shah inaugurates Prime Minister's College of Excellence in MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ INDORE/NEW DELHI

Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday virtually inaugurated "Prime Minister's College of Excellence" for all 55 districts in Madhya Pradesh and hailed Narendra Modi's farsightedness in bringing in the New Education Policy (NEP) amid the aim of making India a developed country by 2047.

Speaking at the main programme held at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government Arts and Commerce College in Indore, which has been developed as a PM College of Excellence, Shah said students must download the NEP document as it will teach them to "think out of the box".

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target to make India a developed nation by 2047 when the country will celebrate 100 years of Independence. NEP will play a major role in it. In order to become a developed nation, the foundation of education



has to be strengthened and PM Modi has shown farsightedness by bringing in NEP that fulfils the needs of the next 25 years," he asserted. "NEP will get our students on par with international standards while keeping them intact with their culture. It focuses on quality and not quantity and provides an opportunity to students to think out of the box. NEP ensures their 360 degree development. It will teach students the art of living," Shah said.

The Union minister said the

55 colleges he inaugurated meet all parameters to provide top quality, practical and modern education. Shah said those on stage may not be present when India becomes a developed nation in 2047 and told the children "you will be witness when Bharat becomes great".

The Union Home Minister praised MP for being the first to implement the NEP, which he said took place when Chief Minister Mohan Yadav was state higher education minister (in the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government).

IAF recalls its contribution in Kargil war

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The IAF on Sunday recalled the force's contribution in the Kargil war 25 years ago during which it flew thousands of strike missions and helicopters sorties to bolster the Army's efforts in fighting against the adversary.

To commemorate the silver jubilee of the victory in the 1999 Kargil war, the Indian Air Force is celebrating 'Kargil Vijay Diwas Rajat Jayanti' at Air Force Station Sarsawa from July 12-26, honouring the bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice for the nation, the ministry of defence said in a statement.

On Saturday, IAF Chief Air Marshal V R Chaudhari laid a wreath at the Station War Memorial as a tribute to all air warriors who laid down their lives in service of the nation. He felicitated and interacted with many next of kin during the event.

A spectacular air show was organised that included display by the Akash Ganga Team and aerial displays by



Jaguar, Su-30 MKI and Rafale fighter aircraft. A 'Missing Man' formation was flown by Mi-17 V5 in memory of the fallen heroes. A static display of IAF helicopters such as Mi-17 V5, Cheetah, Chinook was also organised along with performances by the Air Warrior Drill Team and the Air Force Band, it said.

The event was witnessed by over 5,000 spectators, including school children, local res-

idents of Saharanpur area, veterans, civil dignitaries and personnel of defence forces establishments from Roorkee, Dehradun and Ambala. The IAF has a proud legacy of courage and sacrifice by its gallant air warriors who fought valiantly in the Kargil War 1999, which was indeed a milestone in the history of military aviation, the statement said.

"IAF operations in Kargil War ('Op Safed Sagar') are a tes-

tament to IAF's ability to overcome insurmountable challenges posed by the steep gradient and dizzying altitudes of above 16,000 ft, that posed unique operational difficulties in targeting the enemy," it said.

The swift technical modifications and on-the-job-training held IAF in good stead in its employment of air power to win this war fought at the highest battlefield of the world. "Overall, IAF flew around 5,000 strike missions, 350 reconnaissance/ ELINT missions, and around 800 escort flights. The IAF also flew over 2,000 helicopter sorties towards casualty evacuations and air transport operations," the ministry said.

Also, the 152 Helicopter Unit, 'The Mighty Armour', of Air Force Station Sarsawa played a key role during 'Op Safed Sagar'. On May 28, 1999, Sqn Ldr R Pundir, Flt Lt S Muhilan, Sgt PVNR Prasad and Sgt R K Sahu of 152 HU were tasked to fly as 'Nubra' formation for a live strike against enemy positions at Tololing. After successfully

pressing home the attack, their helicopter was hit by an enemy Stinger Missile during the break away, leading to the loss of four precious lives, it said. For this act of exceptional courage, they were awarded Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry), posthumously. Their supreme sacrifice ensured that their names forever remain etched in the annals of history of IAF forever.

The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence also posted on X a video marking 25th year of the victory of the Indian armed forces in the Kargil war. "On this day, 25 years ago, #OperationVijay was declared a resounding success. Our soldiers stood tall amidst the Kargil heights, their extraordinary bravery and heroism a source of immense national pride and honour. #25YearsofKargilVijay," it posted.

The war was declared over on July 26, 1999, after the Indian forces successfully pushed back the Pakistani forces which had stealthily occupied important heights in Ladakh.

SC to hear KCR's plea against formation of panel to probe power sector irregularities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on July 15 a plea of BRS supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao challenging a Telangana High Court order dismissing his plea to declare as "illegal" the constitution of a commission to inquire into the alleged irregularities in the power sector during his tenure as the state's Chief Minister.

The plea is listed to be heard by a bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. In his petition, Rao has

sought to declare as "illegal" the Telangana government's order constituting the Commission of Inquiry to conduct a judicial inquiry into the correctness and propriety of the decisions taken by his government on procurement of power from Chhattisgarh by Telangana power distribution companies and construction of the Bhadradi Thermal Power Plant at Manuguru and the Yadadri Thermal Plant at Damacherla by TSGENCO. TSGENCO is the abbreviation of the Telangana State Power Generation Corporation Limited.

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) led by K Chandrasekhar Rao, popularly known as KCR, lost the 2023 Telangana assembly to the Congress.

In his plea against the July 1 high court order, he has alleged bias and also sought the continuation of Justice (ret'd) L Narasimha Reddy as the head of the commission to be declared as "illegal". The high court in its 22-page order said the material produced before the court by Rao does not contain any material so as to indicate that the "respondent No.3 (Reddy)" has pre-judged the issues



pending before him. The commission is required to record the findings on the basis of material produced before it, it had said.

The high court had said it cannot also lose sight of the fact that the respondent held the constitutional office of chief justice and has worked

as a constitutional functionary.

"The allegation of bias against the respondent No.3 is solely based on the statement reportedly made in a press conference and no other material has been produced to show that the proceeding before the respondent No.3 is vitiated on account of personal bias," it had said.

"The allegation of bias cannot be inferred but have to be established. In the facts and circumstances of the case, we hold that the petitioner has failed to prove the plea of bias against the respondent No.3. Therefore, the proceeding

before the respondent No.3 is not vitiated on the ground of bias," it had said.

Rao had also dubbed as arbitrary the issuance of a letter directing him to appear before the commission to produce evidence against the witnesses.

Responding to the letter issued to him and on a media interaction held by Justice (ret'd) Reddy, Rao on June 15 alleged that the panel chairman's functioning has not been fair.

In a 12-page open letter, Rao said Reddy who is heading the commission should step down from his post.

In the letter addressed to Reddy, KCR elaborately highlighted the measures taken by his previous regime to address the alleged crisis in power sector that existed in Telangana before June 2014 when his government assumed office with the formation of the state -- craved out of Andhra Pradesh.

Saying that his government has succeeded in supplying 24x7 power to all sectors in the state, Rao alleged that the present Congress regime had ordered the commission of inquiry "with a clear political motive and to discredit the earlier government".

Proposal to bring bonded labour under ambit of human trafficking laws

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A core group meeting chaired by NHRC Acting Chairperson Vijaya Bharathi Sayani has, for the first time proposed bringing bonded labour under the ambit of human trafficking laws with an aim to enhance legal protections and strengthen efforts against exploitation.

The suggestion followed observation by the members of the core group that despite existing legal provisions, bonded labour continues to afflict vulnerable groups such as women, children, and marginalized communities, often trapped in sectors like agriculture, textiles, and brick kilns.



workers, improving rescue and rehabilitation timelines, and sensitizing law enforcement on handling bonded labour cases effectively.

At the meeting which was held recently, Sayani said that despite efforts and legal provisions, several people still get trapped in forced labour and debt bondage. The NHRC has taken significant steps, including issuing advisories to identify, release, and rehabilitate bonded labourers. However, the persistence of bonded labour in various

industries indicates much more needs to be done. The bonded labour has various names extending into non-farming sectors including the Devadasi system and small-scale industries. Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC emphasised the need for concrete suggestions to abolish the menace of bonded labour. He said that while enforcing the implementation of the legal provisions, social awareness must be spread about the value systems protecting the rights

and dignity of fellow human beings to reduce bonded labour in India.

He also pointed out that almost 2 crore people are joining India's workforce every year, implying that there is a mismatch of demand and supply as far as labour is concerned leading to some anti-human labour practices.

Earlier, Devendra Kumar Nim, Joint Secretary said that many children from distressed migrant families end up as bonded labourers in sectors like textiles, fire-cracker manufacturing, brick kilns, and granite extraction units. Women and children from marginalized communities, especially SCs and STs, are frequently targeted for bonded labour in agriculture and textiles. It was also noted that rescued bonded labourers face threats and delays in registering First Information Reports (FIRs), complicating their path to justice.

At the meeting, Onkar Sharma, Chief Labour Commissioner, elaborated upon the concept of "3-D

Jobs" that highlight the dangerous, difficult and dirty nature of the jobs done by bonded labourers. The issue of conception and the gaps between the powers of the beneficiary and his understanding of the law were also stressed.

In addition to the Core group members, some special invites such as Dr. Alby John Varghese, Managing Director, Metropolitan Transport Corporation (Chennai) Ltd. suggested the creation of a portal for registration of such informal workers who may register themselves to secure jobs outside their states. Dr L Mishra called for restoring dignity and protection from abuse for bonded labourers, and criticized the agent/middlemen clause in the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act while Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director, National Coordinator, Action Aid India called for an industry-based approach and specific regulations for brick kiln workers, including better working conditions.

Researchers discover blood markers that may predict glaucoma patients at risk of losing eyesight

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A team of researchers from University College London (UCL) and Moorfields Eye Hospital in the UK has discovered blood markers that may predict whether glaucoma patients are at a higher risk of continuing to lose eyesight after normal therapy. Glaucoma (known as kala motia in India), affects nearly 11.2 million people aged 40 and above in India. It's the third common cause of blindness in our country as it damages a nerve in the back of the eye called the optic nerve. The symptoms can start so slowly that you may not notice them. The only way to find out if you have glaucoma is to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam. The main factors for glaucoma are old age and high blood pressure. Treatments to lower the intraocular pressure in the eye are available but they are not foolproof. Researchers investigated



whether mitochondrial function, as evaluated in white blood cells, is lower in people with glaucoma and if there is any connection at all. The subjects were studied on the efficiency of their blood cells using oxygen, the amount of eyesight lost over time, and the levels of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD). NAD is a chemical in the body that helps cells produce energy and is derived from vitamin B3 in the food. Firstly, the researchers observed that particular cells in the blood, known as peripheral blood mononuclear cells, use oxygen differently in persons with glaucoma. Secondly, people with glauco-

ma have lower amounts of NAD in their blood cells, which means lower oxygen consumption in their body cells, according to the study published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"White blood cell mitochondrial function and NAD levels, if introduced as a clinical test, would enable clinicians to predict which patients are at higher risk of continued vision loss, allowing them to be prioritised for more intensive monitoring and treatment," said Senior author Professor David (Ted) Garway-Heath from UCL's Institute of Ophthalmology and Moorfields Eye Hospital. If research proves that low mitochondrial function or NAD is a factor, then new treatments can be introduced, said authors.

The researchers are now running a major clinical research to see if high-dose vitamin B3 can improve mitochondrial function and minimize vision loss, opening up new avenues.

PM's 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' apt reply to climate change: Shah

PTI ■ INDORE
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday took part in a drive in Indore in Madhya Pradesh, which aims to create a world record of planting 11 lakh saplings in a single day, and asserted the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was an apt reply to challenges of climate change. The 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' was launched by Modi on June 5 to mark World Environment Day, under which some 140 crore trees will be planted across the country, including 5.5 crore in Madhya Pradesh. "Development is taking place and we are enhancing facilities. Modiji has asked us to look back and also work for the coming generation. The concern for environment has



become important not just for the country. Carbon dioxide and monoxide have reduced the level of ozone and created holes in its layer," Shah said. "This has caused rise in temperatures. Climate change is being experienced. The drive launched by Modi ji is a suitable reply to this," he asserted, adding that Indore, the country's cleanest city for several years as per the Swachh Survekshan, will see 51 lakh saplings being planted. In a post on X in the morning, Shah said, "Today is a special day, when the people of Indore are going to create a world record by planting 11 lakh saplings." As part of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign started by the PM, he too would plant saplings at the BSF campus in

Revati Range here, Shah added. Protection of the environment has been one of the biggest priorities of the Modi government, which has made tree plantation a matter of public awareness, Shah said. Since Saturday evening, pits were dug up at the Border Security Force Academy's Revati Range and planting of saplings started this morning after state minister Kailash Vijayvargiya performed 'bhoomi puja', an official said. Seven lakh of the 11 lakh saplings had been planted by afternoon, Indore Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava said. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on July 6 launched 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' in the state, under which 5.5 crores saplings are to be planted, including 51 lakh in Indore.

5 associates of Canada-based terrorist held: Punjab Police

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH
Five associates of Canada-based terrorist Lakhbir Singh alias Landa have been arrested, the Punjab Police chief said on Sunday. Three pistols were seized from them, Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said. "In a major breakthrough against organised crime, Jalandhar Commissionerate Police apprehends 5 more associates of #Canada-based terrorist Lakhbir @ Landa," he said in a post on X. With this, the number of Landa gang members arrested has increased to 13, the DGP said. "The gang is involved in multiple heinous crimes such as murder, extortion and many other criminal activities in many districts of Punjab," Yadav said.

Family of Telangana youth serving in Russian army hopeful of his early discharge

PTI ■ HYDERABAD
The family members of a Telangana native recruited into the Russian army, are hopeful of his early return home following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Russia. Recently, Russia agreed to India's demand to release all the Indian nationals fighting for the Russian armed forces in its war with Ukraine, after PM Modi "very strongly" raised the issue with President Vladimir Putin during his visit. Salman, brother of Mohammed Sufiyan (22) from Narayanpet district of Telangana, urged authorities to expedite the process to discharge his brother. Sufiyan, who had left India in November last year, has been serving in the Russian army as a support staff. Salman, who spoke to his brother a few days ago, said Sufiyan is in Ukraine now and about 70-80 kms away from the war zone. "It (his brother's discharge) will be



done. Our request is, it would be good if the release happens early," Salman told PTI on Sunday. He expressed hope that things would move quickly with the Russian side promising to discharge Indian nationals, who have been misled into the service of the Russian army. Salman claimed that he got in touch with the Indian embassy in Moscow a few days ago, but there was no update available with them since then. He said his brother and others were provided food earlier, but they have to cook food on their own now. Meanwhile, Imran, brother of Hyderabad resident Mohammed Asfan, who died in March this year while working for the Russian army, has urged the Centre to provide a three or six-month visa to enable him to travel to Russia and seek compensation if possible.

Youth ends life by jumping in Chenab, body found in Pak; kin seek PM's help

PTI ■ JAMMU
The body of a youth who ended his life allegedly by jumping into the Chenab river here last month was recovered in Pakistan, following which his family sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to bring back the mortal remains for last rites. Harash Nagotra, a resident of a border village in the Akhnoor sector, went missing on June 11 and his motorcycle was recovered on the banks of the river. A police official said a missing report was registered by Nagotra's family the next day. Preliminary investigation suggested that he might have ended his life by jumping into the river after suffering a loss of over Rs 80,000 in an online gaming application, the official



said. The family got the confirmation about Nagotra's death through a WhatsApp message from a Pakistani official after the Pakistani reactivated a SIM card of their son who worked in a private telecommunication company. Nagotra's father Subash Sharma said the Pakistani official, who claimed to be posted in the post-mortem department, informed them that the body was recovered from a canal in Sialkot in

Punjab province on June 13. The official had informed the deceased's father that the body had been buried. He also sent Nagotra's identity card to the grieving family through WhatsApp, confirming that the body recovered in Sialkot is that of their missing son. "We request our prime minister to help us get back the body of my son for last rites. We want to perform his last rites as per our religion," Sharma said. Nagotra's relative Amrit Bhushan said they have already written to the External Affairs Ministry, Home Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office over the matter. "We are in a state of shock and grief and want his body back. We have also appealed to Pakistani authorities to hand over the body," Bhushan added.

