



OPINION 6
WILL DEMOCRATS
NOMINATE JOE BIDEN

WORLD 9
'TRUMP WILL WIN IF
ELECTION IS FREE AND FAIR'

MONEY 10
SENSEX, NIFTY SETTLE
MARGINALLY DOWN

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.160 Issue 187
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY JULY 12, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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PARIS MY FOURTH,
LAST OLYMPICS:
MANPREET
11 SPORTS



Crucial Security Meet on Jammu and Kashmir



An Inter-State Coordination Conference between BSF, J&K Police, Central Agencies and the Punjab Police being held to focus on enhancing border security and synergy between the two State Police Forces and the Border Guarding Force, in Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday

PTI

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The top brass of the Border Security Force (BSF), Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab police, along with representatives of the Central agencies, on Thursday attended the Inter-State Coordination Conference in Kathua to further strengthen the security grid and prevent infiltration from across the border.

After the Kathua ambush, in which five soldiers of the Indian Army sacrificed their lives in the line of duty on July 8, it is believed that the suspected group of foreign terrorists may have infiltrated inside the Indian territory from across the International border.

When terrorism was at its peak, the Kathua-Billawar-Badnora-Basantgarh-Bhaderwah-Kishtwar axis was considered a traditional route of infiltration taken by the terrorists to enter the Kashmir valley. Former Union Minister hailing from the region, Dr Karan Singh, said the spate of terrorist attacks in the Jammu region are a matter of great concern. "I trust the civilian

Continued on Page 8

Para-military forces to extend quota, age relaxation for ex-Agniveers soon

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The chiefs of CISF, BSF and CRPF on Thursday said 10 per cent posts of soldiers will be reserved in their respective forces for former Agniveers in line with a decision by the Union home ministry. The remarks by CISF Director General Nina Singh, her BSF counterpart Nitin Agrawal and CRPF Director General Anish Dayal Singh came amid fresh spotlight on the Agnipath recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel in the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

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Modi and leading Economists meet to design Budget

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met eminent economists to elicit their views and suggestions for the upcoming Budget, a senior Government official said. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Budget for 2024-25 in the Lok Sabha on July 23.

economists Surjit Bhalla and Ashok Gulati and veteran banker K V Kamath among others were present in the meeting. The Budget will be the first major economic document of the Modi 3.0 Government, which, among other things, is expected to lay the roadmap for making India a developed nation by 2047. President Droupadi Murmu, in her address to the joint sitting of Parliament last month, had indicated that the Government would come out with historic steps to accelerate the pace of reforms.

She also said the Budget will be an effective document of the government's far-reaching policies and futuristic vision. Sitharaman has already held discussions with various stakeholders, including economists and captains of Indian industry, on the forthcoming Budget. Several experts have urged the government to provide tax relief to the common man to boost consumption and take steps to check inflation and accelerate economic growth. The economy has recorded a growth rate of 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and others during a meeting with economists at NITI Aayog, in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

INLD, BSP join hands for Haryana election battle

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) has decided to again join hands with its former ally Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) for the Haryana Assembly polls due later this year, the leaders of the two parties announced on Thursday. Alliance leaders have also decided to project INLD leader Abhay Chautala as its chief ministerial face.

PUC certificate charges increased in Delhi



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has increased the pollution under control (PUC) certificate charges for petrol, CNG and diesel vehicles after a gap of about 13 years, Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said on Thursday.

The charges for petrol, CNG or LPG (including bio fuel) two and three wheelers has been increased from ₹60 to ₹80 and for four wheelers from ₹80 to ₹110, he said in a statement. Gahlot said the charges of PUC certificates for diesel vehicles has been revised from ₹100 to ₹140. The new rates will be effective as soon as it is notified by the Government, he said.

Supreme Court summons State Chief Secretaries

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday summoned the Chief and Finance Secretaries of 16 States for non-compliance of the Second National Judicial Pay Commission recommendations on the payment of arrears of pension and other retirement benefits to the judicial officers.



"We are not sending them to jail but let them be here and then an affidavit will be submitted. Let they be personally present now," the bench said.

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Temples welcome women entrepreneurs

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Temples across India are blooming green with innovative waste management initiatives focusing on recycling of floral offerings into eco-friendly products such as compost, natural dyes, incense sticks, and more, thus protecting Mother Nature and creating job opportunities, particularly for women.



For instance, at much-revered Ujjain's Mahalakaleshwar Temple, 5-6 tonnes of daily flower waste are transformed into eco-friendly products while at Mumbai's famous Siddhivinayak Temple, floral waste is being turned into natural dyes.

Similarly, the Tirupati Municipal Corporation upcycles over 6 tonnes of waste daily from the Tirupati temple, employing 150 women in these green endeavours.

Far in the Eastern part of India in West Bengal, known for its 13th-century Ma Tara temple, Tarapith which attracts around 12,000 devotees daily, a joint initiative between the Mallapur Naisuva Trust and the temple committee is transforming piles of flowers offered to the deity into recycling. The used flowers from temple offerings are turned into vermicompost for local farmers.

Following the consecration of the sacred Ram Mandir in Ayodhya early this year, the Ayodhya Municipal Corporation too has embarked on a similar plan to recycle flowers offered in the temples of Ayodhya Dham.

The move aims not only to maintain the cleanliness of the temple premises but also to create job opportunities for women through the production of incense sticks and gullaal.

Vishal Singh, vice-chairperson of Ayodhya Development Authority (ADA) said, "The idea is to check floral waste from being dumped into rivers and other bodies of water that has been the cause for choking and polluting, leading to environmental degradation."

As disposal of flowers in rivers, oceans, etc. leads to water pollution as well as affects the living organisms present in the waters, there has been increasing demand for the concept of "Green Temples" to be integrated into national policies, transforming these religious spaces into eco-friendly hubs, said an official from the Union Environment Ministry.

Continued on Page 8

Education Minister's NEET assurance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a raging row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of the medical entrance exam this year, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday met some NEET aspirants at his residence in the national Capital.



Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan

File Photo PTI

According to sources, the students raised issues like the uncertainty prevailing over the fate of the exam which was conducted in May, the delay in the counselling process and ultimately the academic calendar. While there have been demand for a retest from several quarters, the Education Ministry has maintained the incidents of paper leak were localised, and by cancelling the exam it can jeopardise the careers of lakhs of candidates who cleared the test fairly.

The matter has also reached the Supreme Court, which on Thursday adjourned till July 18 the hearing on the clutch of petitions seeking that exam be cancelled and the test be reconducted. The petitioners have also sought a probe into the alleged malpractices.

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Cybercrimes on rise in state capital

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a daring act, cyber fraudsters duped former Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh, Alok Ranjan of USD 383 using his credit card for online purchases. The former chief secretary discovered the fraud when he received a transaction message. After getting the credit card blocked, he filed a case at Gomti Nagar police station. Ranjan, who lives in Vivek Khand, said that he received a call around 12 noon on July 8 regarding an outstanding bill on his SBI credit card. The caller introduced himself as an SBI employee, claiming that there was an outstanding amount of Rs 1.9 lakh on the credit card and even mentioned the card number. “When the caller told me the wrong credit card number, I interrupted him. The caller then asked me to press 9 on my mobile. I pressed 9 after being convinced by his words. Later,

the caller said that I should contact the bank, and the call got disconnected. At 6:30 pm, I received a transaction message on my mobile,” he said. He found out that his credit card had been debited for USD 383 (about INR 32,000). He then lodged a complaint by calling the SBI customer care. The police said that the accused made online purchases using the former chief secretary’s credit card. The police said they were tracking down the accused with the help of the cyber cell. After retiring from the post of chief secretary, Ranjan joined the Samajwadi Party as a political strategist. He is counted among the close associates of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav. His current role as a political strategist involves collecting data and gathering information to highlight flaws in government policies. Ranjan also prepared the SP’s manifesto for the 2022 elec-

RECENT CASES

● Kuldeep from Gomti Nagar Extension was deprived of Rs 93.53 lakh in the name of making profits in the stock exchange. ● Wife of Dr Pankaj Rastogi, a resident of Hazratganj, was duped of Rs 2.71 crore by being accused of money laundering in the guise of credit card customer care. ● Niranjan, a resident of Ghazipur, was cheated of Rs 3 lakh by someone posing as

a customs officer. Additionally, a fraud of Rs 16.58 crore was committed using a cheque from the account of the Income Tax department’s Principal Director Sudhakar. ● Dr Saumya Gupta from KGMU was duped of Rs 85 lakh by someone posing as a CBI officer. ● Vinay Katiyar, a resident of Aliganj, was cheated of Rs 29 lakh.

tions. When Akhilesh released this manifesto, Ranjan was present with him. Yadav had also nominated Ranjan for the Rajya Sabha elections, but he lost. Meanwhile, in a recent case of cybercrime, a woman was defrauded of over Rs 13 lakh by unidentified accused posing as a CBI officer. The victim, Manvi Mehrotra, a resident of

Indira Nagar, quickly realised she had been tricked and informed the cyber police station. Swift action by the police helped her recover the entire amount. “Unidentified cyber criminals called Manvi Mehrotra and told her that her name had come up in a money laundering case. The man, posing as a CBI officer, even sent an arrest

warrant and kept her under digital house arrest in the name of an investigation,” SHO of the cybercrime police station Brijesh Kumar Yadav said. A case was registered on June 25 under IPC sections 419 & 420, and Section 66D of the IT Act. “After the case was registered, the entire amount defrauded from the complainant was recovered by the cyber police station team within two weeks,” the SHO added. Earlier, poet Naresh Saxena was digitally trapped by thugs. During this time, he was locked in a room of his house for 1.5 hours. The thugs listened to his poems while extracting details of his bank accounts. When his daughter-in-law got suspicious, she wrote ‘fraud call’ on a piece of paper and tried to alert him. Eventually, they entered the room and snatched the phone. The thugs then abused him. This incident also occurred in Vivek Khand, Gomti Nagar.

SDM suspended for negligence in public work

Lucknow (PNS): Close on the heels of suspension of five officers, including the sub-divisional magistrate and naib tehsildar in Firozabad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, ordered suspension of SDM Vikas Yadav of Naraini, Banda. Vikas Yadav has been suspended for negligence, supervisory indifference and misconduct in matters of public interest. He has been found incapable of fulfilling his official duties properly and is also accused of tarnishing the government’s image. During his suspension, Vikas Yadav will be attached to the Lucknow office of the deputy district magistrate and secretary, Revenue Board, Uttar Pradesh. During his suspension, Vikas Yadav will receive only half his salary and will be deprived of all benefits, including dearness allowance. He will face a departmental inquiry, and a charge-sheet will be filed against him. It is noteworthy that the Yogi government recently took action in Firozabad’s Sirsaganj tehsil, where land was sold illegally and suspiciously allotted to close associates. Following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath’s directives, the deputy district magistrate, naib tehsildar, revenue inspector, lekhpal, and peshkar were suspended, and the district magistrate was instructed to register an FIR and initiate departmental action against them.

Govt to offer free training in French, Spanish, German

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance youth skills and connect them with employment opportunities, in line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath’s vision, the Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM) has launched a unique initiative to provide foreign language training to students in nine districts of the state, including Lucknow, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Azamgarh, Ayodhya, Prayagraj, Jhansi and Banda. The aim of this programme is to make students and professionals proficient in French, Spanish and German, enabling them to add new qualifications to their profiles, advance in their careers, and secure new employment opportunities both within the country and abroad. The training will be provided by expert faculty from the English and Foreign Languages University, Lucknow, and the entire cost will be borne by the Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission. Training sessions will be organised in all the mentioned districts, with a total duration of 192 hours. These sessions will be conducted on weekends. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Kapil Dev Agarwal, stated that this

programme is specially designed for students and professionals who wish to enhance their language skills outside of their regular working hours. “This includes graduate students of engineering, tourism and hospitality management, and nursing and healthcare professionals seeking employment in countries like France and Canada,” he said. He added that expert faculty from the university will visit the districts to conduct training sessions. Through this initiative, students and professionals will gain more employment opportunities and enhance their skills. Initially, the programme is being launched in nine districts, but if demand increases, similar courses can be conducted in other districts as well. Mission Director of Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission, Abhishek Singh, mentioned that due to the limited availability of seats, this initiative is starting in nine districts. Interested students and professionals can register online by visiting the UPSDM portal (upsd.gov.in). He has urged the district magistrates of these nine districts to encourage students to take advantage of this golden opportunity. This will enable them to receive free training in foreign languages, enhancing their future prospects without any financial burden.