Assam flood situation continues to improve

PTI ■ GUWAHATI
The flood situation in Assam continued to improve on Sunday as water level is receding fast across the state, officials said. The India Meteorological Department's Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) in Guwahati has also not issued any warning except predicting some rains in Barak valley and a few districts of central Assam. Meanwhile, a report by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) on Saturday night said that one person died at Gogamukh revenue circle of Dhemaji district. With this, the total number of people losing their lives in this year's flood, landslide, storm and lightning has increased to 107. The report said more than 8,40,000 people are hit due to the floods in Barpeta, Cachar,



Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Golaghat, Hailakandi, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karimganj, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, Sivasagar and South Salmara districts. Cachar is the worst hit with nearly 1.5 lakh people suffering, followed by Dhubri with almost 1.27 lakh people and Nagaon with more than 88,500 people reeling under flood waters, it added. The administration has been operating 221 relief camps and relief distribution centres across 13 districts, taking care of 72,046 displaced people at present. The authority has distributed 616.49 quintals of rice, 111.65 quintals of dal, 32.16 quintals of salt and 2,956.25 litres of mustard oil among the flood victims of the state during the last 24 hours. At present, 1,705 villages are under water and 39,898.92

hectares of crop areas have been damaged across Assam, the ASDMA said. Embankments, roads, bridges and other infrastructure have been damaged by flood waters in Barpeta, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Cachar, Charaideo, Golaghat, Morigaon, Nagaon and Sivasagar. At present, the mighty Brahmaputra is flowing above the danger mark at Nimatighat, Tezpur and Dhubri. Its tributaries Burhidighat at Chenimari and Disang at Nanglamuraghat are flowing above the danger levels. The Barak river's tributary Kushiya is also flowing above the danger marks at Karimganj town, ASDMA said. On account of widespread flooding, over 5,03,400 domestic animals and poultry are affected across the State.

Three die of asphyxiation at illegal coal mine in Gujarat

PTI ■ SURENDRANAGAR
Three labourers died of asphyxiation at an illegal coal mine in Gujarat's Surendranagar district, police said on Sunday. A case has been registered against four persons for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and efforts are on to apprehend them, an official said. The victims, Lakshman Dabhi (35), Khodabhai Makwana (32) and Viram Keraliya (35), were digging at a mine near Bhet village in Thangadh taluka of the district when they died of asphyxiation on Saturday, the official from Muli Muli police station said. The trio did not have helmets, masks or other safety equipment when they were working for the accused, he said.

UP BJP chief vows to win all 10 Assembly seats in UP bypolls

PTI ■ LUCKNOW
The BJP will win the upcoming bypolls to 10 assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, the party's state president, Bhopendra Singh Chaudhary, said on Sunday, a day after the BJP-led NDA's dismal performance in by-elections in seven states. The Election Commission is yet to announce the schedule for the assembly bypolls in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh. In a boost to the INDIA bloc, its members won the bypolls to 10 of the 13 assembly constituencies in seven states, while the BJP managed to bag two and an Independent pocketed one as votes were counted on Saturday. While addressing the BJP's Uttar Pradesh working committee meeting here, Chaudhary urged party workers to take a pledge for ensuring the victory of BJP candidates in the forthcoming bypolls in the state. This was also the first major meeting of the state BJP unit after the Lok Sabha polls, in which the party won 33 seats, down from 62 it clinched in 2019. Uttar Pradesh sends 80 members to the Lower House of Parliament. Of the 10 assembly seats in the state were bypoll is due, nine fell vacant after the MLAs were elected to the Lok Sabha in the recent polls. The Sismau assembly seat fell vacant following Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA Irfan Solanki's disqualification after he was sentenced to a seven-year jail term in an arson case. Targeting opposition parties such as the Congress and the SP, Chaudhary, without taking names, said the next battle (bypolls) is with "members of selfish political dynastic families". The battle is between "anti-national forces and nationalist forces", he said. Chaudhary encouraged BJP workers to visit every booth, promote government schemes and counter opposition rumours as he assured them that their respect is the party's priority. The BJP stands shoulder-to-shoulder with all its workers, he said. By-elections are to be held in

Uttar Pradesh's Karhal, Milkipur, Katerhi, Kundarki, Ghaziabad, Khair, Meerapur, Phulpur, Majhawan and Sismau assembly seats. "We are committed to fulfil (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi ji's resolution to make India a developed nation by 2047. We have to gear up and put in our best efforts to defeat our rivals in the 2027 assembly elections," the Uttar Pradesh BJP chief told workers. He urged party workers to actively engage with the



people to expose the opposition's "divisive conspiracies". Talking about unity and inclusivity, Chaudhary

stressed on the need to embrace and support weaker sections of society and advance the state's development collectively. Terming the Congress "Bhasmasur" (a mythological demon), he said SP chief Akhilesh Yadav should be beware that the Congress' intentions are to "usurp Muslim votes". "The BJP is the only party, which is firm on its ideology. The Congress has no ideology. It has always opposed Baba Saheb Ambedkar and never

considered him worthy of contesting elections in its organisation," the BJP leader said as he congratulated the Modi government for deciding

to observe June 25, the day the Emergency was declared in 1975, as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas'. The meeting saw attended by

prominent BJP members, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and local leaders, Uttar Pradesh BJP co-media in-charge Abhay Pratap Singh told

PUNE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
CHIEF ENGINEER ROAD DEPARTMENT
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (N.I.T) YEAR 2024-2025

Sr.No	Particulars	Date
1	Tender Form Sale Period	12/06/2024 to 5/8/2024 up to 2.30 p.m.
2	Tender Form Receiving Period	12/7/2024 to 5/8/2024 up to 2.30 p.m
3	Pre-Bid Meeting Date	22/7/2024 at 11.00 a.m. at PMC Health Dept.
4	Bid Submission End Date	5/8/2024 at 2.30 p.m.
5	Tender Opening Date	6/8/2024 at 3.00 p.m.

Tender No.	Depart ment Name	Name Of Work	Tender Fees	B1/B2 Rs.	Emd Amt.	Period of Work	Contact Person Mobile No
PMC/Health/CMS/1/2024-25	Health	Purchase of All Tupes of Medicines and Medical Appliances etc. on daily basis for local purchase health scheme (L.P.) from Licenced Holder Medicine Supplier	17,879/-	B1 Rs.6,50,00,000/-	6,50,000/-	12 months	Rahul Vadgaye 9881190696

Sr.No	Particulars	Date
1	Tender Form Sale Period	15/06/2024 to 8/8/2024 up to 2.30 p.m.
2	Tender Form Receiving Period	15/7/2024 to 8/8/2024 up to 2.30 p.m
3	Pre-Bid Meeting Date	24/7/2024 at 11.00 a.m. at PMC Health Dept.
4	Bid Submission End Date	8/8/2024 at 2.30 p.m.
5	Tender Opening Date	9/8/2024 at 3.00 p.m.

Tender No.	Depart ment Name	Name Of Work	Tender Fees	B1/B2 Rs.	Emd Amt.	Period of Work	Contact Person Mobile No
PMC/Health/CMS/2/2024-25	Health	Purchase of All Tupes of Medicines and Medical Appliances etc. on daily basis for Urban Poor Health health scheme (E.B.S) from Licenced Holder Medicine Supplier.	17,879/-	B1 Rs. 6,50,000/-	6,50,000/-	12 months	Rahul Vadgaye 9881190696

Sd/-
Dr. Sanjeev Wavare
Asst. Medical Officer of Health
Pune Municipal Corporation

Sd/-
Dr. Kalpana Bahvant
Medical Officer of Health
Pune Municipal Corporation

ADVT NO : 3/183
DATE : 12/7/2024

HIMALAYA FOOD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
Regd. Office: 118, 1st Floor, 12 Gagandeep Building, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008
CIN: L70102DL1992PLC047399 Tel. +91 11 45108609
E-mail id: cs@himalayainternational.com | website: www.himalayafoodcompany.com
INFORMATION REGARDING 33rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD THROUGH VIDEO-CONFERRING (VC)/ OTHER-AUDIO VISUAL MEANS (OVAM)

The 33rd Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the members of Himalaya Food International Limited ("the Company") will be held on Friday, August 09th, 2024 at 09:30 A.M. (IST), through video conferencing ("VC")/ other audio-visual means ("OVAM") in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and the rules made thereunder and Securities Exchange Board of India ("SEBI") (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("Listing Regulations") read with General Circular No. 14/20 dated April 08th 2020 and 17/20 dated 13th April 2020 read with other related circular including General Circular No 09/2023 dated 25th September 2023 issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA"), SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CMD1/CIR/P/2020/79 dated May 12, 2020 and other related SEBI circular including SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CFD-PoD-2/P/CIR/2023/167 dated October 07, 2023 along with the other applicable Circular (s) issued in this regard by MCA and SEBI, to transact the businesses that will be set forth in the Notice of AGM.

In compliance with the above Circulars, the Notice of the AGM and the Annual Report of the Company for the F.Y.2023-24 comprising of the Audited Financial statements, Auditor's report, Board Report and other documents required to be attached thereto, will be sent only through electronic mode to those members whose e-mail addresses are registered with the Company/ Registrar and Share Transfer Agent or Depositories/Depository Participant(s). The aforesaid documents will be available on the website of the Company at www.himalayafoodcompany.com and also be available on the website of the BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com, in due course of time.

Manner of registering/updating e-mail addresses and bank account details

(a) **For the members holding shares in physical mode:** Please send duly completed Form ISR-1 along with the requisite documents to the Registrar & Share Transfer Agent of the Company i.e., M/s. BEETAL Financial & Computer Services (P) Ltd. at 3rd Floor, BEETAL House, 99, Behind Local Shopping Centre, Madangiri Village, Madangiri, New Delhi, Delhi 110062. The Form ISR-1 is available on the website of the Company and can be accessed at <https://himalayafoodcompany.com/pages/forms-for-investors>.

(b) **For the members holding shares in demat mode:** Please register/ update your email addresses and/or bank account details with your Depository Participant ("DP").

Members can join and participate in the AGM through VC/OAVM facility only. The instructions for joining and the manner of participation in the AGM will be provided in the notice. Members attending the AGM through VC/OAVM shall be counted for the purpose of reckoning the quorum under Section 103 of the Companies Act, 2013.

The Company will provide remote e-voting facility to all its members (holding shares in demat/physical) to cast their votes on the resolutions set forth in the Notice of AGM. The process and manner of remote e-voting, the facility of joining AGM through VC/OAVM and e-voting at the AGM, for members holding shares in demat form or physical form and for members who have not registered their email addresses, will be provided in the Notice of AGM. The members attending the AGM through VC/OAVM, who have not cast their vote through remote e-voting, shall be allowed to vote through e-voting at the AGM.

Notice of Book Closure

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from Saturday, August 03rd, 2024 to Friday, August 09, 2024 (both days inclusive).

The above information is being issued for the information and benefit of all the members of the Company and is in compliance with the MCA Circular(s) and the SEBI Circular.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
Himalaya Food International Limited

Sd/-
Man Mohan Malik
Managing Director
(DIN: 00696077)

Date: 14.07.2024
Place: New Delhi

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

This is to state that Mr. Sonu Agarwal and Mr. Sonu Kumar Agarwal are one and the same person and he is the father of Tejas Agarwal. PD(596)C

Condolence News

It is informed with immense sorrow that my respected father **Shri Vinod Kumar Rao ji** has passed away on 08 July 2024. All of you are requested to come for the thirteenth day least on 20th July 2024 for eternal peace to the departed soul.

Program
Date: 20th July 2024 Time - 11 am onwards
Venue: Community Center, Noids Sector-56

Fondly Remembered by
Kalpna, Binny, Krishna, Kabir

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed that my clients Prasad Singh S/O Ranghraj and Meltar Chand S/O Chhuni with other 11 Co owners all resident of Village Ulhaswasi, Tehsil Sohna Distt. Gurgaon had entered into collaboration agreement dated 09.01.2007 with M/s. A.J.S. Builders Pvt. Ltd Corporate office at: 8, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Marg Gole Market, New Delhi regarding the development and also executed General Power of Attorney dated 09.07.2007 for agriculture land Khewat/Khata No. 176, 179, 180, 267, 268, 293, 296, Khata No. 196, 197, 198, 288, 289, 317, 318, Reet. No. 17, 18, 20, 21, Kharsa Killa No. 1 (8-0), 5/1(4-0), 5/2(4-0), 6/8-0, 7/1(3-16), 10(8-0), 11/1(4-11), 12/7-19, 14(8-0), 15(7-9), 17/1(2-7), 19(7-12), 20(5-16), 21(6-7), 25/2(2-5), land admeasuring 88 Kanal 2 marla (11.0125 Acres approx) situated within the revenue estate of village Ulhaswasi, Tehsil and Distt. Gurgaon (Haryana) in R Zone presently also known as Sector-62. The said builder had not honoured the terms and conditions of the agreement. The builder had to complete the construction work within 36 months after obtaining the licence. The builder instead of starting the work, committed fraud with many other persons and due to the efflux of time the agreement has already become infructuous and void. The builder had not given any heed or attention to the project due to its own legal hassles of criminal fraud. My clients have already sent intimation to the Director, Town and Country Planning Haryana, Chandigarh for cancellation of license and not to renew the same. My clients have the right, title, claim and bonafide possession over the said land. The builder has no right, title or claim in the said land. If anybody is dealing or transacting with regard to the said land, shall do so at their own risk and costs.

Karnail Singh, (Advocate),
K-8, LGF Jangpura Extn, New Delhi-110014



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Wake-up call for BJP

The bypolls result in seven States give INDIA Bloc an edge as it takes 10 of 13 assembly Seats, BJP gets two

In a recent series of bypolls held across seven states, the INDIA bloc emerged victorious, securing 10 out of the 13 contested Assembly seats, while the BJP managed to win only two. This outcome has significant political implications. It is about time for the BJP to introspect on where it is losing connection with the voters and consider the potential reconfiguration of political power dynamics at the state level. The INDIA bloc, an alliance of various regional and national parties, has demonstrated that it is still a force to reckon with and that it is here to stay. Their success in securing 10 seats indicates strong grassroots support and effective coalition-building strategies. This performance underscores the bloc's ability to present a united front against the BJP, leveraging regional issues and local leadership to gain voter trust. The biggest winner in these bypolls is, of course, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), a key member of the INDIA bloc, which swept the bypolls, winning all four contested seats. This victory reaffirms TMC's dominance in the state and showcases that the people of West Bengal have faith in Mamata's leadership. In the West, the INDIA bloc's combined efforts led to significant wins for the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) faction, solidifying their position in the state. This result highlights the effectiveness of their alliance with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). These results are significant as the state elections are coming up in a few months' time. If the bypoll results are anything to go by, then the BJP is going to witness tough resistance from its opponents in



upcoming Maharashtra state elections. The Congress party, a major component of the INDIA bloc, managed to retain its hold on key seats in Rajasthan and Karnataka, reflecting continued voter confidence in their policies. But the biggest turnaround for the congress party came from Uttarakhand. One month after the ruling BJP's third consecutive sweep in the Lok Sabha elections in Uttarakhand, the Congress has now made a comeback in the hill state by winning both the Badrinath and Manglaur Assembly seats in the bypolls. Indeed, it is time for the BJP to go to the drawing board and carve a winning strategy once again, that it know for. The BJP's performance in these bypolls, securing only two seats, signals potential challenges for the party. Despite its robust organisational structure and national influence, the BJP faced stiff competition from the united opposition. The results suggest that the BJP may need to reassess its strategies and address regional concerns more effectively. The coming months will reveal whether the INDIA bloc can maintain its momentum and how the BJP will respond to this electoral setback. Winning and losing are part of the political game; the player who learns from their mistakes stays in the race for the long run.

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PICTALK



Farmers plant paddy saplings in a field in Gurugram

PTI

Lessons in forgiveness from Mandela's life



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Despite facing 27 years of imprisonment, Mandela emerged without bitterness, advocating for reconciliation and understanding rather than retribution

Nelson Mandela, the iconic South African leader, symbolises peace, resilience, and unwavering commitment to non-violence in the face of oppression and injustice. July 18, 2024, marks the 106th birth anniversary of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela – a poignant reminder of his enduring legacy and the principles he championed throughout his life, having had the inspiration of none other than Mahatma Gandhi. Mandela's evolution from a young civil rights activist to a global statesman who promoted reconciliation and peaceful coexistence has left an indelible mark on humanity.

His significant contributions to peace and non-violence, the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's principles on his ideologies, and the continued relevance of his message in today's conflict-ridden world underscore the importance of knowing about his sacrifices and courage.

Mandela's life exemplifies the power of perseverance and the potential for positive change through non-violent means. Born in 1918, he witnessed firsthand the brutalities of apartheid in South Africa, a regime that institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination against the majority black population. Nelson Mandela's anti-apartheid activities led to his imprisonment. At the age of 44, Mandela was manacled and transported to Robben Island prison. He was released at the age of 71 in 1990, after 27 years of incarceration. Upon his release, Mandela embraced a path of reconciliation and non-violence, guiding South Africa through a remarkable transition to democracy. In 1994, he became the country's first black president. Nelson Mandela's words, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite", reflects his belief in the capacity of humanity to embrace love and understanding, transcending divisions based on race, ethnicity, or religion. It echoes Mahatma



Gandhi's emphasis on the essential goodness inherent in people, which can be reclaimed through nonviolent means.

Nelson Mandela's advocacy for non-violence found its roots in the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi. Mandela greatly admired Gandhi's methods, drawing significant inspiration from his successful campaigns against British colonial rule. The Mahatma's teachings on non-violence, civil disobedience, and reconciliation profoundly influenced Mandela's approach to the struggle against apartheid. Madiba viewed freedom not as a pursuit for personal liberation alone but as an endeavour grounded in the emancipation of others. Despite facing 27 years of imprisonment, Mandela emerged without bitterness, advocating for reconciliation and understanding rather than retribution. His approach to forgiveness was not merely personal but was woven into the very fabric of South Africa's journey towards healing and unity, exemplified by the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission'. This process underscored that acknowledging and forgiving past wrongs is essential for building a cohesive and forward-looking society. Instead of trying to seek revenge on his oppressors, he took to the Gandhian path of forgiveness and reconciliation in his



NELSON MANDELA'S ADVOCACY FOR NON-VIOLENCE FOUND ITS ROOTS IN THE IDEOLOGIES OF MAHATMA GANDHI. GANDHI'S PRINCIPLE OF SATYAGRAHA, MEANING 'TRUTH-FORCE' CHAMPIONED PASSIVE RESISTANCE AND NON-COOPERATION AS POTENT STRATEGIES TO COMBAT OPPRESSIVE REGIMES

endeavour to build a new South Africa. We all remember what he said as he was coming out of prison. "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison." Incorporating forgiveness into conflict resolution and personal growth is the need of the hour.

Forgiveness allows individuals and communities to move beyond grievances, fostering environments where trust and collaboration can thrive. It is a powerful antidote to cycles of hatred and violence, promoting lasting peace and understanding. Mandela's legacy teaches us that forgiveness is not about forgetting or condoning harm, but about freeing oneself from the burden of resentment and creating the space for healing and positive change. Forgiveness plays a pivotal role in resolving global conflicts, acting as a catalyst for peace and reconciliation. Across various conflicts, from the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 – during the Rwandan Civil War – to the Northern Ireland Troubles (ethnonationalist conflict in Northern Ireland that lasted for about 30 years from the late 1960s to 1998, and is sometimes described as an "irregular war" or "low-level war"), the process of forgiveness has been instrumental in bridging deep

divides. In Rwanda, following the 1994 genocide that claimed the lives of approximately 800,000 people, the government established 'Gacaca Courts' to facilitate community-based justice. This process emphasized truth-telling, reconciliation, and forgiveness, allowing survivors and perpetrators to coexist and rebuild their communities.

Seen in the context of personal growth, forgiveness liberates individuals from the chains of resentment and empowers them to move forward with a sense of renewed purpose. This is evident in the stories of individuals like Malala Yousafzai, who, despite surviving a brutal attack by the Taliban, advocates for the education of girls worldwide without harbouring bitterness towards her assailants. Similarly, the story of Immaculée Ilibagiza, a survivor of the Rwandan Genocide and motivational speaker, highlights the transformative power of forgiveness. Like in Buddhist psychology, forgiveness is understood as a way to end suffering, to bring dignity and harmony to our lives, what Madiba has taught us is that forgiveness is fundamentally for our own sake, for our peace. It is better, that we learn to let go.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA BLOC GAINS IN BYPOLLS

Madam — This refers to the news about the INDIA bloc gaining 10 out of 13 seats in the recent by-elections held in seven states. Several messages can be decoded from these results. Despite delivering a stern message to mend its policies and relying on two vulnerable regional parties to sustain its rule, the BJP does not seem to understand the significance of the general election results. These outcomes reinforce the message from the public regarding the absence of constructive changes. They clearly signal that a communal agenda does not align with the people's aspirations and demands, as evidenced by the defeats in Ayodhya and Badrinath against independent candidates. The results also convey a message to the opposition INDIA bloc: the public has high hopes for them to function as a responsible opposition, exposing the ruling government's mistakes. Therefore, the ruling party must focus on welfare, employment, inflation, and change its attitude towards opposition members, who are also elected by the people. It is clear that continuing the same policies will prompt the public to respond accordingly in future elections.

A G Rajmohan | Anantpur

CONSTITUTION MURDER DAY

Madam — There is no doubt that the fact that Emergency of 1975 has left unforgettable scars on the people of our nation. The period between 1975 to 1977 is among the grim reality of the Indian History. But commemorating June 25th as the 'Samvidhan Hatya Diwas' is like scratching the old scars after 50 years now. In a milieu, the BJP via its government under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi is messaging Vishva Shanti (Global Peace) by emphasising the fact of extending the leadership as Vishva Guru (World Leader). Then why does the BJP not follow the same principle for internal functioning

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Rising inflation: A persistent challenge



The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation for June 2024 has underscored the ongoing challenges in the disinflation process, as highlighted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The CPI data released by the government on July 12 revealed that consumer

inflation reached a four-month high of 5.08 percent. The core inflation rate, which excludes food and energy prices, remained steady at 3.1 percent.

The CPI measures retail inflation by tracking price changes of commonly consumed goods and services, including food, housing, apparel, transportation, electronics, medical care, and education. Despite the average CPI inflation being 5.08 percent in June, 12 out of the 22 states and union territories reviewed experienced significantly higher inflation rates exceeding 11 percent. June's CPI inflation was primarily driven by food prices, which surged by 11 percent due to increased costs of vegetables, cereals, milk, and fruits. Vegetable inflation has remained in double digits for eight consecutive months, posing a major concern alongside persistently high food grain prices.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

A LEGENDARY CAREER COMES TO AN END

Madam — 'Swing King' James Anderson, the English cricketer and fast bowler, retired in style with a Test victory against the West Indies, achieving remarkable match-winning figures of 3 for 32 in 16 overs. Anderson is the only fast bowler in the world to have reached the towering milestone of over 700 Test wickets. With a total of 704 Test wickets (in 188 matches), 269 ODI wickets (in 194 matches), and 18 T20 wickets (in 19 matches), he boasts an impressive total of 991 international wickets. We urge James to play one or two more Tests to secure just five more Test wickets and become world No. 2 in Test bowling, and just nine more wickets to reach the milestone of 1,000 international wickets. Currently, world No. 2 is Shane Warne with 708 Test wickets, while world No. 1 is Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan with 800 Test wickets.

PV Sinivas Sreelekha | Secundrabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Perceptions, poverty, prosperity and societal biases



SANJAY CHANDRA

The incidents we witness often appear interesting through rose-tinted glasses, but we frequently overlook deep-rooted biases subconsciously

We witness events each waking moment of our lives. These incidents are interesting when looking through rose-tinted glasses. Our analysis may sometimes subconsciously overlook deep-rooted biases. I was out for my usual morning walk. A dog, held firmly by its walker, rushed barking at a bike coming from the opposite direction, straining at the leash. It is immaterial to even contemplate if the bark was a friendly overture, or if it was meant to be a gesture of aggression to protect its territory. The response of the biker was far more interesting, "What will you gain out of biting a poor man?"

A few years back I happened to be sitting with someone. A statement made by the other person was a revelation, "There is a premium on poverty in our society." He went on to elaborate looking at my puzzled expression, "A rickshaw puller or even a cyclist may bump against your car, scratching it in the process. In no time there will be a



crowd requesting you to let the poor man go." I read a couple of interesting articles a few years back. One was about our burgeoning population. The article stated that a big population should be viewed as a bigger human resource bank – one of the 5Ms of manufacturing – Money, Manpower, Materials, Machinery and Methods. This resource, if correctly utilised, can make our country a leading nation in the world; something that China has been able to achieve. I would debate the methods adopted by the neighbouring country for the utilisation of their manpower. However, I could not fault the logic. The other article compared the number of

entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom and India. The percentage of entrepreneurs in the total population was very low in our country. The logic put forward was that we should stop looking to the government to provide us with jobs. More the people enter the business, more the new jobs are created. I have met several people, even from lower strata of the society, who chose to drive their own lives, and in the process, created opportunities for more livelihoods.

That brings me to a recent pre-wedding gala. I did not fathom at the time that there would be many such events leading up to the grand finale. Many felt that such shows of wealth were uncalled for. Without being judgemental, I would say that these also mean the flourishing of several diverse industries and consequently generation of income for the local workforce. Not to forget that many families in India indulge in such events, maybe on a lower scale, even from other walks of life. A friend recently helped

financially in the wedding of a girl from an underprivileged section of society. The expenses also included a decent meal for the entire village of about 250 odd members. The family could not do away with the custom for fear of ostracism from the community. I could not discern any difference between the two events. Both were lavish for the families involved – one could afford it, the other was forced into it! My own opinion is that money should be spent on education and skilling, without any biases – age or gender. Learning is essential – be it for a child, a married woman, or an old man. It is education that would truly empower, providing a better life to all. It is within us to make this world a better place for everyone.

In Frances Hodgson Burnett's words, "If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN THE ART OF LETTING GO

Drop all your desires and let go of your baggage to break from the past



RAVI VALLURI

There once lived a cerebral physicist who taught at an estimable university. The professor was decorated with awards and worldwide recognition followed. As he became a celebratory figure, he soon developed a swollen head. His affectation was to become his hubris. The government and administration stripped him off all the awards bestowed, and his wife deserted him as he became an alcoholic. The esteemed professor was unable to grapple with these misadventures in life.

Some well-wishers from his fraternity commiserated with him and were filled with compassion for their once effulgent colleague. The physicist was wheeled into a rehabilitation centre and under a detoxification regimen was slowly weaned off alcohol and drugs. He underwent the Happiness Programme and learnt the unique rhythmic breathing techniques which provided the ballast for his recovery. The professor though sober now and purged of his hedonistic tendencies was still feeling saturated from within. His soul was yet to feel satiated. He developed a profound interest in the spiritual dimension of life and the universe. Thus, the professor embarked upon a spiritual sojourn. The peregrination took him halfway around the world till he arrived at a remote village, high in the Himalayas, at the feet of an accomplished master.

This suzerain of the sacred texts of different religions had gained remarkable adroitness and virtuosity in Zen Buddhism. The holy person dressed in ochre robes welcomed the professor with a warm embrace. His searching and lustrous eyes scanned the professor. The physicist narrated his story. He concluded by adding that he was now trying to fathom the mysteries hidden in the womb of the universe from the spiritual and scientific points of view. "But this is what you were doing at the university and in your laboratory, is it not professor?" enquired the seer. He felt that the Zen Master could ignite the missing spark from his life and help him expatriate antipathetic thoughts from his mind so that he could ascend the pyramid. He had successfully extricated himself from the whirlpool of gloom once and he could see light at the end of the tunnel. Yet there was something amiss in his life!



It was dry like the autumn leaf that drops from the branches of the tree. The time you let loose "So, what new are you attempting to unravel? Ok, let us have a cup of tea," said the venerated soul. The professor appeared at ease as the perspicacious and sagacious soul poured the tea. Soon the cup began to overflow. Seeing this, the professor exclaimed, "Holy Sir, the cup is overflowing!" "Precisely, and I was examining your reaction," remarked the Holy One. "Unless you just let go of your haughtiness and self-conceit the way the tea overflowed from the cup, you will never learn anything afresh. This is the secret," stated the Zen Master in an absolutely matter-of-fact manner. "Drop all your desires when you approach a Master. Let go of your baggage," he added. The Zen Master was to further add, "Buddha advocated four concepts-Observe the body (Kayana Paschana)Observe the sensations (Vedanana Paschana)Observe the flow of mind (Chittana Paschana)Observe your true nature (Dhammanu Paschana)." The professor realised that he had forayed into uncharted territories but without understanding his mind. His mind was brim-full of demonic and arrogant thoughts and ossified. He was neither simple nor humble or aware. These were the keys for him to let go and be pristine and lucid.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views expressed are personal)

India narrowly escapes fiscal catastrophe



UTTAM GUPTA

India needs to strengthen its economic health with sustainable fiscal policies for long-term stability; state guarantees only put it in a perilous situation



After the Lok Sabha elections 2024 on June 4, the Center narrowly escaped plunging into a state of 'fiscal catastrophe'. Even as Modi-led BJP failed to secure an absolute majority on its own, it garnered the support of 293 MPs including 53 from its allies under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and formed the Government.

On the other hand, the I.N.D.I.A bloc led by the grand old party (GOP) namely Congress cobbled up a total of 234 MPs. A swing of just 38 from NDA to I.N.D.I.A bloc could have enabled the latter to catapult itself to the seat of power. In that scenario, the GOP would have to redeem the promises/guarantees made in its manifesto "Nyay Patra" released in April 2024. These entail mammoth fiscal costs. Look at an annual grant of Rs 100,000/- to every poor Indian household (HH) under the 'Mahalakshmi' scheme. The amount - like unconditional income support - will be directly transferred to the bank account of the oldest woman of the HH. If the HH doesn't have a woman, then the amount will be transferred to the account of the oldest member of the HH. Meanwhile, at a poll rally, Gandhi announced "Initially, we will give you Rs 100,000/- annually, and later we may increase it to Rs 200,000/-". There are around 400 million households in India. Even if we take a conservative estimate of only 10 per cent of the households or 40 million being poor, the Scheme would cost the exchequer Rs 400,000 crore annually. In case, the grant is increased to Rs 200,000/-, the cost would be Rs 800,000 crore per annum. Aware of the huge impact on the budget, the manifesto puts two caveats on the Scheme. First, "the poor will be identified among the HHs in the bottom of the income pyramid". Second, "the Scheme will be rolled out in stages and reviewed every year to assess the number of beneficiary HHs and its impact on alleviating poverty". The way these conditions have been crafted shows that, to begin with, not all 40 million families will be covered. Further, the party could also drop some beneficiaries in due course to rein in the



THERE ARE AROUND 400 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS IN INDIA. EVEN IF WE TAKE A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF ONLY 10 PER CENT OF THE HOUSEHOLDS OR 40 MILLION BEING POOR, THE MAHALAKSHMI SCHEME WOULD COST THE EXCHEQUER RS 400,000 CRORE ANNUALLY

outflow. However, given the massive appeal of the grant amount promised under the Scheme, not a single poor household would like to be left out and a beneficiary HH once included wouldn't like to get excluded. Any attempt to do so could trigger socioeconomic tensions between those who get it and others who don't. So, all 40 million poor HHs will have to be given Rs 200,000/- each.

The other guarantee is a Youth Apprenticeship Scheme (YAS) for diploma holders under which an unemployed youth will be given Rs 100,000/- every year. Taking a total of 260 million persons in the 15-29 years age bracket and an unemployment rate of 10 per cent, giving Rs 100,000/- to each of the 26 million unemployed would cost the exchequer Rs 260,000 crore annually.

An apprenticeship is an arrangement under which a person works for an agreed period to learn a new skill that enables him to get a suitable job. During this period, he gets a fixed amount as a stipend. Under such an arrangement logically it is expected that at the end of the training period, there won't be any need to give the stipend. But, the GOP hasn't alluded to any blueprint for training and occupations/businesses where the apprentices - on completion of the training - would get absorbed. In such a scenario, persons getting Rs 100,000/- will continue to get it year after year. As a result, the Center will be saddled with a recurring liability of Rs 260,000 crore.

Congress promised a legal guarantee for the MSP (minimum support price). The farmers would want it for all 23 crops for which MSP is currently fixed. Eventually, this will have to cover all crops; the entire agricultural produce. The government can't force private

entities to buy at the MSP. So, it should be prepared to pick up the whole of it. This will cost about Rs 33,00,000 crore annually.

It promised 3 million government jobs. Taking an average salary of say Rs 50,000 per month, this would entail an additional cost of Rs 180,000 crore annually. A hike in the wage under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MNREGA) to Rs 400 per day would cost around Rs 80,000 crore. Further, the GOP has promised a one-time student loan waiver to cost around Rs 120,000 crore.

All put together, Congress's Guarantee Schemes will cost the Union Government a monumental Rs 47,40,000 crore annually (800,000+260,000+33,000,000+180,000+80,000+120,000). Excluding the cost of student loan waiver which is one time, the recurring annual burden would be Rs 46,20,000 crore. This is almost close to the total expenditure of Rs 47,66,000 crore estimated in the interim Union Budget for 2024-25 and more than four times the capital expenditure outlay of Rs 11,10,000 crore.