Man stabs younger brother to death

Lucknow (PNS): A man allegedly stabbed his younger brother to death during a brawl in Saadatganj. The family rushed the injured youth to KGMU Trauma Centre in critical condition, but he succumbed to injuries during treatment. Upon receiving information about the incident, police reached the scene and sent the body for autopsy. According to the police, Bablu’s son Faisal (19) and his elder brother Ikhlaj, who live near Hasanganj Bavli Chowki in Saadatganj police station area, had a quarrel late on Wednesday night. Ikhlaj stabbed Faisal in the stomach, causing serious injuries. The family took Faisal to the KGMU Trauma Centre, where he died later. On receiving information about the incident, the local police inspected

the scene and collected evidence. Faisal’s mother Parveen told the police that Ikhlaj and Faisal came home drunk late on Wednesday night and started arguing. Atisha tried to intervene, but Ikhlaj started beating her. In an attempt to stop Ikhlaj, Faisal hit him on the back with a stone. Enraged, Ikhlaj went to the kitchen, grabbed a knife, and stabbed Faisal in the stomach before fleeing the scene. A neighbour, Javed, said that when people heard screams from the house, they gathered and informed the police about the incident. Faisal was admitted to the hospital in critical condition but he could not survive. According to the Saadatganj police, there was an ongoing dispute between Faisal, a daily wage earner, and his brother.

The accused, Ikhlaj, has been taken into custody and is being questioned. Further action will be taken based on the post-mortem report and investigation into the family’s allegations. Meanwhile, a man allegedly killed the son of a woman he had been living with for the last one year in Thakurganj police station area. As per reports, the accused, Monu Mishra of Dilaram Baradari in the area, was staying with the woman, identified by police as Kajal, who is married and had a son named Prince (6) from her first husband. On Thursday, the couple fought over some issue. At that time, Prince was playing near them. Monu allegedly beat him first, then lifted him up and threw him down. The boy suffered serious injuries, to which he succumbed later.

Deputy CM dismisses 17 doctors over absence from work

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak on Thursday dismissed 17 doctors for remaining absent from duty without information. In a post on X, Pathak, who also holds the medical and health portfolio, said treating and curing the sick is a service to God and there cannot be any negligence or indiscipline in it. “It is a great fortune to get the responsibility of serving the people and providing health services. Serving patients is like serving God. There is no place for any kind of negligence or

indiscipline in this. “I have given instructions to the Principal Secretary, Medical and Health, to dismiss 17 medical officers working in various districts of the state for being negligent in providing medical services to the general public and remaining absent from duty for a long time without informing,” Pathak said. He however did not share the names of the doctors who have been dismissed. When asked, a senior health official confirmed that the orders from the deputy CM have been received and that due process is being followed.

3T MRI, 160-slice CT scanner inaugurated at KGMU

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The department of radiodiagnosis at King George’s Medical University (KGMU) inaugurated its state-of-the-art 3T MRI and 160-slice CT scanner in Shatabdi Phase-1 on Thursday. Present on the occasion were KGMU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Soniya Nityanand, and president of the global development division, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Chris Elias. “This is a monumental day for the department of radiodiagnosis as we receive our first MRI machine in 15 years, replacing the older 1.5T model operated under a public-private partnership. Alongside this, we also inaugurated the 160-slice CT scanner. The new 3T whole-body MRI machine is a technological marvel, doubling the

magnet strength of our previous unit. This advancement, combined with superior gradients, hardware, and software improvements, allows for enhanced visualisation of anatomy and pathology. The improved temporal resolution reduces scan times and patient discomfort while providing superior imaging of physiological processes such as brain perfusion and activation, heart function, flow, contractility, perfusion, and infarction. It also significantly enhances body imaging capabilities,” a senior doctor said. He added that the MRI machine excels in detecting and staging breast cancer, endometrial and cervical cancer, head and neck malignancies, and other cancers, providing comprehensive whole-body assessments of metastases and

myeloma. Importantly, it allows for non-contrast peripheral and renal angiography, crucial for diabetic, hypertensive, and chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients. “The enhanced research capabilities and research agreements will enable us to address health challenges specific to our population,” he said. He added that Canon Aquilion Lightning 160-slice Ultra Helical CT scanner, located in Shatabdi Phase 1, significantly upgrades their imaging capabilities. This installation marks a major milestone, providing rapid imaging for transplant patients and supporting interventional radiology procedures. It also offers a controlled, low-infection-risk environment for liver and kidney transplant patients and early scanning for hyperacute stroke patients,” he said.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE
I have changed my name from NAJMUZZAMA SOLEJA to NAJMUZZAMA SOLEJA S/o Mohammad Yousuf R/o 42/57 Makhanaya Bazar Kanpur Nagar -01. In future I would be known and recognise by this name only.

NOTICE
I have changed my name from Mohd. Kaif Huq to Mohd. Kaif for all future purpose. Mohd. Kaif S/o Zainul Haq R/o 20/6, New Idgah Colony, Kanpur

NOTICE
I have changed my name from TAIBA to TAIBA KHATOON W/O MUNEEB ANSARI for future purpose. Add- 119/132 DARSHANPURWA KANPUR NAGAR.

NOTICE
I Saran Dev Singh S/o Late S. Kishan Singh R/o Flat No 1201, Diamond Tower, NRI Heights, NRI City, Mainawati Marg, Nawab Ganj, Kanpur 208017 have changed my name to Swarn Dev Singh for all future purposes.

NOTICE
It is informed to the general public that my name is Amit Kumar in bank documents whereas in Aadhar Card, PAN Card and other documents my name is Amit Kumar Chaudhary. Amit Kumar Chaudhary and Amit Kumar are the same person, hence in future I will be called Amit Kumar Chaudhary. Be known and known as, Amit Kumar Chaudhary S/o Chandrapal R/o L-793 Awasth Vikas No.1 Keshav Puram Kalyanpur Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE
It is informed that my name in High school, Intermediate and other educational documents is written as Tej Pratap while in my aadhar card my name is written as Tej Pratap Jaiswal. Hence, from now I will be known by the name Tej Pratap Jaiswal S/O Harivansh Kumar Jaiswal only. Tej Pratap Jaiswal S/O Shri Harivansh Kumar Jaiswal R/O Sheesh Mahal Colony, Naipalapur, Tehseel and District-Sitapur

NOTICE
This is to declare that Pratakisha Choudhary, and Tejas choudhary Both are same and one person. In future I will be known as Tejas choudhary. Tejas choudhary S/o sanjay choudhary R/o 5/237, vipul Khand, Gomti Nagar, lucknow.

NOTICE
This is to inform that, My daughter Rashi Chaudhary’s 10th class marksheet need correction in parent name. Name of father is Raghvendra and mother’s name is Usha Chaudhary, in future in all the record. Raghvendra.R/o-3/76, Vijayant khand, Gointnagar, Lucknow .

NOTICE
I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM ASHMIT KAUR BHATIA TO ASHMEET KAUR BHATIA ASHMEET KAUR BHATIA W/O KULVINDER SINGH BHATIA R/O 117/H-2/65, PANDU NAGAR, KANPUR

सूचना
स्वीकृत किया जाता है कि मेरे पुत्र का सही नाम कृदय सिंह पुत्र सतीश कुमार सिंह है, जो उसके जन्म प्रमाण पत्र में अंकित है। मेरे अपने पुत्र का स्वास्थ्य ठीक न रहने के कारण अपने ज्योतिषाचार्य के अनुसार उसका नाम नविश राज रख लिया है, भविष्य में मेरे पुत्र को नविश राज पुत्र सतीश कुमार सिंह के नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाये— नेहा सिंह पुत्री उमेश प्रताप सिंह निवासी 98/2 राम नारायण लाल रोड, बैक रोड, थाना कर्नलजी, जनपद प्रयागराज।

Girl alleges molestation by friend

Lucknow (PNS): A girl from Sant Kabir Nagar district was molested in Lucknow allegedly by her most trusted male friend and his accomplices. She had come to Lucknow to take a competitive exam and stayed at her friend’s room in the Gudamba police station area. According to reports, the girl arrived in the city on July 6 and stayed at the room of Virendra Mishra, whom she trusted the most. On July 7, after completing her last exam paper, she returned to Virendra’s accommodation. She alleged that upon return-

ing, she found a liquor party going on in her friend’s room. “Due to this, I went to another room. Later, Virendra entered the room where I was and started beating me unprovoked, banging my head against the wall. He stuffed clothes in my mouth so that I couldn’t scream for help. His friend Abdul Qidwai also beat me. They held me hostage for four hours, kept hitting me, and molested me. Both were heavily drunk. I somehow managed to bolt the door from inside to save myself,” she said. She further stated that the duo forcibly undressed her and

made a video. She identified others as Aman, Satish, and Dhanne. “I would never have imagined that Virendra would do this to me,” she said. She said she dialled the police control room, and a team reached the scene. “They had nefarious designs in their mind,” she said, adding that they would have killed her. “I later reached a nearby police outpost and told the cops about my ordeal,” she said. The police have registered a case and started further investigations. The accused have been detained and are being interrogated.

Pucca Pul closed for heavy traffic

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With Pucca Pul having been identified among 83 bridges in the state as not fit for heavy vehicular traffic, the movement of such vehicles has been restricted. A PWD official said that a height gate has been installed to stop the movement of heavy vehicles, although smaller vehicles are still allowed. He mentioned that major repair work on the bridge had been carried out recently. “This restriction on heavy vehicles was prompted by concerns raised over bridges more than 50 years old following the collapse of bridges in Bihar,” he said. The official assured that people would not face any significant inconvenience because there is another bridge available for commuters in the adjoining area. He further stated that an assessment conducted last year by an agency from Roorkee recommended

closing the bridge for heavy traffic. “No strong enforcement was made earlier to stop the heavy traffic, but now it is being effectively implemented,” he added. A Traffic department official confirmed that traffic personnel have been deployed at Pucca Pul to enforce the restriction on heavy vehicles. This bridge, over a hundred years old, has an interesting history. Well-known historian PK Ghosh provided details about the bridge, saying, “It was built by Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula around 1784 and was known as Pucca Pul because it was a stone bridge, likely constructed to facilitate travel between the trans-Gomti and cis-Gomti areas. There was a significant cantonment of the East India Company where Aliganj exists today, and the bridge was crucial for commuting from this side to the other side of Chowk.” Ghosh also pointed out that in 1911, the British raised a

superstructure on the same piers of the bridge, which was completed and named after Lord Hardinge. He emphasised that this bridge is very strong. “Another bridge, built on the Gomti river by Ghazi-ud-Din Haider and completed by his son Nasir-ud-Din Haider, has been demolished, but Pucca Pul still stands,” he added. Roshan Taqui, another well-known historian, explained that the bridge was also called the stone bridge and played a significant role in connecting other districts of the state with Lucknow. “It was the first stone bridge constructed in the city, hence called Pucca Pul. It was important during the 1857 revolt as it facilitated the movement of both Indian and East India Company forces since there was no other bridge over the Gomti. A bridge constructed near Chhattar Manzil was destroyed by Indian forces,” he added.

Recalling a notable incident at Pucca Pul, Taqui said that on March 8, 1858, British forces attempting to cross from trans-Gomti to cis-Gomti encountered an old woman sitting in the middle of the bridge. “The British officers initially decided to leave her, but a soldier warned them. Upon searching her, they discovered she was carrying an ignition point connected to gunpowder at the bottom of the bridge. The woman was executed by the soldiers,” he recounted. Taqui emphasised the importance of protecting and conserving heritage monuments like Pucca Pul. “An iron bridge at Daliganj, made from spare parts of the Iron Bridge over the Thames, was demolished, although its piers can still be seen. Similarly, Pucca Pul is significant and could be preserved by constructing two bridges on either side to accommodate current traffic needs,” he suggested.

More houses, shops marked for demolition

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 1,000 more houses and shops were marked with red paint in Khurramnagar, Panth Nagar, and Indraprastha Colony on Thursday. Agitated residents and shopkeepers took to the streets to protest the arbitrary approach of the joint survey on the fourth day. They stood in front of their houses and shops as a form of protest but did not try to stop the survey members from their job due to the heavy police presence. They dispersed after senior officers assured them that they were not there to demolish structures but to map

areas adjacent to Akbar Nagar. Meanwhile, a meeting of the Sangharsh Samiti, consisting of residents and shopkeepers, concluded on Thursday. The members resolved not to surrender or allow the district administration to demolish their houses and shops and were determined to fight until the last minute. Following directives from Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) Vice-Chairman (VC) Indramani Tripathi, five teams were formed to check individual shops and houses marked with red paint to avoid confusion in future. The VC stated that while these localities had been developed in an authorised

AGITATED RESIDENTS AND SHOPKEEPERS TOOK TO THE STREETS TO PROTEST THE ARBITRARY APPROACH OF THE JOINT SURVEY ON THE FOURTH DAY
manner, a large number of people had settled there illegally and constructed permanent structures on public land. Action would be taken against these illegal dwellers and their properties, he added.

The VC reiterated that the development authority would not bring authorised houses and shops at any cost. Interestingly, the survey team marked two five-story apartments in Panth Nagar with red paint, indicating they would be demolished. It is said that the development authority will issue notices to the residents of illegal houses and shops to vacate their premises at the earliest. According to official records, the development authority has identified 600 such houses and shops in Khurramnagar, 300 in Panth Nagar, and 100 in Indraprastha Colony. The GSP survey will begin next week.

Jeweller robbed of three gold chains

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a broad daylight incident, a bike-borne accused deprived a jeweller of three gold chains at his shop in Sushant Golf City police station area on Thursday. The victim informed police about the incident, and a team reached the spot. Shivakant Soni of Sadarpur market in Gosainganj, in his complaint to the police, stated that he runs a shop called Ravi Sarraf in Khurahi market of Sushant Golf City police station area. Around 1:30 pm on Thursday, two youths riding a motorcycle (Royal Enfield) reached the shop. One of them remained seated on the motorcycle with the ignition switched

on, while the other youth entered the shop. He asked Soni to show some gold chains, and the shopkeeper displayed four gold chains. The youth then asked to weigh one of the gold chains. As soon as the shopkeeper started weighing the chain, the youth ran out of the shop with the remaining three gold chains in his hand and he and his accomplice sped off the scene. Soni said both of them fled towards Arjunanj. Inspector, Sushant Golf City, Anjani Mishra said that a case has been registered based on the complaint of the shopkeeper. “CCTV footage is being reviewed, and the accused are being searched,” he added.

Forced to pursue studies, 15-year-old boy hangs self

Lucknow (PNS): A 15-year-old boy ended his life after being persuaded against his wish to study in Lucknow. He was found hanging from the door grill of his room at his house in Khargapur, Gomti Nagar Extension. Police identified the boy as Rishabh, who was pronounced dead after examination by doctors. Initial investigations revealed that Rishabh was not interested in studies and wanted to live in his native village in Barabanki. However, his father Ram Tej brought him to Lucknow for education against his wishes. Rishabh had been

despondent since then. On Thursday, while his father was out for work, Rishabh was home alone. “When I returned home, I found the door bolted from inside. I knocked the door, but he did not respond. I then broke open the door and found him hanging from the grill,” Ram Tej told the police. The police reported that Ram Tej was not on good terms with his wife, and they were living separately. Rishabh was staying with his father. The body has been sent for autopsy, and an investigation is underway.

CM conducts aerial survey of flood-hit areas

Distributes relief materials to victims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath conducted an aerial survey of the flood-affected areas in Shravasti and Balrampur on Thursday. During the survey, he gathered detailed information from officials regarding the extent of the floods and directed them to expedite the delivery of relief materials to those affected. Following the aerial survey, the chief minister visited the flood-affected areas on the ground. He interacted with children and women impacted by the disaster and oversaw the distribution of relief materials to those in need.

In a gesture of support, the chief minister handed out cheques of Rs 4 lakh each to families who had lost their loved ones due to the floods. In recognition of their efforts, the chief minister honored Provincial Armed Constabulary personnel who helped evacuate flood victims to the safe zones, presenting them with certificates of appreciation. He also announced special rewards and cash prizes for their bravery and service. State Minister Swatantra Dev Singh and other local public representatives were also present during the chief minister's visit, supporting the ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-affected regions.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath interacts with flood-affected people in Shravasti district.

PTI

The chief minister conducted an aerial survey of all the flood-affected villages in Ikauna tehsil of Shravasti to assess the flood situation there with the officials. Devi Patan Divisional Commissioner Shashi Bhushan Sushil and Shravasti District Magistrate Ajay Kumar Dwivedi informed the chief minister that the floods were caused in the district by the sudden release of water from Nepal following heavy rainfall in that country. Currently, the water level is gradually decreasing. Following this, Chief Minister Yogi inspected the Lakshmanpur Kothi Rapti

Barrage on the ground. There, he met with each of the 11 victims rescued from the floods and enquired about their well-being. During his visit, the chief minister interacted affectionately with the children present there and distributed candies and biscuits to them. He honoured Rekha Devi who provided timely and accurate information without panic, and Ram Ujagar, who guided the PAC jawans, and five PAC jawans who gave information about the people trapped in the floods by giving them certificates. He also announced cash rewards for them. He also handed out cheques of Rs 4

lakh each to four families who lost loved ones in the disaster. In his address to the flood victims, Chief Minister Yogi stated that immediate assistance is being provided to the families of farmers and sharecroppers who lost their lives due to various disasters, including human-wildlife conflict, snake bites, and lightning strikes. He mentioned that currently 12 districts in the state are affected by floods, impacting 633 villages across 33 tehsils, with a total affected population of approximately 17.97 lakh, including over 18,000 cattle. More than 1.45 lakh hectares of agricultural land have also been

affected, he added. Meanwhile, over 923 flood outposts have been established to monitor the flood situation and relief efforts. Additionally, more than 1,033 flood shelters have been set up to house the flood-affected people. In Shravasti alone, 116 villages are either fully or partially affected by floods. The soil erosion situation is critical in 15 villages, affecting a population of 76,000 and over 23,000 hectares of agricultural land. The chief minister emphasised that the state government is conducting relief operations with full force, which is why the loss of life and property has been minimal despite the ongoing flood crisis. He held a meeting with officials and directed them to survey the flood-damaged crops and provide immediate compensation, along with other necessary instructions. While talking to the families affected by the flood disaster, Chief Minister Yogi stated that the government stands with them in this time of crisis and that they need not worry about anything. "The state government is trying to help you in every possible way. Our effort is to ensure you don't face any problems," he remarked. He mentioned that around 50,000 people and more than 32,000 hectares of agricultural land are affected by the floods in Balrampur. For relief work, boats have been arranged by the NDRF, SDRF and PAC Flood Units along with the administration. Instructions have been given to provide houses under the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana to those whose houses have been damaged by the floods.

Govt launches Upvan Yojana

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to enhance the greenery in Uttar Pradesh's urban areas, the Urban Development department has launched the Upvan Yojana. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's dedication to improving the environment, mitigating the effects of climate change and promoting native biodiversity has been instrumental in shaping this initiative. The scheme's objective is to transform the cities of Uttar Pradesh into green spaces that will inspire future generations, making the state more climate-resilient, enriched with urban green cover, and developed parks. An annual budget of Rs 70 crore has been allocated for the Upvan Yojana, ensuring adequate financial support for its implementation. This budget will be distributed among various urban bodies based on their needs and capacities. Municipal corporations will receive between Rs 1.5 crore and Rs 5 crore, depending on the scale of their projects and green cover requirements. Municipalities will be allocated funds ranging from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore, while nagar panchayats will be provided with a sum of Rs 50 lakh. A committee will be formed at the local body level to oversee the implementation of the scheme. In municipal bodies, the municipal commissioner will head the committee, while at the municipality (palika) and panchayat levels, the district magistrate will lead. Urban areas are grappling with increasing pollution, the impacts of climate change and a scarcity of natural spaces. The Upvan Yojana aims to tackle these challenges by enhancing greenery, improving air quality, conserving water and providing natural habitats for various species.

MAHA KUMBH 2025

UP govt eyes CSR funds to enrich visitors' experience

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, efforts are underway to beautify and adorn Prayagraj, ensuring that Maha Kumbh 2025 is a majestic event that offers an enriching spiritual experience. The Yogi government has allocated a budget of Rs 2,600 crore for the entire event, and at the same time, has sought CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds from organisations for enhancing arrangements and amenities at the Maha Kumbh Mela area. The Mahakumbh Mela Authority has invited government and non-governmental organisations to take part in the mega event by making CSR contributions. It is worth mentioning, the Mela Authority is meticulously preparing for Maha Kumbh 2025 to enhance the experiences of devotees, pilgrims, tourists, representatives

of religious and voluntary organisations, as well as saints who would be coming to the event from across the globe. Participating organisations will have the opportunity to serve crores of devotees through their CSR funds and contribute to making this monumental event a global benchmark, aligning with government efforts to elevate its stature on the world stage. The government and non-governmental organisations can participate in Maha Kumbh 2025 by contributing to technology, health facilities, water, sanitation and hygiene, sustainability, safety and security, culture and heritage, infrastructure enhancement, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and mobility. Participating in this grand event provides organisations with a platform to showcase their services and products to a global audience. Their contributions can signif-

icantly enrich the experience of millions of devotees, earning them people's appreciation and support. This engagement also fosters strong community bonds and enhances organisational visibility. Along with the Mela Authority, these organisations can contribute to making the Maha Kumbh Mela accessible to everyone. They will play a vital role in improving the devotees' experience and ensuring the event is fulfilling from a spiritual perspective. Additionally, through digital interventions, they can make the event beneficial for the devotees and help establish it as a cultural legacy. The Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj will be held from January 13, 2025 to February 25, 2025. The mela area, spread over 40,000 hectares, is divided into 25 sectors. Each sector will have essential facilities related to health, cleanliness and security, along with

camp, offices and community areas. The Yogi government is striving to make this event safe, accident-free and memorable. Prayagraj is being developed as a benchmark smart city. Efforts are being made to enhance the experience of devotees by using technology alongside tradition. Dedicated facilities are being established for citizens in Prayagraj and the fair area. Notably, 1.6 lakh tents are being set up, while a parking area is being created over 1,800 hectares. Ghats stretching 12 kilometres are being equipped with facilities for devotees. The Mela Authority is expanding its capacity to be able to accommodate an estimated 40 crore devotees. It is also estimated that around six crore devotees may attend the Maha Kumbh during the Mauni Amavasya from January 27 to January 30.

UP set to grow Shimla's apple on a large scale

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Apples from Shimla thriving in eastern Uttar Pradesh? It sounds surprising, but it is true. Under the government's initiative, apple trees from Shimla have been successfully transplanted from the cold, high mountains to the plain region. This effort was spearheaded by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Belapur in Gorakhpur, the home district of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Three years ago, in 2021, the centre introduced some apple varieties from Himachal Pradesh and planted them locally. By 2023, these trees began bearing fruit. Inspired by this success, Dharmendra Singh, a progressive farmer from Unola village in Pipraich in the chief minister's home district, planted 50 apple saplings from Himachal Pradesh in 2022. This year, his trees also bore fruit. This achievement motivates him to establish a one-acre apple orchard this year. In 2022, Dharmendra Singh planted 50 apple saplings of the Anna and Harman 99 varieties from Himachal Pradesh. This year, they have borne fruit. When asked about his interest in apple farming, he explained, "I am passionate about trying new things. During Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's tenure, there has been a significant focus on agriculture. Fixed grants are readily available transparently, and the

Krishi Vigyan Kendra provides necessary advice. These factors motivated me to start apple farming. Now, I plan to expand. I have ordered more plants and am waiting for them to be planted from Himachal." According to Dr SP Singh, senior scientist at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Belapur Gorakhpur, in January 2021, three apple varieties - Anna, Harman-99 and Dorset Golden - were brought from Himachal Pradesh and planted at the centre. They began bearing fruit after two years. These varieties are well suited to Purvanchal's agro-climatic conditions. Select only the recommended varieties, such as Anna, Harman-99, and Dorset Golden. Planting at least two different species in the orchard is essential for good pollination and optimal fruit yield. Typically, apples grow in clusters of four. Removing some fruits early on enhances the size and quality of the remaining apples. The ideal time for planting is between November and February, with January to February being the most favourable months for planting saplings. Saplings should be planted in rows, maintaining a distance of 10 to 12 feet between each plant. This method allows for approximately 400 saplings per acre. Eighty per cent of the plants begin bearing fruit within three to four years of planting and reach full fruiting maturity in six years. This makes apple cultivation suitable for short-term gardening.

CPI-M voices concern over rising crimes against Dalits

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) state politburo has expressed concern over the increasing crimes against Dalits in the state and has condemned the Shravasti incident in which some upper caste members forced a Dalit, Pradeep Kumar of Rampur Tribhanna under Gilaula police station, to drink urine filled in a beer bottle, terming it as inhuman.

"Such anti-Dalit incidents have increased in the Bharatiya Janata Party rule. The reason behind this is the Bharatiya Janata Party's promotion of upper caste mentality, which has boosted the morale of such criminals," the Communist Party of India (Marxist) state politburo said. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demanded strict punishment to the culprits arrested in this case.