During 2024-25, the total receipts other than borrowings of the central government are estimated to be Rs 30,80,000 crore including tax receipts of Rs 26,02,000 crore. The spend of Rs 800,000 crore on the much-touted Mahalakshmi scheme alone will take away a quarter of the total receipts and nearly one-third of the tax receipts. As it is, the fiscal deficit (total receipts minus total expenditure) or FD for 2024-25 is estimated at Rs 16,85,000 crore which is 5.1 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Add to this Rs 46,20,000 crore being the additional expenditure due to the guarantees, we get a whopping FD of Rs 63,05,000 crore which comes to 19.1 per cent of the GDP. This is more than two

times the 9.2 per cent reached in 2020-21 when the economy was crippled by the devastating Corona pandemic.

One shudders at the very thought of where this will take the Center's debt currently estimated at around Rs 187,35,000 crore (as of 31st March 2025). It will double in less than four years, courtesy of the guarantees. At present, the Center's debt is around 57 per cent of the GDP.

As per the amendment to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act (2018-19), this should have been lowered to 40 per cent by 2024-25. Instead, we will be heading towards a level far more than 100 per cent. India's sound economic fundamentals, robust growth momentum, and focus on fiscal consolidation have led global rating agencies such as S&P Global to consider a sovereign rating upgrade by raising its country outlook to positive from stable after a long hiatus of one-and-a-half decades. All this could go for a toss in the event of 'fiscal profligacy' triggered by the guarantees.

The fiscal catastrophe would bring with it a deadly cocktail of unsustainable debt, galloping interest payments (exacerbated by rising interest rates), high inflation (courtesy, mountain of cash in people's hands), declining investment, decelerating economic activity/GDP even as crores of persons don't need to earn their living and simply wait for the State largesse to take care of all their needs. In short, India would be heading towards an economic disaster. The BJP not having an absolute majority makes the Modi - government vulnerable. In this case, Congress-led I.N.D.I.A bloc takes charge, and the risk of economic disaster looms large.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

Modi 3.0 focuses on ease of living amid inflation and job challenges

Ease of living has taken a hit amidst inflation, rising prices, and job-related challenges, significantly impacting BJP's poll prospects

Ease of living has taken a hit amidst inflation, rising prices and job-related challenges. It was a major poll plank of the opposition, especially Congress which resorted to specific guarantees to provide relief to the common man. All this adversely impacted BJP's poll prospects. Taking a leaf from that, Modi 3.0 will be focusing on Ease of living. This time, along with marginalised sections of society, the focus will be on the formidable yet neglected middle class. During the last 19 years of Modi's rule, the focus was on the poor sections of society. This was reflected through the disillusionment of middle-class voters during the Loksabha polls, denying an absolute majority to the BJP. Faced with assembly elections



VINOD BEHL

in Haryana and Maharashtra in October, the BJP is consciously treading the course-correction path to win the confidence of the electorate. As inflation has hit people hard, the government may well provide budgetary measures like relief in personal income tax, a hike in tax exemption on interest on Savings accounts and benefits to government staff under the National Pension Scheme

(NPS). The budget will come with a reworked middle-class housing scheme to enlarge the number of beneficiaries and benefits like the reintroduction of interest subsidies to homebuyers and tax incentives to developers under PMAY (U). The budget may also come up with measures to promote slum redevelopment to bolster ease of living. The government is also expected to fulfil its promise to broaden the coverage of the Ayushman Bharat scheme by providing free Rs 5 lakh health insurance coverage to senior citizens above the age of 70 years. Taking a lesson from the Loksabha polls, not just the centre, even the BJP-ruled states are taking welfare measures to enhance ease of living. In competitive populism, dol-

are now no longer being derided as 'rewris'. In poll-bound Maharashtra, already Rs 80000 crore of welfare schemes including subsidy for onion and milk farmers, and free power to farmers' agricultural pumps of eligible capacity, have been rolled out. Taking a leaf from the popular 'Ladli Behna' scheme of the BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, Rs 1500 per month and 3 cooking gas cylinders a year have been announced for eligible women from poor households.

The Haryana government is taking populist welfare measures including free bus rides to the poor, plots for the backward communities and special placement drives to recruit youth for government jobs besides considering a job quota



for Agniveers. In a major policy decision, Haryana has enhanced the powers of sarpanches, allowing them to sanction development works of Rs 21 lakh (against Rs 5 lakh earlier) without e-tendering. Under Mukhyamantri Shahari Swamitv Yojana, ownership certificates are being provided to those occupying land for over 20 years. To tackle the ire of the urban middle class due to poor civic infrastructure, the

state government is taking desperate measures to stem the rot. The construction of the Gurgaon Metro Extension, hanging in balance for years, is going to be started before the state elections. As the BJP paid the price for farmers' discontentment, the government's welfare measures are going to be focused on farmers. The policy measures may well include increasing the PM Kisan Scheme allo-

cation, greater investment in R&D and new technologies and better seeds to improve crop yield to achieve doubling of farmers' income and a new National Cooperative Policy and setting up of farm credit societies in over 200000 panchayats and measures to ensure fair price to farmers. A bumper RBI dividend and Rs 1.09 trillion in non-tax receipts will come in handy as a cushion for the government to undertake a range of welfare measures. Under MGNREGA, one may see a hike in mandatory days of employment and wages. Schemes for workers' wellbeing include increasing the beneficiary pool of pensions under the Employee Pension Scheme (EPS), more employment under the National Career

Services (NCS) scheme and expanding the registration target of workers on the e-ashram portal. Against the backdrop of 1.67 million informal sector jobs lost in over 7 years, notwithstanding BJP's claim of creating 12.5 crore jobs in the last 10 years, the Budget will put focus on skill upgradation of workers and professionals with incentives for companies promoting skilling. While following the broader path of structural reforms to boost the economy, the budget is going to have the central theme of ease of living to ensure that the gains of economic development reach the masses.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)

World leaders condemn Trump assassination attempt

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

World leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, on Sunday denounced the appalling assassination bid on former US president Donald Trump and asserted that violence has no place in politics and democracies. Trump, 78, survived an attempt on his life on Saturday when a young shooter fired multiple shots at him at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, injuring his right ear. The shooting left one person attending the rally dead and two others in serious condition. The 20-year-old suspected shooter was shot and killed by a member of the Secret Service. Prime Minister Modi expressed deep concern over the attack and said violence has no place in politics and democracies. Modi said on X, "Deeply con-



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump is helped off the stage at a campaign event in Butler, Pa., on Saturday. AP/PTI

cerned by the attack on my friend, former President Donald Trump. Strongly condemn the incident. Violence has no place in politics and democracies. Wish him a speedy recovery." "Our thoughts and prayers are with

the family of the deceased, those injured and the American people," he added. Starmer said he was "appalled by the shocking scenes" at the rally. "Political violence in any form has no place in our societies and my thoughts are with

No place in America for violence: Biden

Chicago (PTI): US President Joe Biden on Saturday condemned the life-threatening attack on his Republican rival and predecessor Donald Trump and said "there is no place for this kind of violence in America". Delivering remarks to the press at his Rehoboth Beach house in Delaware, Biden said he tried to get in touch with Trump, who is now with the doctors and seems to be doing well. Trump got injured during his election rally in Butler, Pennsylvania following an apparent series of gunshots. He was immediately escorted out of the venue by the US Secret Service. Law enforcement officials said the Secret Service shot dead the suspected shooter at the election

venue. One person has died in the incident. According to CNN, law enforcement agencies are treating the incident as an assassination attempt. It is not immediately clear what type of weapon was used by the shooter. "There's no place in America for this kind of violence," Biden said. "It's sick and one of the reasons why we have to unite this country. We cannot allow for this to be happening. We cannot be like this, we cannot condone this." "... I'm grateful to hear that he's safe and doing well. I'm praying for him and his family and for all those who were at the rally, as we await further information," Biden said in a statement.

all the victims of this attack," he said. Macron called the assassination attempt "a tragedy". "This is a tragedy for our democracies. France shares the shock and indignation of the American people," Macron said on social media platform X. Russian President Vladimir Putin has no plans at present to call Trump, according to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. "We do not at all think or believe that the attempt to eliminate presidential candidate Trump was organised by the current government, but the atmosphere that this administration created during the political struggle, the atmosphere around candidate Trump provoked what America is faced with today," he added. Maria Zakharova, spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry, said American lawmakers should employ the money they use to supply

weapons to Ukraine "to finance the American police and other services which should ensure law and order within the United States". Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said: "This was an inexcusable attack under the democratic values that Australians and Americans share and the freedom that we treasure. These values unite our two countries." Chinese President Xi has expressed sympathies to former president Trump, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Sunday. China is following the shooting incident at a campaign rally, the spokesperson said in a brief statement in Beijing. South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol said on X that he was appalled by "the heinous act" of political violence. He added that the people of Korea stand in solidarity with Americans. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, who survived an assassination attempt himself in May,

condemned the shooting in a Facebook post. He drew direct parallels between the two incidents, suggesting the attack on Trump was the result of a campaign by his political opponents. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said she was deeply shocked by the shooting on X, adding political violence has no place in democracy. The UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attack on Trump, describing it as "a criminal and extremist act". British lawmaker Nigel Farage, a friend of Trump's, sought to pin much of the blame on the "mainstream media" that he claimed opposed the former president. He told the BBC that it was a "horrendous" incident but somehow he was not shocked by it. Earlier, US President Joe Biden, Trump's opponent in the November election, said everyone must condemn political violence.

'Gaza cease-fire talks haven't paused'

AP ■ MUWASI

Hamas said Sunday that Gaza cease-fire talks continue and the group's military commander is in good health, a day after the Israeli military targeted Mohammed Deif with a massive airstrike that local health officials said killed at least 90 people, including children. Deif's condition remained uncertain after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday night "there still isn't absolute certainty" he was killed. Hamas representatives gave no evidence to back up their assertion about the health of a chief architect of the October 7 attack that sparked the war. The Israeli military on Sunday announced that Rafa Salama, a Hamas commander it described as one of Deif's closest associates, had been killed in Saturday's strike. Salama commanded Hamas' Khan Younis brigade. The statement gave no update on Deif, who has long topped Israel's most-wanted list and

UK Foreign Secretary visits Israel and West Bank

Tel Aviv (Israel) (AP): The new British foreign secretary called for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza during a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories on Sunday, his second international trip since Labour's resounding victory in elections earlier this month. David Lammy said the ongoing war in Gaza is "intolerable" and stressed in meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leadership that Britain wants to assist with diplomatic efforts "securing a cease-fire deal and creating the space for a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution". Lammy met Sunday in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and in the West Bank city of Ramallah with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. He will meet with Israeli President Isaac Herzog on Monday. During his

visit, Lammy will also meet with families of hostages currently being held in Gaza who have ties to the UK. He called for the release of all hostages and a dramatic increase in the amount of humanitarian aid entering Gaza. Lammy demanded Israel halt settlement expansion in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, and said that the Palestinian Authority needs to be "reformed and empowered". Both Lammy's Labour Party and the previous Conservative government initially avoided calling for an immediate cease-fire in the war, using phrases like "humanitarian pause". But the language has got stronger. Prime Minister Keir Starmer told Netanyahu last week there was a "clear and urgent need for a cease-fire". Labour's stance on the Gaza war cost it votes in this month's UK election.

has been in hiding for years. Hamas rejected the idea that mediated cease-fire discussions had been suspended after the strike. Spokesperson Jihad Taha said "there is no doubt that the horrific massacres will impact any efforts in the negotiations" but added that "efforts and endeavours of the mediators remain ongoing." The killing of Deif would mark the highest profile assassination of any Hamas leader by Israel since the war began. It would be both a huge victory for Israel and a deep psychological blow for the militant group. Netanyahu said all of Hamas' leaders are "marked for death" and asserted that killing them would move Hamas closer to accepting a cease-fire deal. Hamas political officials insisted that communication channels remained functional between the leadership inside and outside Gaza after the strike in the territory's south. Witnesses said it occurred in an area that Israel had designated as safe for hundreds of thousands of displaced

Palestinians. Israel's military would not confirm that. On Sunday, some survivors were angry that the attack targeting Deif occurred without warning in an area they had been told was safe. "Where are we supposed to go?" asked Mahmoud Abu Yaseen, who said he heard two strikes and clutched his children, then woke up in the hospital to find his son had died. The family had already been displaced five times since the war began, he said. Another 300 people were wounded in the strike, one of the deadliest in the nine-month war sparked by Hamas' October 7 assault on southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took more than 200 hostages. More than 38,400 people in Gaza have been killed in Israeli ground offensives and bombardments since then, according to the territory's Health Ministry. The ministry does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count.

Sister of Kim hints at resuming flying trash balloons toward South Korea

AP ■ SEOUL

The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed Sunday to respond to what she called a fresh South Korean civilian leafletting campaign, signalling North Korea would soon resume flying trash-carrying balloons across the border. Since late May, North Korea has floated numerous balloons carrying waste paper, scraps of cloth, cigarette butts and even manure toward South Korea on a series of late-night launch events, saying they were a tit-for-tat action against South Korean activists scattering political leaflets via their own balloons. No hazardous materials have been found. South Korea responded by suspending a 2018 tension-reduction deal with North Korea and resumed live-fire drills at border areas. In a statement carried by state media, Kim Yo Jong said that "dirty leaflets and things of (the South Korean)

scum" were found again in border and other areas in North Korea on Sunday morning. "Despite the repeated warnings of (North Korea), the (South Korean) scum are not stopping this crude and dirty play," she said. "We have fully introduced our countermeasure in such situation. The (South Korean) clans will be tired from suffering a bitter embarrassment and must be ready for paying a very high price for their dirty play," Kim Yo Jong said. North Korea last sent rubbish-carrying balloons toward South Korea in late July. It wasn't immediately known if, and from which activists' group in South Korea, balloons were sent to North Korea recently. For years, groups led by North Korean defectors have floated huge balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang leaflets, USB sticks containing K-pop songs and South Korean drama, and US dollar bills toward North Korea. Experts say North

Korea views such balloons campaigns as a grave provocation that can threaten its leadership because it bans official access to foreign news for most of its 26 million people. On June 9, South Korea redeployed gigantic loudspeakers along the border for the first time in six years, and resumed anti-North Korean propaganda broadcasts. South Korean officials say they don't restrict activists from flying leaflets to North Korea, in line with a 2023 constitutional court ruling that struck down a contentious law criminalising such leafletting, calling it a violation of free speech. Kim Yo Jong's statement came a day after North Korea's Defence Ministry threatened to bolster its nuclear capability and make the US and South Korea pay "an unimaginably harsh price" as it slammed its rivals' new defence guidelines that it says reveal an intention to invade the North.

Princess Kate at Wimbledon amid cancer revelation

London (AP): The Princess of Wales arrived at the All England Club on Sunday for the Wimbledon men's final, only her second public appearance since announcing she was diagnosed with cancer. Kate, wife of heir to the throne Prince William, was greeted by a standing ovation from the Centre Court crowd as she took her seat in the Royal Box before the start of the championship match between Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz. She and her 9-year-old daughter, Princess Charlotte, got to the site of the grass-court Grand Slam tournament in southwest London in a motorcade about a half-hour before the final was scheduled to begin. They went to a terrace at the club that is connected to the main stadium by a pedestrian walkway and greeted several people, including 2021 US Open champion Emma Raducanu and other young British tennis players. Kate was wearing a purple dress — one of Wimbledon's official

colours. She was joined in the front row of the Royal Box by her sister Pippa Matthews. Two rows behind them were actors Tom Cruise and Benedict Cumberbatch, while a number of former Wimbledon champions were also on hand — including Rod Laver, Andre Agassi and Stefan Edberg. Since 2016, the princess has been the patron of the All England Club, which hosts the Wimbledon each year. Her ceremonial duties include handing out the winner's trophies after the singles finals, although she was not on hand Saturday when Barbara Krackjickova defeated Jasmine Paolini for the women's title. Kate revealed in March that she has cancer and was undergoing chemotherapy. Her lone public appearance since then was attending last month's birthday parade for King Charles III. Before that event, she released a statement saying she was "making good progress" but still had "good days and bad days."

Indian Consulate assists students in Houston amidst power outages after Hurricane Beryl

PTI ■ HOUSTON

The Indian mission here in the US state of Texas is assisting hundreds of students from the country who are badly affected by widespread power outages in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl's devastation. Nearly a million homes and businesses remain without essential services, plunging life in the region into uncertainty due to the impact of the hurricane. The Category 1 storm, though the weakest yet, knocked out power to nearly 2.7 million customers after it made landfall in Texas on Monday, according to US media reports. Consul General of India, D C Manjunath, personally visited local educational institutions, including the University of Houston, to assess the well-being of Indian students amidst the catastrophe. Despite the challenges posed by the hurricane, the consulate continued its consular services, providing emergency provisions and support.