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा
Bank of Baroda

Regional Office, Kanpur Metro Region:
118/330, 1st Floor, Gunti No. 5,
Kaushalpur, Kanpur - 12

Possession Notice **Branch : Ashok Nagar, Kanpur**

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount & interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property & O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand Notice Date & Possession Notice Date
Borrower : M/s Shri Murlidhar Distributors, Partner : Shri Pramod Kumar Pandey and Shri Vivek Kumar Pandey, Both S/o Shri Anand Kumar Pandey, Both R/o : 109/2, Nehru Nagar, Kanpur. Guarantor : Shri Anand Kumar Pandey S/o Shri Murlidhar Pandey and Smt. Sangeeta Pandey W/o Shri Pramod Kumar Pandey, Both R/o : 109/2, Nehru Nagar, Kanpur.
Demand Notice Date: 12-12-2023 • Date of Constructive Possession: 09-07-2024
Property : Residential Property Situated at Flat No. 302 on 2nd Floor at Premises No. 8/199-A, Arya Nagar, Kanpur Nagar in the name of Shri Pramod Kumar Pandey S/o Shri Anand Kumar Pandey and Smt. Sangeeta Pandey W/o Shri Pramod Kumar Pandey, Area : Builtup Area 95.03 Sq. Mtr. & Undivided Share in Land 31.58 Sq. Mtr. Bounded-North : Gali Sarkari 10 Ft. South : Flat No. 301, East : House No. 8/199-B, West : House No. 8/200. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 16,03,233.41 + Int. + Others Charges
Date : 12-07-2024 Place : Kanpur Authorised Officer


UP to implement 3 DTIS projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, the Uttar Pradesh government led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is working diligently to strengthen India's defence sector and space technology infrastructure. As part of this mission, the Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) will implement three projects in the state under the Defence Ministry's Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS). The projects to be located in Kanpur and Lucknow will aim to address the fundamental shortcomings in defence technology testing infrastructure. Over Rs 117 crore will be allocated for the DTIS in Uttar Pradesh, with the Government of India providing a 75 per cent grant and the Yogi administration contributing the remaining 25 per cent.

The DTIS will conduct advanced Research and Development (R&D) to enhance testing technologies alongside offering recommendations and guidance for upgrading testing facilities. Ensuring quality and standards in defence production is also a key focus of DTIS. The scheme aims to bolster indigenous defence production capabilities and provide robust testing facilities to domestic companies. Its primary goal is to boost indigenous defence manufacturing, with a special emphasis on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups, effectively addressing the current deficiencies in defence testing infrastructure. These three DTI schemes, initiated by the Defence Ministry under the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor, will be implemented by UPEIDA. MIDHANI (Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited), a key

partner in India's space missions, will establish a mechanical and material testing facility in Lucknow with an investment exceeding Rs 40 crore. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) will invest over Rs 31 crore in a communication testing facility at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. At the same time, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) will set up an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) testing facility at the same location. These schemes will operate through a special purpose vehicle (SPV) managed by a five-member team. UPEIDA officials say the DTIS will play a crucial role in India's self-reliance initiative. It will boost the Make in India programme in the defence sector and foster indigenous defence production, thereby reducing the country's reliance on imported military equipment.

ARYAVART BANK**आर्यावर्त बैंक**

(A Joint Undertaking of Govt. of India, U.P. Govt. & Bank of India)
(भारत सरकार, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार एवं बैंक ऑफ इण्डिया का संयुक्त उद्यम)

Regional Office: Lucknow, Aryavart Bhawan, 569/20/K/1, Sneh Nagar, V.I.P. Road, Opp. Awadh Hospital, Alambagh, Lucknow

Notice Under Section-13(2) of The Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. (SARFAESI Act.)
Authorized Officer, Aryavart Bank, Regional Office - Lucknow, have issued Demand Notice under Section-13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 through Registered /Speed post. The contents of the same are interalia the defaults committed by you in the payment of outstanding amount including principal interest and other charges etc. The outstanding dues are mentioned here-in-below :

Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/Guarantors/Branch	Description of the property	Date of Demand Notice	Amount of Notice
1.	Borrower: Mr. Anupma w/o Raghvendra Pratap Singh (Borrower & Mortgagor), 48, Narayanpuri Manas Nagar, Lucknow-226023 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Raghvendra Pratap Singh s/o late Bhawani Prasad, 48, Narayanpuri Manas Nagar, Lucknow-226023 2. Mr. Ajay Kumar Chauhan S/o Shyam Kishore Chauhan, 581/ka/80 Chanchanpuri New Raheemabad, Sarojini Nagar Lucknow 226008 Branch : Gauri Bazar Branch	Residential Property: House built on plot no.10, a part of Khasra No.265, Vill-Anaura, Pargana- Bijnaur Tehsil-Sarojini Nagar Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Smt. Anupma w/o Raghvendra Pratap Singh Details of Property As Per Sale Deed (Gift deed) Dated 09.03.2022, Boundaries: EAST: Rasta20 feet wide, West: Land Shyam Yadav, North: Plot No. 11(Smt. Arti), South: Plot No.9 Area: 1200 Sq.feet 111.524sq.mt	12.06.2024	Rs. 8,69,350.49 + Interest & Expenses etc.
2.	Borrower: 1. Mr. Deepika Pandey w/o Abhishek Pandey (Borrower & Mortgagor), Plot at land Khasra no.356 Sarai Sheikh, New Nandi Vihar Colony, PO-Chinhat, Lucknow-226028 2. Mr. Abhishek Pandey S/o Prabhakar Pandey (Co-Borrower), Plot at land Khasra no.356, Sarai Sheikh, New Nandi Vihar Colony, PO-Chinhat, Lucknow-226028 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Anjani Kumar Mishra s/o Vashistha Mishra, HN-55, New Nandi Vihar Colony PO- Chinhat, Lucknow- 226028 2. Mr. Basdeo Pandey S/o Laxmi Narayan Pandey, HN-57, New Nandi Vihar Colony PO- Chinhat, Lucknow- 226028 Branch : Chinhat Branch	Residential Property: Residential plot area minj of khasra no 356 vill- sarai Sheikh Pargana, Tehsil & dist-lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Smt. Deepika Pandey w/o Abhishek Pandey Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 12.06.2014, Boundaries: EAST: Rasta 20 feet wide, West: Bhawan Deegar, North: Plot seller, South: Plot Preeti Singh Area: 1160 Sq.feet 107.806sq.mt	12.06.2024	Rs. 2,14,327.60 + Interest & Expenses etc.
3.	Borrower: 1. M/S. Manish Enterprises: Prop (Ful Chandra Tiwari), Plot no 2 Khasra no 249, Adil Nagar Ward Shankar Purwa Kalyanpur Lucknow-226022 2. Mr. Ful Chandra Tiwari s/o Hari Prasad Tiwari (Borrower), Plot no 2 Khasra no 249, Adil Nagar ward Shankar Purwa, Kalyanpur Lucknow-226022 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Raghvendra Prasad Pandey s/o Jagat Prasad Pandey, Plot No-1 Adil Nagar, Kalyanpur, Lucknow-226022 2. Pawan Kumar Pathak S/O Triyagi Narayan Pathak, 6A/763 Gopesh Kuni,Raibereilli Road, Vrindavan Yojna Lucknow-226029 Branch : Kalyanpur	Plot no. 02, part of Khasra no. 249 Min. Situated at Adil Nagar, ward-Shankarpurwa Pargana tehsil & dist- Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Ful Chandra Tiwari S/o Hari Prasad Tiwari Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 17.06.2003, Boundaries: EAST: Rasta 16 feet wide, West: Plot no-9, North: Arajee Samiti, South: Arajee Deegar Area: 46.47 Sq.mt	06.06.2024	Rs. 5,11,881.37 + Interest & Expenses etc.
4.	Borrower: 1. Mr. Prabhu Dayal S/O Mr.Tilak Ram (Borrower & Mortgagor), Semra Gaudi ward Fajjullahganj Sitpur Road, Thana Madiyon Lucknow-226013 2. Mr. Anil Rajwanshi S/o Prabhudayal (Co-Borrower), Semra Gaudi ward Fajjullahganj Sitpur Road, Thana Madiyon Lucknow-226013 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Sushil Kumar Rajvanshi s/o Kamlesh, EWS 1/549/H Janikipuram Lucknow-226031 2. Mr. Jugdutt s/o Shiv Ram, Semra Gaudi ward Fajjullahganj Sitpur Road, Thana Madiyon Lucknow-226013 Branch : Bhitauli Khurd Branch	Residential Property: Residential House, Vill-Andrun Abadi Semra Gaurthi-Andrun Abadi Semra Gaurthi ward- Faizullaganj, Tehsil & Dist- Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Shri Prabhu Dayal S/o Late Tilak Ram Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 01.05.2017, Boundaries: EAST: 4 feet wide road, West: Khandhar Rajendra, North: House of Ram Avtar, South: House of Chetram Area: 777 Sq.feet 72.211sq.mt	10.06.2024	Rs. 5,72,722.50 + Interest & Expenses etc.
5.	Borrower: Mr. Ramesh Singh s/o Mr. Sambhar Singh, Rampur Devrai Bakshi ka talab, Lucknow-227202 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Chatrapal S/o Mr. Maiku Lal, Rampur Devrai Bakshi ka talab, Lucknow-227202 2. Mr. Devendra Singh Chauhan S/o Mr. Shiv Kumar Singh Chauhan, Rampur Devrai Bakshi ka talab, Lucknow-227202 Branch : Bakshi ka Talab	Property No. 1: Plot Gata No.258 Kha Minj vill- Rampur Devrai pargana-Mahona Tehsil-Bakshi ka talab, Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Mr. Ramesh Singh S/o Late Sambhar Singh Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 08.03.2013, Boundaries: EAST: Khet Banwari, West: Road 15 feet wide (Chakmarg), North: Land Seller, South: Land Seller Area: 330 Sq.mt Property No. 2: Residential Property: Plot Gata No.258 Kha Minj vill- Rampur Devrai pargana-Mahona Tehsil-Bakshi ka talab, Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Mr. Ramesh Singh S/o Late Sambhar Singh Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 10.04.2013, Boundaries: EAST: Khet Banwari & others, West: Road 15 feet wide (Chakmarg), North: Land Purchaser, South: Land Deegar Area: 330 Sq.mt	04.06.2024	Rs. 16,44,637.34 + Interest & Expenses etc.
6.	Borrower: Mr. Kedar Baks Singh s/o Chandika Baks Singh (Mortgagor), Navipur Firozabad, Barabanki-227131 Guarantor: 1. Singh Traders Prop: Deepak Singh (Borrower), Navipur vill- Firozabad, Haidergarh, Barabanki-225124 2. Mr. Deepak Singh (Borrower), Navipur vill Firozabad, Barabanki-227131 3. Mr. Dinesh Kumar Chaurasiya S/o Gauri Shankar Chaurasiya (Guarantor), Ganharee, Barabanki-227131 4. Mr. Kedar Baks Singh s/o Chandrika Baks Singh (Guarantor), Navipur Vill- Firozabad, Barabanki-227131 Branch : Khairakankoo	Residential Property: Khata no.00582 Gata No.265 vill-Firojabad pargana, Tehsil- Haidergarh Dist- Barabanki, TITLE HOLDER- Kedar Baks Singh s/o Chandrika Singh Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 07.09.1999, Boundaries: EAST: Chakroad, West: Chakroad, North: Matatabad ka Khet, South: Shatrohanka Khet Area: 0.3295 hectare	06.06.2024	Rs. 7,23,654.50 + Interest & Expenses etc.
7.	Borrower: Mrs. V. Sunita Rao w/o V. Adinarayan Rao (Borrower & Mortgagor), H.No.5/193, Rajni Khand Sharda Nagar, Lucknow- 226002 2. Mr. V. Adi Narayan Rao s/o V. Sarathi (Co-Borrower), H.No. 5/193, Rajni Khand Sharda Nagar, Lucknow-226002 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Raveendra Kumar Gupta s/o Late Mansharam Gupta, House No. 5/220, Rajnikhand Sharda Nagar Yojna, Raibereilly Road, Lucknow-226002 2. Mr. Vaibhav Gupta s/o Om Shanker Gupta, E-19 Housing Society Kanpur Road Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow-226008 Branch : Gudamba Branch	Residential Property: House No. EWS 5/193 Rajni Khand Sharda Nagar Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Mrs.V. Sunita Rao w/o V.Adinarayan Rao Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 19.09.2016, Boundaries: EAST: House No-5/117, West: 6.0 mtr. wide road, North: House no.5/192, South: House no.5/194 Area: 39.293sqm	10.06.2024	Rs. 18,61,087.83 + Interest & Expenses etc.