Reflecting on the situation, Consul General Manjunath emphasised, "None of us are immune to nature's fury. As Houston authorities work tirelessly to restore power, we are committed to assisting Indian students with critical supplies during this challenging time." He also expressed gratitude to local Indian community organisations such as SEWA, BAPS, and VPSS for their tireless efforts in supporting the community during this crisis. The resilience of Houston residents is being severely tested as frustrations boil over among the millions still grappling with the aftermath of Beryl. CenterPoint Energy reports that approximately 860,000 customers remain without power, despite restoring service to over 1.4 million since the hurricane struck. The struggle continues for many enduring a week without electricity, forced to discard spoiled food and face uncertain living conditions amidst scorching temperatures. Hurricane Beryl's toll has been

staggering, with at least 11 fatalities in the US and nine in the Caribbean, including three in Houston due to extreme heat exacerbated by prolonged power outages. Residents of hard-hit areas like Flamingo Island in Fort Bend County have resorted to desperate measures, sleeping in cars or seeking refuge in scarce hotel rooms as their homes remain uninhabitable. In a glimmer of hope, Indian-origin Fort Bend County Judge KP George announced Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approval for individual disaster assistance, providing much-needed relief to residents facing immense hardship. As temperatures soar, the National Weather Service has issued a Heat Advisory for the Houston area, compounding the challenges faced by those enduring the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl without basic utilities. Local authorities and nonprofits have opened cooling centres to provide respite for vulnerable residents struggling in

the oppressive heat. Texas Governor Greg Abbott's call for an investigation into CenterPoint's response reflects mounting public anger and frustration over the utility's handling of the crisis. Vulnerable populations, including those reliant on refrigerated medications, continue to suffer disproportionately amidst the ongoing chaos. The resilience and unity of Houston's community are being severely tested in the wake of Beryl, highlighting both the strength and vulnerabilities of a city grappling with a disaster of unprecedented scale. The fallout from Hurricane Beryl has pushed residents of Houston to their limits, with those fortunate enough seeking refuge in hotels while others endure unbearable conditions in their homes or vehicles. Emergency services are stretched thin, responding to a surge in heat-related emergencies as hospitals strive to cope using backup generators.

First Titanic voyage in 14 years follows submersible tragedy

Portland (US) (AP): The company that owns the salvage rights to the Titanic is undertaking its first expedition to the ship's wreckage in years, and those involved in the mission said they have both heavy hearts and lofty goals for a trip happening a year after a submersible disaster involving another firm killed five people. RMS Titanic Inc., a Georgia-based firm, holds the legal rights to salvage the wreck of the ship, which sank in the North Atlantic Ocean in 1912. The company's first expedition to the site since 2010 launched Friday from Providence, Rhode Island. The voyage arrives as the worldwide community of undersea explorers is still reeling from the deadly implosion of an experimental submersible en route to the Titanic in June 2023. The Titan submersible disaster killed all five people on board, including Paul-Henri Nargeolet, who was director of underwater research for RMS Titanic. This summer's mission to the Titanic "means even more with the passing" of

Nargeolet, known as "Mr. Titanic" by many, RMST Inc. president Jessica Sanders said. The expedition will use modern imaging technology and remotely operated vehicles to capture detailed images of the Titanic, the wreckage site and the debris field, RMST Inc. representatives said. "This monumental undertaking will allow us to document the Titanic in unprecedented detail and share new discoveries from the wreck site with the public, continuing the extraordinary work and passion of PH," Sanders said. The ship headed to the site, the Dingo Chouest, will take several days to reach the site and is slated to return around Aug. 13, said Jon Hammond, a spokesperson for RMST Inc. The work will allow the company to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current condition of the Titanic wreckage site and a detailed assessment of artifacts that can be safely targeted for future recovery, RMST Inc. representatives said. Nargeolet made more than 35 dives to the Titanic in his lifetime.

Bastille Day parade intersects with Olympic torch relay in unique year

AP ■ PARIS

Paris hosted an extra-special guest for France's national holiday on Sunday — the Olympic flame lighting up the city's grandiose military parade for Bastille Day. Just 12 days before the French capital hosts exceptionally ambitious and high-security Summer Games, the torch relay joined up with thousands of soldiers, sailors, rescuers and medics marching in Paris beneath roaring fighter jets. While people around France mark the day with concerts, parties and fireworks, here's a look at what the holiday's about, and what's different this year: What does Bastille Day celebrate? On July 14, 1789, revolutionaries stormed the Bastille fortress and prison in Paris, heralding the start of the French

Revolution and the end of the monarchy. The holiday is central to the French calendar, with events across the country. It aims to embody the national motto of 'liberty, equality and fraternity', though not everyone in France feels the country lives up to that promise. The Paris parade is the holiday's highlight. This year, it paid tribute to those who freed France from Nazi occupation 80 years ago, with a re-enactment of the D-Day landings of June 6, 1944, and a presentation by service members from the 31 countries whose troops contributed to the liberation. About half are African nations that were under French colonial rule during World War II. Some 4,000 people and 162 horses marched in the tightly choreographed show, among



them units that served in NATO missions in eastern Europe, against Islamic extremists in the Sahel, protecting French territories in the South Pacific and global shipping corridors. They were joined this year by three German officers from a cross-border brigade. The ornamental uniforms are rich in symbolism — most notably those of the French Foreign Legion sappers, with long beards, leather aprons and axes from their original role as route-clearers for advancing armies. Overhead, 65 aircraft flew in formations, including a British Typhoon fighter alongside French Mirages and Rafales, rescue helicopters and aircraft used in missions from Afghanistan to Mali or international drug busts. President Emmanuel Macron

kicked Sunday's events off with a review of the troops. Military bands and choirs played an important role, performing a medley of French military songs, American jazz tunes, a Scottish bagpipe ballad — and the Marseillaise. The numbers are scaled back compared with previous years, because of Olympics security measures. Around 130,000 police are deployed around France for the holiday weekend. This year's Bastille Day offered Macron a moment of distraction from the political turmoil he unleashed with snap elections that weakened his pro-business centrist party and his presidency. The result left a deadlocked parliament with no one clearly in charge. The prime minister could leave office within days, while the left-wing alliance that won the

most seats is struggling to agree on a proposed replacement. Meanwhile, Russia's war in Ukraine is threatening Europe's security. At a meeting with military leaders on Saturday, Macron said France will keep up support for Ukraine and called for higher defence spending next year because of 'approaching threats'. The Olympic torch relay reached Paris just in time. The parade wrapped up with the arrival of the flame, escorted by riders on horseback, 25 torchbearers, and cadets dressed in the five Olympic colours forming the shapes of the five interlocking Olympic rings. The first torchbearer was Col. Thibault Vallette, equestrian gold medalist in the 2016 Rio Olympics, who passed it on to a group of young athletes smiling broadly as they passed it

hand-to-hand in front of the presidential tribune. Usually, the parade travels from the Napoleon-era Arc de Triomphe to the Concorde plaza, where France's last king and queen were beheaded. This year, Concorde has been transformed into a huge Olympic venue for breakdancing, skateboarding and BMX. So the parade route headed to the Bois de Boulogne park on the city's edge instead. Olympic venue construction around the Eiffel Tower means spectators can't gather beneath the monument to watch its annual fireworks show, either. After its Bastille Day appearance, the torch relay will swing by Notre Dame Cathedral, the historic Sorbonne university and the Louvre Museum before heading to other Paris landmarks on Monday.

Ensuring stability a tough task as veteran leader Oli returns as PM

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

K P Sharma Oli, a wily politician who has wrecked many governments in Nepal in the past and endangered ties with India during his first tenure, has a tough task ahead as the new prime minister amidst frequent political turmoil. Almost on predictable lines, the Oli-led Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), which is the largest party in the ruling coalition, withdrew support from the government led by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' last week. Oli, 72, ditched his one-time friend Prachanda to join hands with his foe-turned-friend Sher Bahadur Deuba, leading the largest party in the House of Representatives, the Nepali Congress for the remaining 40 months of Parliament. President Ramchandra Paudel on Sunday appointed CPN-UML Chairman Oli as the prime minister of Nepal. This is Oli's fourth stint as the country's chief executive. Since 2008, when the erstwhile monarchy was formally abolished and Nepal adopted an interim Constitution, it has had 13 different governments with Dahal, Deuba, and Oli serving multiple terms as prime minister akin to a musical chair. Oli, seen as a pro-China leader, on Thursday defended his party's decision to ditch 'Prachanda' and form a coalition government with the Nepali Congress, saying it was required for maintaining political stability and development of the country. Gunaraj Luitel, chief editor of Nagarik Daily, explaining one of the main reasons that possibly motivated 72-year-old Oli to go for the prime minister's chair again, said: "Sidelining the ambitious smaller parties (by bigger parties) is the main cause of political instability in Nepal, especially given the party positions in provincial governments." "Governments have become unstable in the provinces as smaller parties having one or two seats are also claiming the chief minister's position," he

pointed out. Therefore, it was necessary for the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML to come together and share power to end political disorder and chaotic situation in the country," Luitel said about the CPN-UML supremo, who had joined the Communist Party of Nepal in February 1970. Oli served as the country's prime minister from October 11, 2015, to August 3, 2016, during which Kathmandu's ties with New Delhi were strained, and then, from February 5, 2018, to May 13, 2021. He continued to serve from May 13, 2021, to July 13, 2021 — because of an appointment by the then President Bidya Devi Bhandari, described by local media as a success of Oli's Machiavellian tricks. Later, the Supreme Court ruled that Oli's claim to the post of prime minister was unconstitutional. During his first term, Oli had publicly criticised India for interfering in Nepal's internal matters and accused the southern neighbour of toppling his government. In 2015, when Nepal adopted the new federal, democratic Constitution, the ethnic Madhesi group, populated mostly by people of Indian origin in the Terai region, protested for months claiming discrimination. The issue did strain Indo-Nepal ties but Oli agreed to form a Nepal-India Eminent Persons' Group (EPG). Then, ahead of assuming office for the second term, he promised to forge a partnership with India to move his country towards the path of economic prosperity. During his second term, Oli claimed that efforts were being made to oust him after his government redrew Nepal's political map by incorporating three strategically key Indian territories, a move that again strained ties between the two countries. India had termed as "untenable" the "artificial enlargement" of the territorial claims by Nepal after its Parliament unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura areas, which India maintains belong to it.



Further in July 2020, Oli ruffled Indian feathers claiming that India had appropriated Ram and that real Ayodhya was in Nepal, forcing Nepal's Foreign Ministry to issue a clarification. Oli's tilt towards the neighbouring countries has been a flip-flop in the past, according to an analyst, who preferred to remain anonymous. "Once he was seen as close to India, but later he chose to be close to the northern neighbour (China). Under the leadership of Oli, UML contested the election in 2015 with an anti-India slogan when India imposed a kind of blockade against Nepal," the analyst said. "However, to his benefit, Oli's introduction of the new political map of Nepal with the inclusion of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhuri territories projected him as a nationalist leader," the analyst noted. But before staking claim to form the new government on Friday, Oli-led CPN-UML said the landlocked Himalayan nation could attain economic prosperity only by maintaining close friendly relations with India. "CPN-UML doesn't believe that Nepal can progress or the interest of Nepalese people could be promoted by pursuing anti-India policy," Dr Rajan Bhattarai, the Foreign Affairs Department chief and Standing Committee member of the CPN-UML, told PTI in an interview. He said the party's chairman Oli wants to take Nepal-India relations to a new height as per the demand of the 21st century. However, one has to wait and watch his actions in the coming months on how the new prime

minister will deal with India and China, especially on Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative projects in the country. Born on February 22, 1952, in Eastern Nepal, Oli is the eldest child of Mohan Prasad and Madhumaya Oli but was raised by his grandmother. His wife, Rachana Shakya, is also a communist activist and the two had met in the course of party activities. Oli started his political career as a student activist in 1966 by joining the fight against the autocratic Panchayat System under the direct rule of the King. He joined the Communist Party of Nepal in February 1970 but went underground soon after, and the same year, he was arrested for the first time. One of the few political leaders in Nepal, Oli spent 14 consecutive years from 1973 to 1987 in jail. After his release from prison, he became a central committee member of UML until 1990. Following the 1990s democratic movement that brought down the Panchayat regime opposed by the communists, Oli became a popular name in the country. In 1991, he became the founding chairman of Prajatantrik Rastriya Yuwa Sangh, the youth wing of the party. He was elected as a member of the House of Representatives for the first time from the Jhapa district in 1991 and served as the minister of home affairs from 1994-1995. He was re-elected from Jhapa in 1999. He had served as deputy prime minister during the interim government led by Girija Prasad Koirala in 2006. Oli was elected as leader of the CPN-UML Parliamentary Party in the Second Constituent Assembly on February 4, 2014, and further consolidated his position when he became the prime minister for the first time. Now Oli has the tough task of keeping his unusual coalition with the Nepali Congress intact and providing political stability to Nepal which has had 13 governments in the last 16 years, indicating the fragile nature of the Himalayan nation's political system.

2 Indians held in Italy for enslaving 33 countrymen on farms

Rome (PTI): Two Indian nationals have been arrested for allegedly enslaving 33 farm labourers, all from India, in Italy's Verona province, according to a media report, weeks after the country was shocked by the tragic death of a Sikh farm worker who bled to death. Finance police also seized assets worth 475,000 euros from the suspects, who own two agricultural sector companies with no employees on the books and are allegedly total tax evaders, ANSA news agency reported on Saturday. The two alleged gangmasters were arrested on Saturday and are under investigation for crimes, including enslavement and labour exploitation, the Italian news agency said. The issue of modern forms of slavery in Italy recently came to the fore of media attention following the case of 31-year-old Sikh farm labourer Satnam Singh, who bled to death after being abandoned by his employer after a strawberry wrapping machine severed his arm in Lazio, near Rome, last month. Singh, who was an Indian national, died due to "copious bleeding", the ANSA news agency earlier reported. On June 26, India asked Italy to take prompt action against those responsible for Singh's death. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said last month that Singh, one of thousands of Indian immigrants who work the fields in the country, was the victim of "inhuman acts". "These are inhuman acts that do not belong to the Italian people. I hope that this barbarity will be punished harshly," she said following a Cabinet meeting. Gangmastering and the often violent exploitation of migrant farm labourers is a chronic problem in Italy, especially in the south of the country. Latina hosts thousands of immigrant labourers, many of them Sikhs, working picking fruit and vegetables for the local 'agro-mafia', according to Italian media reports.



A woman swings on a swing in Venaio beach in Pedasi, Panama, on Saturday

AP/PTI

Death toll rises to five in Nepal twin bus tragedy

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Rescuers in Nepal on Sunday found the body of a person who went missing when two buses were swept into a swollen river by a mudslide last week in Chitwan district, police said, taking the death toll to five, including that of an Indian. The rescue team on Sunday found the fifth body at Gairidhar-7 while searching for passengers after two buses carrying 65 passengers, including seven Indians, went missing in the flooded Trishuli River on Friday. The landslide happened in the Simaltal area along the Narayanghat-Mugling road in Chitwan district. Three people swam to safety soon after the incident. So far only five bodies, including that of an Indian, have been recovered during the search operation, My Republica news portal quoted a police official as saying. The identity of three dead, including the Indian national who carried an Indian Identity Card in his pocket, has been

revealed while the bodies of two others are yet to be identified, the official added. The first body from the buses was recovered on Saturday morning from 50 km away from the accident site. The deceased was identified as Rishi Pal Shahi, 40, from Bihar, police said. The body was found half covered by sand in the Narayani River of Chitwan district, police said, adding that he was carrying an Indian ID. The rescuers in the afternoon recovered two more dead bodies from the Gairidhar area in East Nawalparasi district, police said, adding that both the deceased were Nepali nationals who were missing in the accident. They were passengers of the bus heading towards Kathmandu from Birgunj, they said. Besides Shahi, the other missing Indian nationals were identified as Santosh Thakur, Surendra Sah, Adit Miyaan, Sunil, Shah Nawaj Alam, and Ansari. There were 24 people, includ-

ing seven Indian nationals, on board a bus heading towards Kathmandu from Birgunj and another bus heading to Gaur from Kathmandu was carrying 30 local people. The two buses fell into the river as the landslide accompanied by muddy water, triggered by heavy rain, swept them away. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and Chitwan District Police Office spokesperson Bhes Raj Rijal, the deceased Indian national was a passenger of the bus which was heading to Gaur from Kathmandu. My Republica news portal reported. Shahi was originally from the Rajmuna area of Bihar's Motihari city and used to live and work in Nepal, the report said, quoting his brother. More than 500 security personnel, including from the Nepali Army and Nepal Police, along with deep divers were mobilised for the search operation, police said. The security personnel are also using motor boats and drones for the rescue operation, they said.

6 people killed in road mishap in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

At least six people, including children, were killed and seven others injured when a jeep plunged into a river in northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday, police said. The accident occurred in the Upper Chitral district of the province when the 14-seater jeep they were travelling in skidded off a mountainous track and fell into the Chitral River, the police said. The rescue teams retrieved the dead bodies and moved them to the hospital. The injured were shifted to a hospital. Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur expressed profound grief and sorrow over the tragic road accident. Gandapur directed hospital authorities to provide the best medical treatment to the injured.

Tough road ahead for Imran despite back-to-back judicial relief

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Despite back-to-back judicial relief to beleaguered Imran Khan, his woes are far from over and Pakistan's former prime minister remains in jail with his wife Bushra Bibi. A district and session court on Saturday overturned the conviction of 71-year-old Khan and his wife Bushra, 49, in the un-Islamic marriage case related to the violation of the mandatory waiting period for a Muslim woman between two marriages. The relief came a day after the Supreme Court in a key judgment declared that his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was eligible for the seats reserved for women and minorities in the national and four provincial assemblies. The PTI will become the largest party in the National Assembly with 109 seats after the Supreme Court ruling. Two successive victories for Khan were being interpreted as some kind of change of heart on the part of the powerful establishment towards the PTI and its founder, but the subsequent developments belie any

such possibility. The court in the Iddat case verdict stated that Khan and his wife should be released "if not required to be detained in any other case" and anticipating his release a large number of PTI supporters accompanied by key leaders reached the Adiala Jail Rawalpindi, where they have been kept, to welcome them. But the PTI feared countermeasures by the government and announced that Khan would be arrested in three cases related to May 9 violence. However, it emerged that he and his wife were taken into custody by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a fresh Toshakhana corruption case. Khan and his wife during his government allegedly obtained gifts from the gift repository at low prices and sold them at higher rates. It is the third Toshakhana case and Khan's sentence in the two previous Toshakhana cases had been suspended by the Islamabad High Court. The new case alleged that the couple got some precious watches and other gifts from



the state depository by violating rules. Khan faces a slew of cases launched against him since his ouster from power in April 2022 after he fell out with the establishment which was believed to be instrumental in bringing him to power. Despite dozens of cases against him and several party leaders, he has kept up his rhetoric by attacking the senior Army leadership, and his supporters churning out half-baked stories against the establishment on social media. The Army this month after a key meeting termed the attack

on social media as "digital terrorism", calling it "unwarranted criticism by some quarters". Army commanders stated that the onslaught of politically motivated digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators, duly abetted by their foreign cohorts against state institutions is meant to induce despondency in the nation and sow discord through the peddling of blatant lies, fake news and propaganda. The forum affirmed that military leadership is cognizant of the full spectrum of the challenges and resolved to shoulder its constitutionally mandated responsibilities with the support of the resilient people of Pakistan. Khan on his side uses the presence of media on the occasion of hearing cases against him in the Adiala Jail to fire salvos at rivals, showing unflinching resolve to fight. He also reiterates not to spare his tormentors. His own X handle is active, apparently operated by someone on his behalf, charging his opponents from the Army and civilians with an unwavering commitment. The same attitude has been displayed by his party leaders

who often compete with each other to breathe more fire than others. All this had added to his hardships despite getting relief from the courts regularly. In the latest arrest, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is expected to produce Khan and his wife before an accountability judge to seek their physical remand. Under the law, NAB can detain a person for 40 days on remand for investigation. As courts operate within rules, it is not easy for his legal team to secure his release. The circuitous legal battle is getting more entangled due to the official opposition to his release from jail. Recently, political advisor to Prime Minister, Rana Sanaullah, reportedly stated that new cases would be lodged against Khan in the coming days. Talking to the reporters in Lahore on June 15, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal stated that Khan's detention for the next five years was necessary to bring economic stability. "People come to us and tell us if Pakistan has to progress then Imran Khan will have to be kept in jail for five years," he said.

Ex-PM, wife handed over to anti-graft body on remand in fresh case

Islamabad (PTI): A court in Pakistan on Sunday handed over jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to the country's anti-corruption officials on an eight-day remand for probe in a fresh case of alleged corruption. The former first couple was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) soon after a district and sessions court on Saturday quashed their conviction in their un-Islamic marriage case. The court's short order also stated to release Khan and Bibi immediately unless they were wanted in other cases. The NAB, which filed a new Toshakhana case against the couple, on Sunday presented them before Judge Muhammad Ali Warraich of the accountability court. The judge conducted the hearing inside the Adiala Jail due to security reasons. NAB Deputy

Director Mohsin Haroon, who led the team to arrest them, requested their physical remand and the court, after hearing the lawyers, agreed to grant an eight-day remand. The court then ordered to present the two on July 22. The remand period can be extended to a maximum of 40 days at the request of NAB if it is needed to probe the suspects. The new Toshakhana case is based on the accusation that the couple during Khan's government purchased gifts from the state depository in violation of rules. This is the third Toshakhana case and Khan's sentence in the two previous Toshakhana cases had been suspended by the Islamabad High Court. Last week, the Supreme Court declared that PTI was eligible for the seats reserved for women and minorities in the National Assembly and four provincial assemblies.

China's Communist Party leadership to unveil new reforms to halt economic slowdown

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's ruling Communist Party headed by President Xi Jinping will begin its four-day key economic review meeting on Monday to finalise a new set of economic reforms to revitalise the country's economy hamstrung by the persistent slowdown that has sparked concerns at home and abroad. The meeting called the third Plenum to be attended by 376 full and alternate members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee will meet from Monday to Thursday to primarily examine issues related to comprehensively deepening reforms and advancing Chinese modernisation, according to an official announcement earlier. The meeting to be presided

over by President Xi who also heads the party aroused global attention as the world's second-largest economy worth USD 18 trillion was unable to shake off its slow-down mode, especially after the COVID-19 lockdowns. The party's powerful Politburo presided over by Xi finalised the draft for the discussion at the Plenum, CPC's top economic policy body on June 27. The draft has thoroughly analysed the new situations and problems in advancing Chinese modernisation and scientifically planned the overall arrangements for further deepening reforms, official media reported. While announcing the meeting, the Politburo, in a rare admission, spoke of the grim economic outlook in the country due to insufficient demand and uncertain exter-

nal environment. The meeting spoke of the difficult situation at home and abroad for Chinese enterprises. Referring to the increasing measures by the US and EU to restrict Chinese high-tech products especially electric vehicles (EVs), the meeting "cautioned against challenges, such as insufficient demand, high operation pressure facing enterprises, and an external environment that is more complicated, grimmer and more uncertain". In a bid to come out of the stagnating economic situation, China in the last few years focussed its resources to build a massive overcapacity in EVs which it hopes to sell around the world. But both the US and EU have slapped heavy tariff duties and restrictions to limit Chinese imports. Amid a difficult economic

situation, the CPC wants to build a "high-standard" socialist market economy by 2035. The system and capacity for governance will be basically modernised, and socialist modernisation will be basically achieved by 2035, the announcement said. The IMF top brass which reviewed the status of China's economy with Chinese officials in May here cautioned Chinese leaders that the country's economy faces further slowdown and may contract to 3.3 per cent by 2029 due to ageing and slower productivity growth. "China's economic growth is projected to remain resilient at 5 percent in 2024 and slow to 4.5 percent in 2025" IMF's First Deputy Managing Director Gita Gopinath told media after the IMF's annual

review of China's economic policies. Over the medium term, growth is expected to decelerate to 3.3 per cent by 2029 due to ageing and slower productivity growth, she said. "Furthermore, risks are tilted to the downside, including a greater- or longer-than-expected property sector adjustment and increasing fragmentation pressures," the Indian-American economist, said. China's property sector, the dominant component of the Chinese economy, in the last few years turned out to be its Achilles heel causing wide-spread crisis as many of the top builders went bankrupt. After prolonged dithering, China finally moved in to address the near collapse of its mammoth property sector by allotting billions of dollars to

buy back unsold homes and repurchase idle lands to resurrect its bankrupt real estate sector, which once constituted the mainstay of its economic growth. The People's Bank of China has established a 300-billion-yuan (about USD 42.25 billion) re-lending facility for government-subsidised housing projects. Gopinath said the ongoing housing market correction, which is necessary for steering the sector towards a more sustainable path, should continue, she said. "China faces significant fiscal challenges, especially for local governments," she said, referring to the huge debt burden by the provincial and local governments in the country. Sustained fiscal consolidation over the medium term is needed to stabilise debt while restructuring the unsustain-

able debt of local government financing vehicles can help reduce fiscal strains, she said. According to Luo Zhiheng, chief economist at Guangzhou-based Yuekai Securities, China's hidden local debt was estimated to be at a whopping USD 4.44 trillion. Gopinath also underlined the US, EU and global concerns over overcapacity of the Chinese manufacturing sector especially, E-vehicles which China is pushing in a big way in the global markets bringing down their prices and urged Beijing to scale back such policies. "China's use of industrial policies to support priority sectors can lead to a mis-allocation of domestic resources and potentially affect trading partners", Gopinath said. "Scaling back such policies

and removing trade and investment restrictions would raise domestic productivity and ease fragmentation pressures. In this context, China should continue its efforts to strengthen the multilateral trading system, particularly the World Trade Organisation," Gopinath said. Steve Barnett, the IMF's senior resident representative in China, said the plenum should look to continue with economic reforms to boost productivity as it rolls out plans for the next decade. "If we think of the third plenum as a time to look at medium- and long-term reforms, if I could pick just one [pressing issue to focus on], it's to boost productivity," Barnett said. The way to do that is to continue with economic reforms, he added.

Continue 45-day MSME payment rule, industry body urges FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Industry body SME Chamber of India has urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to continue the 45-day MSME payment rule for corporates and other buyers. According to Section 43B(h) of the Income Tax Act, introduced through the Finance Act 2023, if a larger company does not pay an MSME on time -- within 45 days in case of written agreements -- it cannot deduct that expense from its taxable income, leading to potentially higher taxes. The government in last year's Budget added a new clause under Section 43B of the Income Tax Act to address the challenge of delayed payments faced by MSMEs in the country. "We are pursuing not to change the 45-day MSME payment rules imposed by the Department under the pressure of corporates or multinational companies to



save the life span of the MSME sector. Section 43B(h) of the Income Tax Act reinforces the importance of timely payments by mandating that companies settle payments to MSME vendors within 45 days to qualify for deductions," SME Chamber said in a statement

addressed to Sitharaman. The industry body argued that this provision serves as a powerful incentive for companies to adhere to payment timelines, thereby supporting the financial health of MSMEs. "Many MSMEs are NPA victims of corporates, who are buying from them and not dealing through the TReDs platform. Most of the corporates and multinational companies are forcefully insisting to deregister from the Udyam Portal and insisting not to deal through the TReDs platform," SME Chamber stated. The industry body also urged the finance minister to consider providing Rs 5 crore loans under the "Differential Rate of Interest" scheme for micro and small enterprises. It suggested changing the NPA definition from 90 days to 180 days for the MSME sector. The chamber also sought the setting up of a task force to review various issues, hurdles, grievances and difficulties faced by MSMEs for availing credit facilities and the lack of approach by the financial institutions towards enhancement of credit flow to the MSME sector.

Govt will pay bond interest dues of MTNL, there will be no default: DoT sources

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The government will pay the bond dues of ailing Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL), a DoT source said assuring that there will be no default, and that the amount will be paid before the due date of July 20. The move assumes significance as it would avert a looming crisis for the telecom corporation which is being seen teetering on the brink with regard to its debt obligations that are becoming due. All eyes are on MTNL, ever since the debt-laden firm last week expressed its inability to make interest payments to certain bondholders due to paucity of funds. Telecom Department sources said that the government will step in and pay the said dues, and asserted that there won't be any default on the same. In this particular case, where the second semi-annual interest (7.59 per cent) on certain bonds is falling due on July 20, 2024, DoT sources said that "the dues will be



paid before the date". Amid mounting financial woes, MTNL last week informed in a statutory filing that it is unable to make interest payments to certain bondholders "due to insufficient funds". "The second semi annual interest with regard to 7.59 per cent MTNL's bond series...is due on July 20, 2024. As per the structured payment mechanism of Tripartite agreement (TPA) signed among MTNL, Department of Telecom and Beacon Trusteeship Ltd, MTNL has to fund the semi-annual interest into the Escrow account with

adequate amount 10 days before the due date," it said. MTNL informed that in the wake of provisions of TPA, and due to insufficient funds, it could not fund the escrow account with an adequate amount. MTNL, which offers telecom services in Delhi and Mumbai, has seen a steady erosion in its subscriber base over the past years. MTNL's losses mounted to Rs 3,267.5 crore for FY24, from Rs 2,915.1 crore in FY23. The revenue from operations for the year ended March 2024 fell to Rs 798.56 crore, down 14.6 per cent from a year ago. In an update on MTNL on July 12, India Ratings and Research said it "received an intimation from the trustee dated 11 July 2024, confirming that the escrow account is not funded by T-10 days from the due date of payment of the interest which is due on 20 July 2024. "This breach of condition of the debenture trustee deed is considered as event of default, as per the intimation received by the agency. Ind-Ra has also

received confirmation from the trustee that as per the structured payment mechanism, if the designated trust and retention account is not funded to the requisite extent by (T-8)th day that is by end of day 12 July 2024, the trustees shall forthwith invoke the government of India guarantee by sending a notice of invocation to the Government of India by 12 July 2024 end of day," Ind-Ra said. The term 'T' here refers to the due date for interest or principal payments. "Ind-Ra has an outstanding rating of 'IND AAA(CE)/Stable on these bonds, based on the presence of a pre-default guarantee from the parent, GoI, along with a structured payment mechanism monitored by a third-party trustee. As per the payment structure mechanism, the GoI shall deposit requisite funds in the designated trust and retention account as per the notice of invocation served by the trustees latest by T-3rd day," Ind-Ra said.

Builders cut project completion time in top 7 cities: Anarock

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Real estate developers across seven major cities are taking an average 18-20 per cent less time to complete a project because of tight regulations and the use of latest construction technologies, according to Anarock. Real estate consultant Anarock data analysed all projects that were launched and completed between 2010-2019 and 2014-H1 2024 across the top seven cities. In the last decade, the average time taken to complete smaller projects of less than 500 units across these seven cities was four years, while builders took 4.9 years to complete large projects of more than 500 units each. During 2010-19 period, the average time taken by builders was 4.9 years for small projects and 6.1 years for larger ones. So, the average completion time across seven major cities has fallen by 18 per cent in small projects and 20 per cent in large projects during the period under review. "The stringent rules imposed on project delays by the regulatory authorities have also been a key factor in reducing the completion time," Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said. As per the data, builders in Chennai took the least time to complete both small and large projects in the last 10 years. Maximum completion time for large projects was in Kolkata, while for small projects Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Delhi-NCR took highest time period. For all projects launched and completed between 2014 and



H1 2024, Anarock data showed that the average completion time in Chennai was 3.6 years for larger projects and 3 years for small projects. Among other cities, the consultant data showed builders in Kolkata took 5.7 years for larger projects and 4.4 years for smaller ones. In Mumbai Metropolitan Region, it took an average of 4.7 years to complete small projects, and around 5.2 years for large projects. The average project completion time in Pune was 4.3 years for small projects, and 5.4 years for large ones. In Delhi-NCR, homebuyers waited an average of 4.7 years for small projects and 5.4 years for large ones. Builders in Hyderabad took 3.1 years for small projects and 4.2 years for large projects. In Bengaluru, it was 3.5 years for small projects and 4.8 years for large ones during the last 10 years. According to the data, the reduction of completion time for larger projects is in the range of 10 per cent to 36 per cent across these seven cities. The fall in execution time is in the range of 8 per cent to 30 per cent in case of smaller projects.