Further with reasons, we believe that you are avoiding the service of said Demand Notice issued under the Act hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of demand notice, as required u/s-13(2) of said Act, the Rule-3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay Aryavart Bank, within a period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Demand Notice with the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc., failing which, we Aryavart Bank will take necessary action under the provisions of Section-13(4) of sale thereof. Further, you are prohibited u/s-13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease etc. and encumber in any other way, the aforesaid secured assets.

Date : 12.07.2024 **Place :** Lucknow **Authorised Officer**

Ensure timely disposal of complaints: Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Registration Fees Ravindra Jaiswal, while present at the Prime Minister's parliamentary office here on Thursday, heard the problems of the people at a 'Jansunwai' (public hearing) programme. During the public hearing, he talked to the officials directly on mobile in many cases and directed for their quick disposal. He directed the officials to take problems and complaints of people very seriously and ensure their quality and timely disposal. During the public hearing, Jaiswal also assured the people that their problems would be resolved soon.

Earlier a chaupal was organised in Pure of Sewapuri block, a village adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana here on Wednesday. It was held under



UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal listening to the problems of people at PM's parliamentary office in Varanasi on Thursday.

the chairmanship of District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam. The DM also performed the rituals of 'godh bhara' of pregnant women and annaprashan of newborn chil-

dren. Speaking on the occasion, the DM said chaupal was organised for the second time to include the left out beneficiaries by cross-checking them. He heard the complaints one by

one of the people and directed the officials of the departments concerned to resolve them soon. In the chaupal, the problems of the gram panchayat Pure, including the main schemes of the government, Pradhan Mantri/ Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Yojana, Har Ghar Nal Jal Yojana, toilets, Ayushman cards, ration cards, old age, widow and disabled pension schemes etc were discussed. The DM directed the officials present to inform the left out eligible people about the government schemes and benefit them. During the review of the housing scheme, the project director said that 108 eligible persons have been given its benefits and a list of 70 more beneficiaries has been prepared. Many people complained about being deprived of the housing scheme on which the DM directed the gram panchayat secretary and gram pradhan

to verify other eligible people and benefit them from the scheme. He said that those who are landless should be provided toilets along with housing scheme by making a lease. Rajalingam further said that those who have pucca houses should not ask for houses out of greed. The government runs such schemes for poor people. On the problem of pipe leakage in Har Ghar Nal Jal Yojana, the DM directed the executive engineer of Jal Nigam to prepare an estimate and submit it so that the repair work of pipes can be done soon. On a woman's complaint about the absence of a marriage hall in the village, the DM assured the people to get it constructed within six months. Similarly, he heard the complaints of the left out beneficiaries of schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Yojana, Ayushman cards, ration cards, pension etc

and directed the officials of the departments concerned to benefit them. The DM also directed the officers of the department concerned to resolve the complaints of waterlogging, revenue dispute, encroachment on public land etc. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal said that various construction works related to drains, lanes, parks, solar lights, CCTV cameras, passenger sheds, working sheds for women of self-help groups, dustbins, a library and other development works have been approved in this gram panchayat, which will be started soon. During this, giving the message of environment, the DM and CDO planted saplings of banyan and pakkaad in the secretariat premises. Project director, BDO, DPRO, lekhpal, secretary and other officials apart from gram pradhan of gram oanchayat and others were present in this programme.

Jaya, Abhishek offer prayers at KVT



Jaya Bachchan and her son Abhishek Bachchan at Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi on Thursday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Famous Bollywood actress-turned-politician and Rajya Sabha MP from Samajwadi Party (SP) Jaya Bhaduri Bachchan, along with her son and an actor Abhishek Bachchan and daughter Sweta Bachchan Nanda arrived here on Thursday and offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT). After landing at the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur, they reached Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham and then offered prayers at KVT. They were accompanied by Prof Chandramauli Upadhyay, former head of Jyotish department in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) who is close to Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan's family as he was always seen in most of

Bachchan's family functions. Though Amitabh was not seen, he has visited this Dwadasa Jyotisinga many times in the past. Seeing the famous Bollywood family, there was rush of people to have the glance of Jaya and Abhishek. During their stay, senior officers of temple administration were also present. The purpose of the visit is not known. Abhishek, who also visited the city many times earlier for his film shootings, is rarely seen in movies these days though many of his films like Gulab Jamun, Houseful-5 etc are likely to be released soon. He is also popular in the sports field by owing kabaddi and other league teams. However, his wife and famous actress and former Miss World Aishwarya Rai was not seen.

Population day: CMO flags off 'Sarathi' vehicle, rally



CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary flagging off Sarathi vehicle on World Population Day in Varanasi on Thursday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the occasion of World Population Day, various awareness programmes, including a seminar were organised at the CMO office here on Thursday. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary flagged off the 'Sarathi vehicle' and the rally. ASHA workers participated enthusiastically in the programme. In the rally, ASHA workers gave many messages, including 'adopt family planning, make life happy', 'new identity of developed India, family planning is the pride of every couple'. The CMO said the service delivery phase of Population Stability Fortnight has started. This fortnight will continue till July 31. The fixed service day camps will be organised at urban and rural

level CHCs/PHCs in which male and female sterilisation services will be provided to the interested beneficiaries. "The ASHA workers are a strong and important link of the Health department who have done better work in health programmes like vaccination or door-to-door search of patients from in all conditions and seasons", he said, emphasising that more and more people in the community should be made aware about male sterilisation (NSV) as it is a very easy and safe process compared to female sterilisation. Dr Chaudhary asked the health workers to motivate interested beneficiaries and couples by removing misconceptions in the society. "All ASHA workers must get at least one male sterilisation done in their respective areas", he said,

adding that the Health department is constantly making efforts to promote population stability and reduce the fertility rate. Nodal officer and deputy CMO Dr HC Maurya said on fixed service day sterilisation camps will be organised at rural CHCs at Araziline, Cholahpur, Gangapur and Misirpur, PHCs at Sewapuri, Harhua, Pindra, Badagaon, Chiragaon and urban CHCs at Shivpur, Chowkaghat, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Durgakund and Sarnath. For this, six surgeons have been deployed on roster basis who will provide male and female sterilisation services. Apart from this, family planning means such as Antara injection, Mala N, Chaaya, condom, PPI-UCD, IUCD will be provided through 'basket of choice' at all government hospitals, urban and rural CHCs/PHCs, Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres and health sub-centres. On the occasion, Administrative Officer Sheshmani, ACMO Dr Rajesh Prasad, ACMO Dr Nikunj Kumar Verma, Deputy CMO Dr Amit Singh, DHEIO Harivansh Yadav, District Advisor (Tobacco Control Cell) Dr Saurabh Pratap Singh, Urban Health Coordinator Ashish Singh, CPCM Kaushal Choubey and representatives of the partner organisations UPTSU, PSI India along with other health workers were also present.

Ganga, Yamuna rising slowly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Due to the effect of downpour in Uttarakhand and other areas, the water level of twin rivers — Ganga and Yamuna is rising slowly here. However, both the rivers in Prayagraj are flowing below the danger mark. During the last 24 hours, the water level of Ganga in Prayagraj increased



by 3 cm and Yamuna by 4 centimeters. It has been raining in many areas, including Uttarakhand and West UP, for the last few days. Its effect has also been seen in the water level of rivers here. The water level in Phaphamau of Ganga rose to 76.01 metres on Thursday. Similarly, the water level of the Ganga in Chhatnag rose from 71.71 m to 71.74 m. The water level of Yamuna in Naini rose by 4 cm. The water level was 72.55 metres at 8 pm on Tuesday night, which reached 72.59 metres on Thursday morning. The increasing water level of Ganga and Yamuna is also visible at Sangam. The

water level of the Ganga has reached Daraganj Ghat. On Monday, 1.28 lakh cusecs of water has been released from Narora Barrage. At the same time, about 14,000 cusecs of water has been released from Kanpur. The effect of water released from Kanpur will be seen in Prayagraj in three days and the water of Narora barrage will reach Prayagraj in

about a week. **TRAGIC END:** Marketing inspector Surendra Singh died after slipping while boarding a train at Maa Belha Devi Junction, Pratapgarh, on Wednesday night. He was boarding the train to go home when his foot slipped suddenly and he came under the train. GRP Inspector Gopal Kushwaha said that during the investigation, it was revealed that the marketing officer's foot slipped while boarding the moving train. As a result he fell down and died. Despite this investigation is still going on. The post-mortem examination report is awaited.

Tractor driver dies in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A tractor driver was killed when his vehicle in a bid to save a cyclist overturned in the Shivrajpur police station area on Thursday morning. The police sent the body for an autopsy. He was identified as Rajneesh Babu alias Kalloo Kureel (26), a resident of Kunwarpur village, Shivrajpur. On Thursday when he was going towards Shivrajpur, the tractor suddenly overturned into a ditch near Barry level crossing in a bid to save a cyclist. The passers-by rescued him from the ditch and took to the community health centre (CHC) where he was declared dead by the doctors. The police sent the body for autopsy. In another incident a doctor was killed while his friend seriously injured when their speeding car rammed into a truck from behind on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway under Bilhaur police station area on Thursday morning. Meanwhile a man died while his nephew was seriously injured when a speeding car hit their bike near Jhinhak in Kanpur Dehat. **INSPECTED:** Former international cricketer Shashikant Khandekar and his team inspected the ongoing renovation work at the Palika Stadium of Kanpur Nagar Nigam on Thursday. He said the ground will soon be available for the budding cricketers. Cricket expert Ashu Mehrotra was also present on the occasion.

Emphasis on eliminating possible sources of mosquito breeding

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view of the possibility of spread of mosquito-borne diseases, especially dengue and malaria, the Health department has issued an advisory for effective control and action, emphasising on eliminating the possible sources of mosquito breeding. For this anti-larva spraying, fogging and oil balls are being used. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said a special communicable disease control campaign is being run in the district from July 1. Under it various activities are being carried out in rural and urban areas. The CMO informed that 20 beds each equipped with mosquito nets have been reserved for dengue patients in Shri Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Divisional Hospital Kabirchaura, Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital Pandeypur, Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) Hospital Ramnagar and Swami Vivekanand Memorial

(SVM) Hospital Bhelupur. Apart from this, 10 beds each have been reserved at urban and rural level community health centres (CHCs) and five beds each at primary health centres (PHCs). He said instructions have been given to compulsorily display the admission, discharge and platelet protocol of dengue patients in the wards of these hospitals and health centres. Dr Chaudhary said in view of the possible spread of dengue during the rainy season, some private doctors create an atmosphere of fear among the relatives of the patient by creating unnecessary demand for platelets. In this regard, according to him, the managers of all private hospitals were instructed that whenever they send a demand for platelets to the blood bank, they should send it along with the forms related to the current clinical condition of the patients and platelet count. "The names and signatures of

the registered doctors must be mentioned on the platelet requisitions. Platelets should be requisitioned as per the platelet protocol and not unnecessarily", he said. He said as dengue mosquito breeds in clean and stagnant water so empty and clean household water storage containers should be covered on a weekly basis and water should not be allowed to accumulate in pots or any other utensils, coconut shells, tyres kept on the roof of the house. Besides, water storage containers should be covered with lids and during the rainy season, all persons can wear clothes that cover hands and feet. He advised the people that mosquito nets can be used while sleeping, personal protective measures such as insecticide treated bednets, coils and vaporisers can be used to prevent mosquito bites, mosquito repellent creams can be used during the day time to prevent mosquito bites etc.

2 highway robbers arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Prayagraj police arrested two highway robbers and recovered a looted trailer on their information. DCP (Ganga Nagar) Abhishek Bharti said the police of Soraon police station and the team of surveillance cell (Ganga Nagar) took joint action and arrested Azad of Kulipur under Delhupur police station, Pratapgarh and Aasik Ali of Narwa City under Kotwali police station, Pratapgarh. They used to commit robbery on the highway. On July 10 the miscreants looted the trailer from near the Saint Nirankari satsang site on the Mauima-Pratapgarh highway. The cost of the trailer is about Rs 25 lakh. The teams arrested the robbers with the help of CCTV cameras and inquiry. Meanwhile, Prayagraj STF arrested an accused of duping 5000 people of Rs 100 crores from Nagpur. The accused was absconding for two years. The police of five states were looking for him. The accused Gyanesh Pathak is a resident of Prayagraj. The STF teams along with the UP Police were searching for Gyanesh since 2022. Two days ago, the STF team got information about Gyanesh Pathak hiding in Nagpur. Then a team of Prayagraj STF reached there. The team traced the accused in about 24 hours. After this the accused was arrested and two mobile phones were recovered from him. Pathak was arrested in a case registered in Bareilly's Kila police station and presented in Nagpur court. Transit remand has been granted by the court. The accused will be brought to Bareilly and legal action will be taken.

Illegal plotting demolished

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The enforcement squad of Kanpur Development Authority (KDA), Zone 1, apart from demolishing the illegal plotting on 70 bighas land in New Kanpur City and surrounding area also bulldozed the 14 under-construction buildings with the help of six backhoe loaders on Wednesday. Under the directives of Vice Chairman Madan Singh Garbyal, OSD (Zone 1) Sat Shukla reached New Kanpur City with the team on Wednesday and demolished the illegal plotting carried out on arazi No 2 by Alok Katiyar, Shahjade Lal and Hari Shanker in Gangpur behind KDA Greens. The squad also removed the illegal plotting on arazi No.757 of Ajay Yadav and Bhupendra Bhadauria in Singhpur Kachhar; arazi No 787 of Harikishan Katheria, Ram Khilwan and Ashok Kumar in Singhpur Kachhar apart from roads, drains, cement poles and boundary walls etc. total on 28 bighas of land. At the same time, the squad also demolished the six under-construction premises there. Thereafter, on the Barrage main road in Bithoor, Hindupur areas, the squad removed illegal plotting on around 42 bighas of land and demolished eight under-construction buildings. It also bulldozed the illegal plotting on arazi Nos 510, 511 in Hindupur Naya Dallapurwa carried out by Hakim Singh; arazi Nos 505, 506 (K), 507, 579, 580, 581, 582, 599, 600 in Dallapurwa, Bithoor, by Kishore Nishad. Assistant Engineer Sandeep Modanwal, Zonal Engineers Janardan Singh and Kailash Singh were present. OSD (Zone 1) Sat Shukla said illegal plotting in



New Kanpur City project would not be allowed. Apart from demolishing the illegal plotting, other penal action would also be initiated against the guilty. He said any construction work in the proposed New Kanpur City area was prohibited and FIR would be lodged against those carrying out the illegal plotting there, he added. **MILESTONE:** Kanpur Metro has completed the work of installing the third rail system in the 'Up-Line' of the Chunniganj-Nayaganj section of Corridor-1 (IIT-Naubasta) on Wednesday. This marks the readiness of the approximately 14 km long metro route from IIT to Nayaganj on its 'up-line'. The metro authorities are poised to energize this system within the next day or two, transforming the traction line into a live operational segment. Concurrently, efforts to instal the third rail on the 'Down-Line' are advancing swiftly, in tandem with ongoing track construction. The third rail system installed parallel to the track, provides power for Kanpur Metro trains using 750-volt DC electricity, replacing the conventional OHE (overhead equipment) system. This setup offers reduced maintenance since it runs alongside the track, eliminating risks such as power interruptions from external factors like kite flying.

Moreover, the system's design ensures that no visible electrical wires mar the city's aesthetic infrastructure, enhancing its visual appeal. Managing Director of Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Limited, Sushil Kumar, remarked on the significant progress of the Kanpur Metro project, stating, "The track construction work in the underground section of Kanpur Metro is progressing rapidly. Concurrently, we achieved a major milestone with the completion of third rail installation on the 'up-line' up to Nayaganj. The Kanpur Metro team's commendable speed in construction is noteworthy. Once track construction on both lines is complete, the route from IIT to Nayaganj will be fully prepared for a trial run. We are confident that this momentum will continue, ensuring timely completion of all civil construction works on Balance sections of Corridor-1." Presently, Kanpur Metro commercial services are operational on a nine km Priority Corridor (IIT-Motijheel) under approximately 24-km-long Corridor-1 (IIT-Naubasta). Apart from the Chunniganj-Nayaganj and Kanpur Central-Transport Nagar underground sections, construction work is also progressing rapidly in the approximately five-km-long Baradevi-Naubasta elevated section.

New method for detecting adulterants in milk developed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A team of researchers from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Sikkim University has developed a new, cost-effective and home-based method for detecting adulterants in milk using the evaporation process and machine learning algorithm. The method is useful in ensuring the strength and quality of milk and public health. The method has been developed by Tapan Parsian, a research scholar, under the supervision of Dr Archana Tiwari, Department of Physics, in collaboration with Dr Ajay Tripathi, Sikkim University. The evaporation process is a phenomenon in which when a drop is left to evaporate on a surface the suspended particles in the drop move towards the edges and leave behind a ring-like pattern on the surface. Different types of suspended particles form their own unique evaporated ring patterns. These evaporated ring patterns act as fingerprints for identifying the substance. To validate the method, synthetic milk was prepared in the lab by mixing appropriate amounts of detergent, ordinary vegetable oil, urea and tap water to create a mixture that resembled real milk. This synthetic milk was then mixed with real milk in varying quantities. The evaporated ring patterns of the synthetic milk were then analysed. During the analysis, several signs were identified in the evaporated ring patterns that reveal the quality of the milk.

Tree plantation drive organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Harsahai PG College, P Road, organised a tree plantation drive 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' on Thursday. It was inaugurated by the district president of BJP Shikshan Sansthan Prokosta Dipu Pandey by planting a tree in the college ground. State Covenor Dr Diwakar Mishra conducted the proceedings. District Co-convenor Dr Sushil Srivastava inspired teachers, students and college management to plant more and more trees by distrib-



uting them among other people thereby promoting the greenery and eliminating the air pollution. Others who also spoke on the occasion were the corporators Govind Shukla, Alok Pandey, senior BJP leader Anand Trivedi (former corporator), and Shweta Gupta (Principal, Harsahai Inter College). Mandal president (Lajpat Nagar) Amit Bajpai, ward president (Sisamau) Om Prakash Chautala, Sudhir Pandey, Ankur Sahu, students, teachers in large number were present.

India calls for infusing new energies into BIMSTEC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday called on seven-nation Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping to infuse new energies, resources and a fresh commitment to bolster cooperation among the Bay of Bengal countries. The appeal was made by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar while hosting his counterparts from BIMSTEC member states at a two-day retreat in the national capital. The BIMSTEC brings together seven countries of South and Southeast Asia for multifaceted cooperation. Besides India, BIMSTEC comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.Jaishankar said BIMSTEC should harbour higher aspirations.For India, BIMSTEC represents the intersection of its 'Neighbourhood First' outlook, the 'Act East Policy' and the 'SAGAR vision,' Jaishankar said in his opening remarks on the first day of the retreat. "Each of these endeavours is being proposed with a specif-



ic focus on the Bay of Bengal, where collaborative potential has long remained under-realised," he said. "Our challenge is to change that for the better, and to do so rapidly," he added. India has been making concerted efforts to make BIMSTEC a vibrant forum for regional cooperation as initiatives under SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) were not moving forward for a variety of reasons.India has been cooperating with the countries of the Indian Ocean region under the broader policy framework of SAGAR or Security and

Growth for all in the Region. BIMSTEC foreign ministers' retreat is aimed at exchanging ideas openly, candidly and fruitfully. "We all benefited from the last such exercise in Bangkok. This one now has a particular importance as it serves to prepare strong outcomes for the summit to be held later in the year," Jaishankar said. "Our message should be clear - that we are all determined to infuse new energies, new resources and a new commitment into cooperation among the Bay of Bengal nations," he said. Thailand is the current chair of

BIMSTEC and it is set to host the annual summit of the grouping later this year. Jaishankar said the first part of the discussions in the retreat will revolve around connectivity, cooperation in trade and business, collaboration in health and space, digital public infrastructure, capacity building and societal exchanges. "I hope in the second part of our deliberations, we could focus more sharply on the possible outcomes of the forthcoming summit," he said. BIMSTEC foreign ministers had last met in a similar format in Bangkok in July last year.

Boost to desi defence production: 7 projects awarded to private firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to give a boost to self-reliance in defence manufacturing, India's premier defence research organisation DRDO has awarded seven new projects to private entities to develop key military assets including underwater launched unmanned aerial vehicle and long-range remotely operated systems. The projects were cleared under the defence ministry's Technology Development Fund scheme to boost domestic defence manufacturing, Defence Ministry said here on Thursday. The project for underwater-launched unmanned aerial vehicles is aimed at developing versatile marine battlefield accessories which can be deployed in multiple combat roles, officials said. The objective is part of a larger framework of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and maritime domain awareness (MDA), they said. The project has been awarded to Sagar Defence Engineering Pvt Ltd, Pune, according to the defence ministry. The other projects are development of ice detection sensor for aircraft, manufacturing of radar signal processor, long-range remotely-



operated vehicles for detection and neutralisation of underwater objects. The long-range remotely-operated vehicles will be dual-use systems that will enable detection, classification, localisation and neutralisation of underwater objects while keeping the key assets away from the suspected operational area, the ministry said. The work has been awarded to start-up, IROV Technologies Pvt Ltd, Kochi. The other projects are development of radar signal processor with active antenna array simulator, development of Indian regional nav-

igation satellite system-based timing acquisition and dissemination system and indigenous scenario and sensor simulation toolkit. The toolkit project involves development of an indigenous system for simulator training of pilots in realistic scenarios. This will help in full mission planning and large force engagement, the ministry said. The project has been awarded to start-up, Oxygen 2 Innovation Pvt Ltd, Noida. "Providing impetus to Aatmanirbharta, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has

awarded seven new projects to industries under the Technology Development Fund scheme for various requirements of the armed forces and aerospace and defence sectors," the ministry said. "These project sanctions are a testimony to the continuing endeavour of DRDO in nurturing Industries, especially MSMEs & start-ups, in defence and aerospace domains," it said. "The indigenous development of these technologies will strengthen the military industrial ecosystem," it said in a statement.

Heart to Bravehearts car rally to mark Kargil war anniversary flagged off



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant General Bhavnish Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area, on Thursday here flagged off the 'Heart to Bravehearts', a car rally to commemorate the 25th anniversary of India's victory in the Kargil War, army said. The 'Heart to Bravehearts' Car Rally is a tribute to the valour, resilience and sacrifices of heroes of Kargil War to commemorate Rajat Jayanti Celebrations of the Kargil War. The Car Rally was simultaneously flagged off from Tanot Border Post, Tezu, and Kochi Port on June 30, carrying messages from citizens to the soldiers across the country especially those deployed on the borders. The teams converged in Delhi on July 9 and flagged off on Thursday to further proceed to the Kargil War Memorial at Dras. The Rally will cover a distance of over 10000 Km before culminating at the Kargil War Memorial on July 15. The Rally passes through various military stations en-route and felicitates the brave soldiers

of the Indian Army. The Flag-off and Flag-in ceremonies at all prominent places are being conducted in the presence of serving personnel, Veterans, Veer Naris, and family members of the Bravehearts and eminent dignitaries. The Kargil War Veterans and Veer Naris are being felicitated recognising their sacrifices and unwavering support during the war. This Rally, organised by Mahindra & Mahindra in collaboration with Indian Army, carries messages from the citizens in the form of letters, poems, sketches, and other creative expressions. As the Rally makes its way through the length and breadth of the country, they carry with them the stories of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism. The gestures in form of letters, messages and posters/ photographs collected at Mahindra & Mahindra showrooms pan India are also being carried by the Rally. The campaign is a sincere call on and opportunity for all Indians to express their appreciation towards the Indian Armed Forces.

Nadda bats for family planning for Viksit Bharat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister J P Nadda said on Thursday that the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' can only be achieved when the health of India's families is well maintained and this can be accomplished by the smaller families, he stated. He said the Centre and the States need to collectively work to ensure that women can exercise their right to make family planning choices and are not burdened by unwanted pregnancy. Nadda virtually held a meeting with the states and the Union Territories (UTs) on the occasion of World Population Day. The theme of the event was 'Healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies for the wellbeing of mother and child'.



He said the Centre and the States should also ensure that the unmet needs of contraceptives are met especially in the high burden States, districts and blocks. Highlighting that one-fifth of

global population is India's, he stressed on the need to celebrate World Population Day as a reaffirmation and recommitment to working towards population stabilisation. The goal of Viksit Bharat can

only be achieved when the health of India's families is well maintained, which can be achieved by smaller families,' he stated. The Centre and the states need to collectively work to ensure that women can exercise their right to make family planning choices and are not burdened by unwanted pregnancy, and to ensure that unmet needs of contraceptives are met especially in the high burden states, districts and blocks," he said. The objective of the family planning (FP) programme needs to be 'Birth by choice and by informed choice', he stated. Highlighting the government's focus on securing a brighter, healthier future for all, including youth, adolescents, women and the elderly, the Minister said.