India to see retail digital payments to double to USD 7 tn by 2030: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
With digital adoption fast gaining currency, India is likely to see retail digital payments double to USD 7 trillion by 2030 from current levels, a study by Kearney and Amazon Pay said. In the report 'How Urban India Pays', Kearney-Amazon Pay said strong adoption of digital payments in online purchases has potentially led to a permanent shift in consumer behaviours, fuelling offline adoption as well. While 90 per cent of the respondents of the survey preferred digital payments when making online purchases, affluent consumers lead the way with the highest Degree of Digital Payment Usage (DDPU), tending to use various modes of digital payment for 80 per cent of their transactions. "Millennials and Gen X are leading in the adoption of all types of digital payment instruments," it said. "Men and women both use digital payments in about 72 per cent of their transactions, indicating gender parity." The research was based on an online survey of over 6,000 consumers along with more than 1,000 merchants through offline and online methods across 120 cities with representation from various regions, income groups, city categories, age brackets and genders. India has seen a surge in e-commerce, with the market valued at USD 75 billion to USD 80 billion in 2022 and expected to grow at a 21 per cent CAGR until 2030. "In line with India's digital journey, retail digital payments have grown dramatically over the past five years - from USD 300 billion in FY18 to USD 3.6 trillion in FY24. By FY30, they are likely



to double to USD 7 trillion," the report said. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has been a key driver of this growth, demonstrating a CAGR of 138 per cent in its volumes during FY18-24. Other instruments such as cards and digital wallets are also gaining in popularity, contributing 10 per cent of digital transaction value today. "With such dynamic developments, it is no wonder that India is a global frontrunner in the digital payment landscape, accounting for a stellar 46 per cent of the global digital transaction volumes in 2022," it said. Digital payments have penetrated small towns, with respondents in these areas highlighting that 65 per cent of their transactions are digital, while respondents in larger cities cited this ratio to be 75 per cent. "There is a strong correlation between a city's average DDPU and its retail potential, as measured by the Kearney India Retail Index, with the top six metros displaying both high DDPU and high retail potential," the report said. DDPU surpasses retail potential in some cities such

as Lucknow, Patna, Bhopal, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Ahmedabad and Pune, which have a high DDPU nearly matching that of larger metropolitan cities despite having a lower retail potential than the top six metros. The report said co-branded credit cards are gaining momentum. "Emerging methods such as buy now, pay later (BNPL), wearable payments and voice assistant-based payments are also starting to make inroads." Digital modes of payment constitute around 69 per cent of the total transaction volumes for the Indian merchants that were surveyed. Even street vendors such as paan shops, fruit and flower sellers, food stalls, and kirana stores are joining the digital payment brigade. "Challenges for merchant adoption mirror consumer concerns, emphasizing issues of financial fraud, limited connectivity and trust," it said. The report said the next wave of growth in digital payments will be fueled by increasing penetration in segments with lower DDPU, such as consumers in lower-income groups and smaller towns, along with enhancing the value of spending via digital modes of payment in

the higher DDPU segments by addressing their concerns. "All key stakeholders across the digital payments' ecosystem, including payment providers, the government, and value-added services players, will need to play a part in expanding digital payment adoption," it said. The focus areas should be empowering communities with financial education by launching target programmes to boost awareness of digital payments and new methods such as UPI Lite and UPI Lite X, especially for aspiring consumer segments, women in small towns, and street commerce merchants, to encourage higher adoption. Also, there is a need to create user-friendly consumer journeys by streamlining documentation and know-your-customer (KYC) processes, optimising user interfaces, and establishing responsive customer complaint resolution mechanisms, it said adding also there is a need to enhance digital infrastructure by addressing systems and network issues and exploring innovations such as UPI Lite X for areas with limited internet. Also, the risk of fraud has to be minimised and access to credit-based payment methods expanded by using alternate data for underwriting risk, developing innovative credit products and promoting credit education for financial health. "These areas can help India overcome challenges in the digital payment ecosystem by fostering a more inclusive, secure, and user-friendly environment, thereby enhancing the adoption of digital payments among consumers and merchants in India," it added.

Govt may introduce insurance laws amendment Bill in Budget session

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The government is likely to introduce a bill seeking amendments to the Insurance Act, 1938, during the upcoming Budget session to achieve 'Insurance for All by 2047'. Some of the provisions, which could be part of the amendment bill, include composite license, differential capital, reduction in solvency norms, issuing captive license, change in investment regulations, one-time registration for intermediaries and allowing insurers to distribute other financial products, sources said. The move will enable the entry of differentiated insurance companies like in the banking sector. The banking sector is currently categorised as universal bank, small finance bank, and payments bank. The provision of composite licenses would allow life insurers to underwrite health insurance or general insurance policies. As per the provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938, life insurers can only offer life insurance covers, while general insurers can offer non-insurance products like health, motor, fire, marine, etc. The Irdai does not allow composite licensing for insurance companies, which means that an insurance company cannot offer both life and non-life products as one entity. The draft bill is ready and it has to go to the Cabinet for its approval, sources said, adding that the finance ministry is hoping that it gets introduced in the upcoming session. The proposed amendments primarily focus on enhancing



the policyholders' interests, improving returns to the policyholders, facilitating the entry of more players leading to economic growth and employment generation, enhancing efficiencies of the insurance industry - operational as well as financial and enabling ease of doing business, sources said. The finance ministry in December 2022 invited comments on the proposed amendments to the Insurance Act, 1938, and the Insurance Regulatory Development Act, 1999. The Insurance Act, 1938, serves as the principal Act to provide the legislative framework for insurance in India. It provides the framework for the functioning of insurance businesses and regulates the relationship between an insurer, its policyholders, shareholders and the regulator Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India. According to the sources, the easing of capital norms can allow the entry of companies focused on micro-insurance, agriculture insurance, or insurance firms with a regional approach. The entry of more players in the sector would not only push penetration but result in greater job creation across India.

Govt should rope in PSU firms to ensure fermented organic manure off-take: IBA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Indian Biogas Association (IBA) has suggested that the government should rope in state-owned fertiliser marketing companies to ensure off-take of fermented organic manure to boost the sector. Talking to PTI in an interaction, IBA Chairman Gaurav Kedia said, "Present production of FOM (fermented organic manure) in the country roughly stands at 1 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTA), with an increased potential of up to 7 MMTA with present and upcoming 570 plants, which can serve almost a state like Rajasthan for its fertiliser demand". He informed that as per our latest data, there are around 97



functional CBG (compressed biogas) plants with an average production of 7.5 TPD (tonne per day) CBG and 30 TPD FOM per plant. There are estimated production of the FOM of around 1 million tonnes per annum, with a higher potential of up to 7 million tonnes per annum. Presently, he said, there are 570 CBG plants, with 165 plants

under construction, which are expected to be completed by this financial year and 405 plants yet to start construction. To support biogas producers and encourage organic farming, the government should consider roping in Fertilizer Marketing Companies (PSUs) for the off-take and distribution of Fermented Organic Manure (a product of biogas plant)," he said. The Department of Fertilizers must ensure that these companies (like IFFCO, KRIBHCO and NFL) provide adequate support for the co-marketing of FOM alongside chemical fertilisers through their dealer networks and other marketing channels, Kedia suggested. The ministry should mandate

that these companies issue an expression of interest (EOI) for the registration of FOM producers and the off-take from both centralised and decentralised biogas/bio-CNG plants, as per the Fertilizer Control Order (FCO) for solid and liquid FOM, he said. These companies should be linked at the root level to facilitate the application process for corresponding FOM producers within a specific geographical area, he noted. Given that FOM has 2 per cent NPK content and 70 per cent moisture content, the current production of 1 million metric tonnes of FOM can supply 6,000 tonnes of NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium) supplements, he explained.

Indian AC industry likely to double in next four years, says Blue Star

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The air-conditioning industry, valued at around Rs 27,500 crore (USD 3.3 billion), is likely to double in the next four years, Blue Star has said in its annual report. The Indian HVAC&R (heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigerating) is poised for exponential growth, said Blue Star Chairman & Managing Director Vir S Advani. This growth would be driven by factors such as "low penetration" of room ACs and the burgeoning middle-class consumers with "high disposable incomes", especially from smaller Tier III, IV & V markets. "The Indian The overall AC industry (both residential and commercial), currently valued at around Rs 27,500 crore, is likely to double in the next four years," Advani said in his

address to the company's shareholders in the annual report for 2023-24. The company is "optimistic" about its future business outlook, given the changing weather pattern, resulting in hotter summers coupled with a new and resilient product portfolio in residential and commercial air-conditioning. Blue Star has rolled out a 3-year strategic plan to strengthen its core capabilities, acquire new capabilities, build new processes, and adapt innovative technologies, Advani added. It also specifies details of investments to support these growth plans. "In FY25, the Company will continue to focus on growing faster than the market, margin improvement initiatives through a comprehensive Total Cost Management programme, prudent management on financial

capital, leadership development and succession planning," it said. The company expects its strong consumer insights of the domestic market coupled with its expertise, network of channel partners spread over 900 towns and a strong brand equity will place it in "good stead" to leverage the opportunities that the scale will bring in. "This will necessitate substantial investments in sales and distribution, R&D, manufacturing, supply chain and digitalisation," it said. Blue Star ended FY24 with a revenue growth of 21.4 per cent to Rs 9,685.36 crores. The company, which has completed 80 years, has improved its market share in the room air-conditioner (RAC) during the year, which is estimated to be at 13.75 per cent compared to 13.50 per cent in FY23.

Govt proposes mandatory labelling for bulk pre-packaged commodities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The Consumer Affairs Ministry on Sunday proposed an amendment to the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011, seeking to mandate the declaration of key information on pre-packaged commodities weighing over 25 kg or measuring more than 25 litres sold in retail markets. The move aims to close a loophole that currently exempts such bulk packages from displaying crucial details like maximum retail price, best before date, manufacturer information, and country of origin. The proposed amendment would require makers, packers, and importers to provide comprehensive labelling on all pre-packaged goods intended for retail sale, regardless of quantity.



GOITRE CAUSES, PREVALENCE, AND MANAGEMENT



If you notice a swelling in your neck or have trouble swallowing or breathing, it's important to consult a doctor who can determine if you have a goitre and recommend the best treatment as per your needs. Dr Sunil Chumber, Head of the Department of Surgical Discipline, AIIMS Delhi and his team members share insight into disease causes and its management with **ARCHANA JYOTI**

The thyroid gland, shaped like a butterfly and located in the neck, can enlarge, causing a condition known as goitre. There are two main types: diffuse, where the gland enlarges uniformly, and multinodular (MNG), characterized by lumpy growths due to nodules. MNG develops gradually over years, potentially growing large enough to compress the food pipe and windpipe, leading to symptoms discussed in this article. Worldwide, goitre affects 500-600 million people, more prevalent in regions with insufficient dietary iodine. However the actual number is estimated to be about 167 million. MNG is said to be endemic when it affects more than 10 per cent of a given population. The Government of India in 2021 reports the



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prevalence of self-reported goitre to be at 2.9 per cent which increased from 2.1 per cent reported in 2016. The incidence in non-endemic regions is 0.1 per cent to 1.5 per cent. Non endemic goitre is more common in women and elderly. Overall it is three times more common in females than in males in both endemic and non-endemic regions. In

areas where goitres are common (endemic areas), nodules can form early in life, while in other places they appear later although many people may not even know they have a goitre until therein his or her late 40s and 50s. In India, the main endemic goitre belt is sub-Himalayan region and other pockets of endemic goitre are present in many states.

CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS

Understanding the cause of your thyroid enlargement helps in planning further treatment with your doctor. The thyroid is essential for regulating your body's metabolism. It does this via the production and secretion of thyroid hormone (thyroxine). When a goiter develops, it indicates that the gland is enlarged which happens due to issues with its functions.

AUTOIMMUNE THYROIDITIS Sometimes the body's immune cells (cells responsible for fighting outside germs) go haywire and attack the body's own cells, oftentimes triggered after an infection. When thyroid cells become the target, it can lead to accumulation of these cells inside the gland and cause destruction of the normal gland structure.

CANCER Although not a common cause, irregular growth of cancer cells can lead to nodule formation in the thyroid gland.

PREGNANCY AND GROWTH SPURT During pregnancy and puberty, there is increase in the demand of thyroid hormone in the body. These can cause temporary thyroid enlargement, usually associated with smooth enlargement and rarely causing nodule formation. These do not require any treatment.

GENETICS In some cases, genetic factors can affect how the thyroid works, leading to nodules.

UNKNOWN CAUSES Not all nodular goitre can be ascribed to an identifiable cause. Many times the cause of multinodular goitre remains unknown. Women, older adults and those with family members with similar condition have more chances of having nodular goitre. (To be concluded)

Here are some reasons why MNG can happen:

IODINE DEFICIENCY Iodine is required for the production of thyroid hormone in the thyroid gland. This production is under regulation by the hypothalamus and pituitary gland (small glands located near the brain) which produce chemicals called TRH and TSH. When there's not enough iodine, the thyroid enlarges in order to produce more hormones under the influence of TRH and TSH. The stimulation is not always continuous, and all the areas do not grow at the same rate leading to nodule formation. If the deficiency remains for a long time, the thyroid can enlarge to a very big size.

GOITROGENS Certain foods like cabbage, kale, broccoli, cassava contain substances that interfere with the production of thyroid hormones. When eaten in large amounts for a long period of time these can lead to enlargement of thyroid as it tries to overcome the interference.

SYMPTOMS AND CLINICAL FEATURES

Most multinodular goiters do not have symptoms and are identified on routine physical examination or incidentally on imaging. Patients with a toxic multinodular goiter may have signs and symptoms of hyperthyroidism (excessive thyroid hormone production). Some people with a nodular goiter feel or see a lump in their neck which is usually the main reason for seeking a doctor's opinion.

At times, during a scan done for other purposes nodules can be picked up in the thyroid. Patients can experience any other associated symptoms like, Feeling anxious or having trouble sleeping/ Feeling weak or tired/ weight loss in spite of good appetite/ Feeling one's rapid heartbeat/ heat intolerance and excessive sweating/ frequent



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bowel movements/ nervousness and restlessness/ tremors/ Thinning of hairs/ irregular menstruation (in women) If a nodular goitre is very large in size, it might cause compression on the food pipe or airway thereby causing the following symptoms: Wheezing/ coughing/ a choking

feeling (food or pills getting stuck in the throat)/ Difficulty in swallowing/Difficulty in breathing (especially when lying flat) These symptoms can happen if the goiter is huge and long standing or if it's growing into the chest, called a substernal goiter.

TYPES OF GOITRE



Preventing Monsoon Allergies in Children

Monsoon provides relief from summer but also brings allergic problems, especially for children, triggered by environmental factors prevalent in humid months. Recognising common allergies and their triggers can help parents take preventive measures, says **DR NEERAJ GUPTA**

Understanding common allergies can help parents take preventive measures. Here we go:

POLLEN ALLERGIES

One of the most common monsoon allergies is caused by pollen. As trees, grasses, and weeds release pollen into the air, children playing outdoors can inhale these tiny particles, leading to allergic rhinitis or hay fever. Symptoms include sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, and congestion. Dry and dusty environment often aggravates these symptoms. High pollen counts typically occur on dry, windy days, making it essential for parents to monitor pollen forecasts and limit outdoor activities when counts are high.

INSECT STINGS

Monsoon is prime time for insects like bees, wasps, and mosquitoes. Children are particularly vulnerable to insect stings, which can cause local allergic reactions characterized by redness, swelling, and itching at



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the sting site. In some cases, more severe reactions, such as anaphylaxis, can occur, requiring immediate medical attention. Using insect repellent and wearing protective clothing can help reduce the risk of stings.

CHLORINE SENSITIVITY

Swimming is a favourite children activity, but the chlorine used to

keep pool water clean can cause skin and eye irritations in sensitive children. Chlorine sensitivity can lead to red, itchy skin, and irritated eyes. Rinsing off after swimming and using hypoallergenic moisturizers can help alleviate symptoms.

MOLD AND DUST MITES ALLERGIES

Damp, humid conditions in monsoon can lead to the growth of mold, both indoors and outdoors. Dust mites thrive well in mattresses, pillows, curtains and carpets especially during warm and humid conditions. Both mold spores and aerosolized faecal pellets of dust mites can trigger allergic reactions such as coughing, wheezing, early morning sneezing and nasal congestion. Keeping indoor humidity levels low and ensuring proper ventilation can help prevent mold growth and reduce allergy symptoms. Adequate sunlight and cross ventilation in the



HEAT RASH

Heat rash occurs when sweat ducts become blocked, causing red, itchy bumps on the skin. It's common in hot, humid conditions and can be prevented by keeping the skin cool and dry. Dressing children in lightweight, breathable fabrics and keeping them in shaded or air-conditioned areas can minimize the risk.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Picnics and barbecues often feature foods like nuts, seafood,

and dairy, which are common allergens. Parents should ensure that children with known food allergies avoid trigger foods and always carry an epinephrine auto-injector in case of accidental exposure.

PREVENTION TIPS

- Ensure adequate sunlight and cross ventilation.
 - Keep windows closed during high pollen counts.
 - Use air conditioning with a clean filter to reduce indoor allergens.
 - Ensure children wash their hands and face after playing outside.
 - Use hypoallergenic sunscreen and lotions.
- By being aware of these common monsoon allergies and taking preventive steps, parents can help their children enjoy a symptom-free, active monsoon. Consulting with a paediatrician or an allergist can provide additional strategies tailored to a child's specific needs.

DOCTORSPEAK Optimising Diet for Health in Old Age

In old age, maintaining a healthy diet is crucial for managing co-morbidities effectively. A balanced and nutrient-rich diet can support overall health. Here are key tips to maintain vitality in your later years.