"Collaboration is key as we address upcoming responsibilities and recognise family planning and reproductive health as fundamental," Nadda spoke on 'Mission Parivar Vikas' (MPV), one of the successful schemes of the National Family Planning Programme, which was initially launched for 14 high priority districts (HPDs) in seven high-focus states and later expanded to cover all districts in these states and six northeastern states. "Making districts as the primary focal point of this scheme helped in bringing the TFR (Total Fertility Rate) down in the entire state. Mission Parivar Vikas has not only contributed to lowering the states' TFR but also helped in the national TFR", he stated.

LS Speaker Birla for greater democratisation of UN, WTO



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday made a strong pitch for greater democratisation of global governance structures such as the UN Security Council and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Addressing the 10th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in St. Petersburg in Russia, Birla said India was committed to uniting emerging markets and developing countries, and affirmed its dedication to the principles of mutual respect, understanding, equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness and consensus. He was speaking at the first plenary session on the theme of "The BRICS Parliamentary dimension: prospects for strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation". Birla also welcomed the four new members — Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — into the BRICS Parliamentary Forum. "BRICS, largely representing the interests of the developing world, stands for greater democratisation of the global governance system, and for reforming the international organisations such as the UN Security Council, WTO, at the global level," the Lok Sabha speaker said.

CBI likely to file chargesheet in UGC-NET paper leak case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is likely to file a chargesheet against a youth who allegedly circulated a "doctored" screenshot of the UGC-NET paper on Telegram which led to the cancellation of the examination after an alert from the Union Home Ministry about a possible "breach", officials said. The CBI did not find any large-scale conspiracy in the episode and would limit the charge sheet to offences of attempt to cheat or cheating, they said. The central agency's probe into the alleged UGC-NET paper leak had found that the screenshot of the "leaked" question paper for the June 18 examination was "doctored" by a school student, the officials said. The CBI has informally conveyed its findings to the government and is likely to file a charge sheet against the youth, they said. More than 11 lakh candidates had registered for the examination which determines eligibility for junior research fellowship, appointment as assistant professors and admission to PhD in Indian universities and colleges. The examination was cancelled by the Union Education Ministry on June 19 following the alert from the Union Home Ministry's National Cyber Crime Threat Analytics Unit of the Indian



Ministry of Education had said after the cancellation of the examination. The investigation was handed over to the CBI, which found that the purported screenshot of the paper was created by the school student using an app. He changed the date of the screenshot to June 17 to make some money by giving the impression that he had access to the question paper, they said. The youth tried to give an impression that he could arrange subject-specific papers which were to be held later, they said. The central agency consulted forensic experts who opined that the screenshot was doctored, they said. The examination was cancelled based on inputs received by the University Grants Commission from the I4C that the paper was available on the darknet and was allegedly being sold for Rs 5-6 lakh on messaging platforms, sources said. The UGC-NET will now be held afresh from August 21 to September 4.

Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C). "The UGC received certain inputs from the National Cyber Crime Threat Analytics Unit of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre under the Ministry of Home Affairs on the examination. These inputs prima facie indicate that the integrity of the aforesaid examination may have been compromised," the

Ministry of Education had said after the cancellation of the examination. The investigation was handed over to the CBI, which found that the purported screenshot of the paper was created by the school student using an app. He changed the date of the screenshot to June 17 to make some money by giving the impression that he had access to the question paper, they said. The youth tried to give an impression that he could arrange subject-specific papers which were to be held later, they said. The central agency consulted forensic experts who opined that the screenshot was doctored, they said. The examination was cancelled based on inputs received by the University Grants Commission from the I4C that the paper was available on the darknet and was allegedly being sold for Rs 5-6 lakh on messaging platforms, sources said. The UGC-NET will now be held afresh from August 21 to September 4.

Alarming rise in number of women going missing

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Between 2019 and 2022, approximately 13.13 lakh women were reported missing in India—a staggering statistic disclosed by the NCRB that highlights the grave challenges faced by women, especially in rural areas. This pressing issue was discussed threadbare during the recent 'Missing Women and Girls' summit organized recently by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Anita Sinha, Joint Secretary of the NHRC, attributed this alarming trend to factors such as poverty and trafficking. These women are often deceived with promises of lucrative jobs in urban centers, only to find themselves trapped in exploitative situations such as domestic servitude, prostitution, or organ trade, she said. NHRC member S. Vijaya

Bharathi echoed similar concerns regarding the dismissive attitude of law enforcement agencies towards cases of missing women and girls. She emphasised the urgent necessity for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to streamline efforts in effectively tracing missing women, as the absence of structured procedures often delays and hampers coordinated responses to these cases. Dr Meena Gopal, Associate Professor at Pondicherry University, focused on the educational challenges faced by young women in rural areas, which contribute to high dropout rates. She emphasized the importance of establishing hostels and providing other forms of state support to encourage young women to pursue education. Dr Sabiha Hussain, Professor and Director at the Sarojini

Naidu Center for Women's Studies, Jamia Islamia University, highlighted the plight of older women who go missing in India. She noted that elderly women often face financial insecurity, poor health, and social isolation, which make them vulnerable to exploitation. Hussain emphasized the need for age-specific data collection and better coordination among agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of older women. Drawing attention to specific trafficking tactics observed in Chhattisgarh, where traffickers befriend locals in rural villages and lure young women with promises of high-paying jobs in urban sectors like construction or brick kilns Shatabdi Pande National Head of Women's Cooperative Cell, Sahakar Bharati called for involvement of local Panchayats in keeping young women engaged in pro-



ductive activities to protect them from falling prey to traffickers. S Yamini Sharma, President of SINGC Trust, highlighted the rising number of missing women cases in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, attributing them to factors

such as poverty, lack of education, and weak law enforcement. She advocated for long-term socio-economic support for victims and their families, alongside comprehensive awareness and sensitization programs in educational insti-

tutions. Similarly, Meenakshi Negi, Member Secretary of the National Commission for Women, emphasized the need for area-specific solutions to address missing women cases. She called for enhanced training of police personnel in

women's cells at police stations to provide effective legal aid and support to victims, stressing the importance of strengthening outreach efforts and coordination with NGOs and other stakeholders. Similarly, Daya Shankar, Director at the Ministry of Women and Child Development, outlined various government initiatives aimed at addressing missing women and girls, including the establishment of One Stop Centres (OSCs) and women's helplines. He underscored the importance of comprehensive training for law enforcement officials to handle crimes against women sensitively and effectively, while also highlighting the role of the Nirbhaya Fund and Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in supporting these efforts. D. Neeharika Reddy, Advocate at the High Court of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, critiqued

the ineffective implementation of laws pertaining to missing persons and emphasised the need for Zero FIRs (First Information Reports) in all missing persons' cases. Reddy also called for stronger international coordination to combat cross-border trafficking. Manisha Kotheekar, All India Organising Secretary of Bharatiya Stree Shakti, stressed the importance of segregating data by age to better understand and address the needs of different age groups of missing women and girls. She highlighted the necessity of strengthening existing mechanisms such as AHTUs and OSCs at the district level while Vandana Mishra, In-charge at Pragya Pravah Women, Aayam Bharat Madhya Prant, emphasised the role of moral education in shaping societal attitudes towards women's rights and safety.

FIRST COLUMN

PM MODI'S STRATEGIC VISIT

PM Modi's visit to Russia underscores the importance of Russia in India's foreign policy



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

This week marked several high-profile meetings amongst senior leaders around the globe, discussing primarily various conflicts and possible outcomes. PM Narendra Modi, in his first state visit during his third stint, visited Russia and Austria. The State visit by the India PM was the first since the Ukraine war and underscores the primacy of Russia in India's state of affairs. Meanwhile, all North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) leaders assembled in Washington DC to discuss global geopolitics. Ukraine and the Middel East featured prominently in all the discussions, even though the flavours were significantly different.

The India-Russia joint statement following President Putin and PM Modis' bilateral meetings read "The Sides highlighted the imperative of peaceful resolution of the conflict around Ukraine through dialogue and diplomacy including engagement between both parties. They noted with appreciation relevant proposals of mediation and good offices aimed at peaceful resolution of the conflict by international law and based on the UN Charter in its entirety and totality. "Earlier, PM Modi during one of the televised speeches of the two leaders told his Russian counterpart "peace is of utmost importance" and solution to Ukraine could not be found on the battlefield. He expressed serious concern regarding the bombing of a children's hospital in Kyiv and said "When innocent children are murdered, one sees them die, the heart pains and that pain is unbearable." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, with whom PM Modi has had several telephone calls in the past, called the Russia state visit by India "a blow to peace efforts."

NATO Secretary General, Mr Stoltenberg in the run-up to the NATO summit said "Allies will agree a financial pledge for Ukraine", and that he also expects more immediate military support to Ukraine." Ukraine is moving closer to NATO ". The close relationship with NATO was one of the reasons Russia came marching into Ukraine. It was a tightrope walk for PM Modi, in Russia, given the relatively new strategic relationships, he has developed in his last decade of being at the helm, crucial among them being the India-US partnership. It would be worth mentioning that



In the wake of the war in Ukraine, India has not yet verbally criticised Russia, for its aggression and has also stayed away from multilateral resolutions against Moscow. In the first few months, of Russia's attack on Ukraine, several US top leaders had criticised India's stance regarding the war, and even a threat of sanctions was discussed. However, with deft diplomatic efforts made by both long-term partners, the high-decibel criticism was restricted to closed-door meetings. PM Modi's state visit to Russia opened some of the past heartburn regarding Ukraine in Washington. US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said "US has raised concerns with India regarding its relationship with Russia". He added "We would urge India, as we do any country when it engages with Russia, to make clear that any resolution to the conflict in Ukraine needs to be one that respects the UN charter, that respects Ukraine's territorial integrity," This comes at a time when the US has been seen to be one of the most important allies of India in the recent past.

Interestingly President Putin upon re-election chose to visit Beijing in one of his first official trips and followed it with a bilateral last week, on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Kazakhstan. China and Russia have mutually agreed to be friends without any limitations, and are widely seen as challengers to what they allege as the US-led democratic order. India and China are on an extremely rough patch due to the military aggression on India's borders. India managed to walk the tight rope for now, but at some point of time it will have to balance it out with more actionable statements on world conflicts.


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

India and US support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetans upsets China

India and America's identical and unequivocal stance on Tibet has rattled China, highlighting the evolving geopolitical dynamics in Asia

In a significant diplomatic move, both India and the United States have extended their support to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause, provoking a strong reaction from China. The adoption of the Resolve Tibet Act by the US Congress and a recent high-profile meeting between a bipartisan American Congressional delegation and the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala have amplified the tensions between the US, India, and China. This article explores the strategic and ideological implications of these developments.

A Diplomatic Convergence: The backdrop of this development is the increasingly strained relationship between the United States and China.



K S TOMAR

The US Congress's passage of the Resolve Tibet Act, which promises comprehensive support for the Tibetan cause, marks a clear stance against China's policies in Tibet. The meeting between the American delegation and the Dalai Lama further underscores this commitment. In a related move, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the US delegation, who congratulated him on his historic third-term

election victory and praised the fairness and transparency of the recent Indian general elections. Modi's subsequent Twitter post highlighted the strong bipartisan support for advancing the India-US strategic partnership. Notably, the post did not mention the Dalai Lama, though it was clear the topic was a significant aspect of the discussions. India's hosting of the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamshala places it in a unique position concerning the Tibetan cause. The Indian government has historically balanced its support for Tibet with its broader strategic and economic relations with China. The timing of the meetings suggests a coordinated diplomatic effort to highlight shared values and mutual

interests in countering China's assertive policies. **Strategic Ramifications:** The convergence of American and Indian interests reflects the evolving geopolitical landscape in Asia. Both nations share concerns about China's growing influence and assertive behavior, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. By reinforcing their strategic partnership, the United States and India signal their commitment to a rules-based international order, countering China's ambitions. In response, China is likely to intensify its efforts to strengthen alliances and expand its influence in the region. This could involve deepening ties with Pakistan, increasing engagement with other South Asian nations, and accelerating

ing Belt and Road Initiative projects to secure strategic footholds. Additionally, China might enhance its military posture along disputed borders with India, particularly in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, to assert territorial claims. Beyond immediate strategic calculations, these meetings highlight the broader ideological contest between democratic values and authoritarian governance. The Dalai Lama, a symbol of non-violent resistance and spiritual leadership, embodies values resonating with global advocates of democracy and human rights. Engaging with him reinforces the US and India's commitment to these principles. China, facing scrutiny over its

human rights record in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong, is placed in a defensive position. In the global influence battle, soft power and moral authority are becoming increasingly important. The Dharamshala and Delhi meetings enhance the soft power of the United States and India, positioning them as champions of human rights and democratic values. **The Path Forward:** As the geopolitical chessboard in Asia becomes more complex, the interplay between diplomacy and deterrence will be crucial. The United States and India, through coordinated diplomatic actions, are setting the stage for a more assertive and collaborative approach to countering China's influence. This involves not only

strengthening bilateral ties but also fostering broader coalitions with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region. The high-level US delegation, led by Republican Rep. Michael McCaul and including prominent figures like Democratic former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, discussed the relevance and significance of the Resolve Tibet Act. President Joe Biden, a strong advocate for Tibetan rights, is expected to approve the Act. China's reaction has been predictably strong, warning the United States against sending the "wrong signal." The Chinese embassy in India emphasized China's stance on Tibet as an internal matter, condemning any perceived

interference in its domestic affairs. **Conclusion** India and America's identical and unequivocal stance on Tibet has rattled China, highlighting the evolving geopolitical dynamics in Asia. The historical breach of trust by China in 1962, replicated in 2020 during the Ladakh confrontation, underscores the challenges in Sino-Indian relations. Prime Minister Modi's efforts to normalize ties with Beijing have not yielded desired results, reflecting the ongoing tension. Adopting a more nuanced approach to diplomacy may help mitigate tensions while advancing China's strategic goals. (Writer is a political analyst; views are personal)

A call for civility and integrity in democracy

The elected representatives must adhere to constitutional principles and the high standards set by the framers of the Constitution



The Constitution and its makers Deserve RespectJ.S. RajputIn a functional democracy, election times could indeed become a celebration time, not only the competing candidates and their partiers, but also for the for entire country, which may involve votes, and future voters. Imagine a situation in which every candidate remains respectful to all others, and is ever conscious of his words and their usage in every interaction, interview and interpretation of the views of his competitors. Everyone who enters the election fray is duty-bound to remember that there is a generation of younger people watching closely how they conduct themselves in competitive conditions, and the extent to which they are conscious of their conduct and behaviour, both in public and private. Though it is a major responsibility of the family and school to shape the growing up of the children, the significance of the role of society and particularly those keen to lead the society could never be ignored.