- **Balanced Nutrition:** Ensure your diet includes a variety of foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats.
- **Caloric Needs:** You can adjust the calorie intake based on your own individual needs, considering factors like activity level, metabolism and specific health conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.
- **Fibre-rich Foods:** We encourage the consumption of fibre from fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes to support digestive health and manage conditions like constipation effectively.
- **Protein Intake:** Adequate protein is important to maintain your muscle mass and overall health. Include lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes and plant-based protein sources.
- **Heart Health:** Limit saturated fats and trans fats and prioritise unsaturated fats (found in olive oil, nuts, seeds, and fish) to support your heart health. You have to actively avoid increasing your salt intake to manage blood pressure.
- **Calcium and Vitamin D:** Very important for bone health, especially for elderly individuals. You may include dairy products, fortified plant-based milks, leafy



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- greens and sunlight exposure for Vitamin D.
- **Special Considerations:** Adjust diet based on specific co-morbidities such as diabetes (monitor carbohydrate intake), renal issues (manage protein, sodium and potassium intake) and gastrointestinal disorders (emphasise easily digestible foods).
- **Small, Frequent Meals:** Some older adults may prefer smaller, more frequent meals due to reduced appetite or digestion. This can help ensure adequate nutrient intake throughout the day.
- **Consultation with Healthcare Providers:** Always consult with medical experts to tailor dietary recommendations based on your individual health needs, medications and personal preferences.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Govt ropes in Soumya Swaminathan for NTEP

Former Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research and World Health Organisation's Chief Scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan has been appointed as the Principal Adviser at the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). She will be serving in MoHFW on a pro bono basis. As the Principal Adviser for the NTEP, Dr. Swaminathan will provide technical advice on the overall strategy to achieve goals, suggest policy directions and necessary course corrections for optimal outcomes, and advise on research strategy. Her appointment comes at a crucial juncture, where the deadline set



DR SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN

by the Centre for eliminating TB looms closer. India accounts for 25% of the world's TB burden and over 25 lakh new cases of TB were notified in 2024 in the country, according to the India TB report released recently by the Centre.

First renal autotransplant surgery at AIIMS Delhi

A seven-year-old boy with resistant renovascular hypertension, a condition that causes high blood pressure due to narrowed kidney arteries, underwent the country's first rare successful renal autotransplant surgery at AIIMS Delhi. The rare surgical operation, which was carried out on June 29, entailed the removal of the patient's kidney and its subsequent relocation to another area within his body. According to doctors, this is the

first such case in India and the third in the world. Dr Manjunath Maruti Pol, additional professor of surgery and kidney transplant surgeon, said symptomatic aneurysms require treatment through stenting or surgery. "In this case, the aneurysm's location near the kidney hilum (distal) and its fusiform shape made stenting unfeasible and ineffective, leading to the decision to proceed with surgical treatment," he said.

Robo surgery for rare liver disease at PGI Lucknow

Doctors of Sanjay Gandhi PGI, Lucknow have succeeded in performing surgery on a young man suffering from the complex disease pelvic lipomatosis. According to Professor Uday Pratap Singh of Urology Department, for the first time in the world, successful robotic surgery for this disease has been done. XI robotic machine was used in the surgery. There is considerable improvement in the patient's health. Prof Singh said that youth (24) was having stomach pain for some time. He could not even urinate properly. Medical consultation revealed

swelling in both the kidneys. Pelvic lipomatosis, a complex disease was confirmed with swelling in both kidneys. There was also kidney infection. According to a report, till now 231 people across the world are suffering from pelvic lipomatosis. During robotic surgery, fat was removed and the urethra was carefully reattached. of the patient's intestine. Pelvic lipomatosis may be due to obesity and genetics. Its main symptoms are frequent urination, feeling of discomfort even after urinating and pain in the lower back.

WE WANTED TO FINISH CHASE WITHOUT ANY LOSS: JAISWAL

India's 10-wicket win in 4th T20I

PTI ■ HARARE

India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal revealed that he and captain Shubman Gill were batting with the aim of winning the fourth T20I against Zimbabwe without losing any wickets, focusing on the team's victory rather than thinking about individual scores.

Chasing 153, Jaiswal and Gill went hammer and tongs to knock off the target in 15.2 overs, recording only the second instance of India beating Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in a T20I on Saturday. "We were only thinking about finishing the game and make sure that the team wins and we finish without any loss (of a wicket)," Jaiswal told a group of fans after the game in a video shared by the BCCI.

While the win handed India an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series, Jaiswal, who was the aggressor in the partnership, looked set for a century but remained unbeaten on 93, which came off 53 balls with 12 fours and two sixes.

"The only thing in the mind was to finish the game without any loss," Jaiswal said. "I really enjoyed playing today, it was an amazing experience with Shubman bhai and I really enjoyed



scoring the runs. Whenever I play for India I really enjoy and feel proud," he added. A member of the T20 World Cup-winning squad, the 22-

year-old who arrived at international circuit across formats only last year, said he totally enjoyed the experience of being a part of the historic

feat. "I enjoyed my process and being a part of the World Cup champion team and I learnt a lot. I was really excited.

Whenever I get a chance I try my best and make sure that I am contributing for the team and winning the games for my team," he said.

India's tour of Zimbabwe for five T20Is concludes on Sunday with the fifth and final game slated here at the Harare Sports Club.

Aditi rises to T-22nd at Evian Championship

PTI ■ EVIAN LES BAINS (FRANCE)

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok shot three birdies in the last four holes of the third round as she carded a 4-under 67 and jumped 22 places to tied-22 at the Amundi Evian Championship here.

The Indian, who has played more than 30 Majors, vaulted to 5-under for three rounds as she continues her search for her maiden Top-10 finish in a Major.

Earlier, Diksha Dagar had withdrawn from the event after her first round 76.

Both Aditi and Diksha will play for India at the Olympic Games in Paris.

The 72-hole stroke play competition has a purse of USD 8 million with a winner's share of USD1.2 million.

Australian Stephanie Kyriacou edged a stroke ahead of Japan's Ayaka Furue and Lauren Coughlin of the United States with a birdie on the final hole.

The 23-year-old from Sydney, fired a 67 in hot and sunny conditions for a 54-hole total of 14-under-par.

The Rolex Rankings No.100 played 19-and-a-half holes on Saturday, after the second round was suspended overnight due to thunderstorms.

She completed her second round at 8am before taking a



nap and then starting her third round five hours later.

Second round leader Furue, who is just one shot off the lead, would not be satisfied with her third round 70 but is still in the race.

Coughlin, also tied for second on 13-under-par, was pleased with her 65.

Pajaree Anannarukorn of Thailand is three strokes further back in fourth place on 10-under-par. Ally Ewing of the United States had the round of the day — a seven-under-par 64 — and shares fifth with Hye-Jin Choi and Patty Tavatanakit.

Four further players, Chanatee Wannasena, Narin An, Ingrid Lindblad and Yu Jin Sung, share eighth place on eight-under-par.



Siniakova, Townsend win women's doubles title at Wimbledon

AP ■ LONDON

After seeing longtime doubles partner Barbora Krejčíková win the Wimbledon singles title, Katerina Siniakova went out on Centre Court and added another Grand Slam trophy to her own collection.

Siniakova won her third women's doubles title at Wimbledon after teaming up with Taylor Townsend to beat Gabriela Dabrowski and Erin Routliffe 7-6 (5), 7-6 (1) on Saturday in a match that finished after 10:20 p.m. Local time under floodlights.

"Amazing. I'm so proud of Barbora," Siniakova said of her Czech countrywoman. "I'm just so happy that we could do it as well."

Siniakova has won seven major doubles titles with Krejčíková and one with Coco Gauff at this year's French Open. This was her first with Townsend,

an American whose previous best Grand Slam result in doubles was two runner-up finishes at the 2022 U.S. Open - in a loss to Siniakova and Krejčíková - and 2023 French Open.

Townsend said it was Siniakova's idea for the two of them to play together at Wimbledon. "I'm so glad Katerina slid into my DMs," Townsend said.

A bit more than six hours after Krejčíková beat Jasmine Paolini in the women's singles final, the fourth-seeded Siniakova and Townsend converted their first match point when Routliffe double-faulted.

Siniakova and Townsend failed to convert any of their seven break points in the second set but raced to 5-0 in the tiebreaker.

It was the third match of the day on Centre Court after the men's doubles final.

BCCI to release ₹one crore for treatment of cancer-stricken Gaikwad

PTI ■ MUMBAI

In a noble gesture, the BCCI on Sunday decided to release Rs one crore for the treatment of former India coach Anshuman Gaikwad, who is battling blood cancer at a medical facility in London.

BCCI's decision has come following emotional appeals for support from former captain Kapil Dev and Sandip Patil, who had enjoined the cricket board to help Gaikwad.

"Mr. Jay Shah has instructed the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to

release Rs 1 crore with immediate effect to provide financial assistance to India's veteran cricketer Mr Anshuman Gaikwad, who is battling cancer," BCCI apex council said in a statement.

Gaikwad, son of former India captain D K Gaekwad, is undergoing treatment for



blood cancer at the King's College Hospital in London.

"Shah has also spoken to Mr Gaekwad's family to take stock of the situation and extend support. The board stands by Gaekwad's family in this hour of crisis and will do whatever is essential for Mr Gaekwad's quick recovery,"

the statement continued. "The BCCI will continue to monitor Mr Gaekwad's progress and is confident that he will come out of this phase strongly," it added.

The 71-year-old Gaekwad played 40 Tests and 15 ODIs for India between 1975 and 1987.

China tries to go for 8-for-8 sweep in diving gold at Paris Olympics

PTI ■ PARIS

Chinese divers won seven of eight gold medals at the last Olympics in Tokyo, termed one of the greatest performances in Olympic history.

Even more is expected this time in Paris.

China has ruled diving for decades. But it's never pulled off the elusive gold sweep at the Games. The People's Daily - the official newspaper of the Communist Party - termed this lapse "regrettable" in a recent article.

How's that for pressure? "I hope that all of us can stand on the top of the podium," Tokyo gold medalist Quan Hongchan said in an interview on state-run television.

China's record in diving is already staggering. Starting with the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics where China claimed its first diving gold, it has won 47 of 64 gold medals. Add to that 23 silver and 10 bronze. If you start counting from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Chinese have won 27 of 32 gold.

That's almost perfection, but someone always spoils the party - like American David Boudia, Australian Matthew Mitcham, Briton Tom Daley or Russian Ilya Zakharov.



The People's Daily urged the team to "launch an all-out bid this time for gold medals in all diving events."

Eight might be the charm. That number is viewed as fortuitous in Chinese culture. Note the 2008 Beijing Games opened on Aug. 8, 2008, at 8 p.m.

Quan was only 14 when she won gold three years ago on the 10-meter platform. Teammate Chen Yuxi, the gold medalist in synchro on the platform, was only 15. Both are back and probably in a class by themselves.

For the men, Wang Zongyuan was the silver medalist on the 3-meter springboard in Tokyo behind teammate Xie Siyi and should be the favorite in Paris. The American challenge this will be Drew Johansen's fourth

straight Olympics as the U.S. Diving coach. The head coach at Indiana University is assisted by Wenbo Chen, the China-born coach at the University of Minnesota. Also on the staff is Purdue coach David Boudia, the Olympic gold medalist on the platform in 2012.

Three silver medalists from Tokyo return: Andrew Capobianco, Jessica Parratto and Delaney Schnell. They all made the podium in synchronized events, and those events may offer the best chances for the Americans and others.

Parratto will dive again with Schnell in the 10-meter synchronized platform, and Capobianco is on the 3-meter springboard. He did not qualify in synchronized. Schnell and

Daryn Wright will compete on the platform. "The world has been catching up to the Chinese in all the events except for women's platform," Johansen said. "Chinese women on the tower are still way ahead of the world."

Sarah Bacon and Cassidy Cook have a shot in the 3-meter synchronized springboard, and Bacon and Alison Gibson should contend as individuals in the 3-meter springboard. The new name to watch is Carson Tyler in both the 10-meter platform and 3-meter springboard, a rarity participating in both events and a reminder of Greg Louganis' double-double gold medals in 1984 and '88.

"Carson has shown up as a great mental performer," Johansen said. "We've managed to beat China in certain events over the years and I feel like some parity has come to the sport," he added. "We have been hovering around those gold medals and points away from getting them."

Johansen said part of the strategy is to put the pressure on the Chinese by attempting dives with a higher degree of difficulty, which earn more points if successfully delivered. "It's a risk-reward game," he said.

Anirban Lahiri takes 4-shot lead in Spain

PTI ■ SOTOGRANDE, (SPAIN)

Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri inched closer to a maiden win on the LIV golf series as he carded a 5-under 66 in the second round to take a four-shot lead at the LIV Golf Andalucia here.

Lahiri, who plays on the Crushers team, put himself in position for his first win after the second round that included six birdies and no bogeys in his last 13 holes.

The 37-year-old, who opened with a 2-under 69, is 67-under with 18 holes to go. New Zealand's Danny Lee is his closest pursuer at 3-under.

Lahiri is seeking to end his nine-year victory drought. His last win came in his home country in the Hero Indian Open on the DP World Tour.

"It (the lead) doesn't really matter on this golf course. Every day you have to battle it out... [but] it is a difficult golf course to catch up," Lahiri said.

Thanks to Lahiri, captain Bryson DeChambeau's 67 and Paul Casey's 69, the league-leading Crushers shot a counting score of 11-under to move atop the team leaderboard at 7-under.

They have a four-shot advantage over home favourites Fireballs GC and are seeking a third team trophy this year.



While Lahiri has experienced plenty of team success with the Crushers, the most recent of his 18 individual pro wins came in February 2015 in India.

Since joining LIV Golf in 2022, he's had a few close calls, including his debut start in Boston when he was part of a three-man playoff won by Dustin Johnson.

Last year, he had three podium finishes, including a runner-up to DeChambeau in Chicago.

"The win would mean a lot. I've been chasing it for a while," said Lahiri, whose family arrived in town and will be cheering him on the final day.

While the Valderrama course was not as difficult in the second round as the day before, only about a third of the field managed to break par, with Lahiri and Ripper GC's Marc Leishman sharing low round scores.

ArcelorMittal showcases low-carbon steel tie-up with Paris Olympics 2024

PTI ■ PARIS

ArcelorMittal, the steel major owned by Indian entrepreneur Lakshmi Mittal, is showcasing the various facets of its low-carbon steel partnership with the Olympics and Paralympics, kicking off in Paris later this month.

The Luxembourg-headquartered company revealed this week that its recycled and renewably-produced XCarb is behind the Torches that have been touring the world, the Olympic Rings that now adorn the French capital's iconic Eiffel Tower landmark and the Agitos

symbol of the Paralympics atop the city's Arc de Triomphe.

The Paris Olympics 2024 is also setting a new milestone by reusing the Torches for the first time, with a significantly reduced carbon footprint with the production of just 2,000 required as opposed to 12,000 in the past.

"We think the Games are about sport, but they transcend sport," Ian Louden, the Head of Brand for ArcelorMittal, told reporters in Paris.

"They go over and above sport itself, trying at least to bring together the world on a

platform of equality and peace and shared belief. For example, for the very first time in Paris 2024, there are equal numbers of male and female athletes. As a leading global industrial company, we think this is exactly the kind of event in society that we should support," he said.

The company previously tied up with the London 2012 Olympic Games, resulting in the ArcelorMittal Orbit designed by celebrated British Indian artist Anish Kapoor.

The Paris Games, opening on July 26 and running until August 11, involves the firm providing the steel and



manufacturing knowhow for the Torch, designed by French artist Mathieu Lehanneur, and what is collectively referred to as the "Spectaculars" - the Olympic Rings and the Agitos - a project masterminded by engineer Professor Pierre Engel.

"This is the work of a big team, from the production of the steel in Chateaufort in Burgundy to the lifting of the rings involving about 200 people," said Professor Engel.

"We had to face several challenges and the first one was to decide the position, then imagine innovative lighting and, of course, the

safety of a project involving such iconic landmarks of Paris," he said.

Engel and his team worked at pace over the course of 18 months with a retired Army man in charge of keeping the timelines to military precision.

"We could not risk any drifting timelines associated with the construction industry with this project, with the date of the Games a definitive finishing line," noted Engel.

Measuring 29 metres wide by 15 metres high, and positioned approximately 84 metres off the ground, in between the

first and second floors of the Eiffel Tower, the Rings appear in their coloured form of red, blue, green, yellow and black - depicting the five continents of the world. At night, they are lit up in white "because you cannot light black," explains Engel. The Agitos, meanwhile, depicted in red, blue and green, are lit up in colour 24/7.

"Being an official partner of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games and supplier of the Torch gives ArcelorMittal an incredible opportunity to showcase the beauty, flexibility and potential of steel," said CEO Aditya Mittal.