It is not only the 'Acharya' whose conduct is under watch and is emulated, children in their sensitive years learn from numerous sources, and no one is out of their ambit of keen observation. Having seen, observed and participated in the elections that were just over, one may find all these 'expectations' just 'utopian, to be aspired for, but with full understanding that these would never be fulfilled! After the election results, the parliament meets, and there is only a superficial bonhomie of a few minutes, followed by the same old routine of distrust, and a sense of shyness, the creation of hurdles and ensuring that the nation must once again get ready to suffer continuous shouting in both the Houses of parliament and regular walk-outs! Is it amazing – and sadly enough, amusing – that the elected representatives of the great Indian democracy just cannot sit together and find out ways and means to sit together, express themselves, and arrive at inferences that are for the good of their voters? How could they ignore that they are the legatees of Gandhi, Ambedkar, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagolachari, and that illustrious lot that prepared the Constitution, and had created conditions to enable them to get elected, enjoy all the perks and privileges that have been acquiring bulging proportions? A veteran of the freedom struggle once told me he finds it repulsive when people go to Raj Ghat before beginning their so-called fasts, political dramas and whatever you may call it. I share his anguish. Many others would also be doing so. Those who indulge in such frivolities could remember what Dr Ambedkar had mentioned in his concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949: "If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also a fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgment we must do is hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha." He goes on to point out that even with the Constitution in place, the nation, its people in general and those occupying constitutional positions in particular must never forget: "...however good a constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot.... The Constitution can provide only the organs of the State such as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depends are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics." Not only Dr. Ambedkar, but other stalwarts were also equally concerned oabouthow things may take shape in future.

Speaking on November 26 of 1949, the final remarks of the President of the Constituent Assembly could be the guiding light for every member of parliament, irrespective of his party affiliations: "Whatever the Constitution may or may not provide, the welfare of the country will depend on how the country is administered. That will depend upon the men who administer it. It is a trite saying that a country can have only the Government it deserves. If the people who are elected are capable, and men of character and integrity, they will be able to make the best even of a defective Constitution. If they are lacking in these, the Constitution cannot help the country. After all, a constitution like a machine is a lifeless thing. It acquires life because of the men who control it and operate it, and India needs today nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interest of the country before them". There can be no better articulation of the anxiety and anguish that every concerned Indian citizen experiences at this juncture of history. India needs awakeners not only in every section of Indian society." The newly elected MPs could rally move towards an illustrious political career if they just internalize the thoughts, ideas and ideals of three of the illustrious Indians: Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad and Ambedkar; the ARG" This could become their tribute and salutations to the three of them, and that would equip them to plunge into the service of the people and India. Scholars and institutions must launch serious analysis of certain aspects of how the democratic process has fared in its actual practice, in sustaining its credibility amongst the voters. They could also find out with academic fidelity – and inform the people what has eroded Gandhian values that were supposed to become the cornerstone of the Indian Democracy after the Constitution of India was prepared with un-heard of dexterity and socio-economic and cultural comprehension by its framers, all of whom were distinguished freedom fighters, known for their sacrifice, non-accumulation, and commitment to a cause. Not only in India, the greatness of the contributions of Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar is acknowledged globally. It is indeed intriguing for numerous people how those who swore by his name all the time to give a zing to their political ambitions, blatantly ignore some of his basic premises which were an outcome not only of his intellectual prowess but also a precise and incisive comprehension of life he had led! Take the example of reservations for the SC/SC communities. It is the responsibility of the members of the Parliament and State assemblies to fact-check the extent to which reservations have helped the target groups. How long shall the unscrupulous among the politicians shall be allowed to play the games of caste, creed, religion, region and even language? If all this is permitted to continue, it would be impossible to create an India that projects social cohesion and religious amity. Revert back to the sixties of the last century, Gandhi had gone but had not vanished from the psyche of the people, young persons were convinced that the caste system would be eliminated during the next two to three decades. Yes, that was the spirit of the Constitution of India, that was the India of Baba Saheb's Dreams! (Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity; views are personal)

ated conditions to enable them to get elected, enjoy all the perks and privileges that have been acquiring bulging proportions? A veteran of the freedom struggle once told me he finds it repulsive when people go to Raj Ghat before beginning their so-called fasts, political dramas and whatever you may call it. I share his anguish. Many others would also be doing so. Those who indulge in such frivolities could remember what Dr Ambedkar had mentioned in his concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949: "If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also a fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgment we must do is hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha." He goes on to point out that even with the Constitution in place, the nation, its people in general and those occupying constitutional positions in particular must never forget: "...however good a constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot.... The Constitution can provide only the organs of the State such as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depends are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics." Not only Dr. Ambedkar, but other stalwarts were also equally concerned oabouthow things may take shape in future.

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India progressing under Modi, Mamata leaves for Anant wedding, may meet Pawar, Uddhav

Rahul misleading people: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP on Thursday said India is marching ahead on the path of progress under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and cited Government data to accuse Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of misleading people on the issue of employment and the government policies. The ruling party's charge comes a day after Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said the youth of the country have been completely demoralised by unemployment and claimed that their future is in "limbo" due to the BJP's "anti-education mindset". Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Syed Zafar Islam said that about 12.5 crore jobs were created in the last 10 years of the Modi government and the latest RBI report, released recently, showed creation of "five crore jobs in 2023-24 alone". "This is a record in itself in the entire world. India is most successful country in the world in job creation due to the strong leadership of Prime



Minister Modi. Rahul Gandhi, who insulted Hindus, has started following the religion of falsehood. He and other opposition leaders are misleading people by spreading lies," Islam charged. The BJP leader said that Rahul and other opposition party leaders may be claiming that there is unemployment in the country and jobs are not being created but the world doesn't say so. Multilateral and big institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund say inflation is under control in India and the country tops in job creation, he added. On Sunday, the Congress alleged that the Modi government had accentuated India's

"unemployment crisis" with the decimation of job-creating MSMEs through the "Tughlakian demonetisation, a hastily rushed GST, and rising imports from China". In a statement, Congress general secretary, in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh had cited a new report by Citigroup, a global bank, to flag "alarming numbers", which he claimed confirmed what the Congress stated throughout the recent election campaign. Hitting back, Islam said the previous Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government under "an economist" Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had created just 2.9 crore jobs during its 10-year term. "Unemployment rate, which was at six per cent in 2017, has now come down to 3.2 per cent," he added. The data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) earlier this week indicated that India added nearly 4.7 crore jobs during 2023-24, taking the total number of employed people to 64.33 crore spread over 27 sectors covering the entire economy.

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday left for Mumbai to attend the Friday's wedding ceremony of industrialist Mukesh Ambani's son Anant Ambani. Banerjee who is likely to hit multiple birds in a single shot will meet a number of senior leaders like Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray, NCP chief Sharad Pawar and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav during her stay in Mumbai. Anant is marrying businesswoman and classical dancer Radhika Merchant. Banerjee's Mumbai trip marks her first meeting with national leaders since the Lok Sabha elections, highlighting the significance of her visit. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also likely to attend the wedding Banerjee may meet him also during her three-day stay in India's commercial capital. On what gift she was carrying for the wedding couple, none would hazard a guess though some insiders said, "when it is Didi then expect something outstanding." According to sources another celebrity from Kolkata's Tollywood film industry Raima Sen the

daughter of actress Moon Sen also have been invited to the wedding. Speaking to reporters before catching the flight Banerjee said, "I have been invited by Mukesh-ji and Nita-ji (Mukesh Ambani and Nita Ambani) to attend the wedding of Anant and Radhika. They requested me so many times. Therefore I am going to Mumbai to attend the wedding. Before that, I will meet Uddhav Thackeray. We will hold political talks as I am meeting him after a long time, especially after the Lok Sabha polls. I will also meet Sharad Pawar at his residence. Akhilesh will also be there tomorrow. So I might meet him as well depending on when he arrives." Banerjee who is looking to forge a united opposition to protest against the three new criminal laws Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) --- that have from July 1 replaced Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Indian Evidence Act --- is likely to discuss the modalities of the joint movement against the three laws, sources said.



According to her these new legislations would rob the people off their rights. Sources said the CM had instructed Trinamool MPs to be vocal against any anti-people measures of BJP govt. The Chief Minister who will possibly put up at a private hotel at Bandra-Kurla complex is likely to return to Kolkata on July 13, sources said adding she could also visit Delhi if required discuss the issue with other leaders. Banerjee's Mumbai trip assumes importance in the backdrop of her party's stupendous victory in the recently concluded parliamentary elections when her Trinamool Congress won 29 seats compared to opposition BJP's 12 and the Congress' one. More confident than ever before after the general elections Banerjee --- who

has for the past more than a decade been unsuccessfully trying to bring investors including the Ambanis to Bengal in a big way --- is likely to use her Ambani connections to make successful her government's annual Bengal Global Business Summit, experts say. Curiously Banerjee who leaves no chance to attack the BJP Government would not utter a word unlike the Congress or the Left post hike in mobile-internet charges. Referring to her Mumbai visit CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakrabarty said "though there is no harm in a person attending the wedding ceremony of another person ... the question is whether the Chief Minister supports the hike in mobile rates ... perhaps she is not ... she has also not spoken a word against the hike in power bills by the power companies because her party has been taking donations from them." Meanwhile in a parallel development Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday met Home Minister Amit Shah and reported to him about the deteriorating law and order situation of the State

that included post poll violence and incidents of public flogging of common people by the TMC goons. Adhikari subsequently said that he had reported to the Home minister "about the atrocities committed against women in Chopra (where a woman was publicly flogged along with her alleged partner), Cooch Behar (where a lady BJP Minority Morcha Karyakarta was disrobed and beaten), and Ariadaha (where a woman was held by her hands and legs and beaten with sticks), among others." Shah is known to have assured all help, sources said. The Chief Minister however refuted the BJP leaders' claims saying, "some television news channels continuously highlighted one incident but didn't show how peaceful the election was held in the state. Whenever there is something against the TMC, these channels get excited. If someone is guilty, action will be taken. Channels need to cross-check before broadcasting news. They are forced to do so or else the BJP will send CBI, ED and Income Tax Department after them. I am making an appeal now. If this continues, I will have to take legal action."

Canal breach in National Capital

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a rupture in the Munak canal, which supplies around 36.7 per cent of water (719 cusecs) from Haryana to Delhi, residential colonies in Bawana in the national Capital turned into a river on Thursday, wreaking havoc in the daily lives of the people and stranding residents in their houses. A breach in the Carrier Lined Channel (CLC) of the canal, part of the Western Yamuna Canal, led to water entering the J, K, and L blocks of the colony in northwest Delhi early Thursday, causing significant inconvenience and concern for the locals. Videos on social media reflect the gravity of the situation with the residents trying to wade through knee-deep flooding and even waist deep water in parts of the area. Residents of the

area expressed frustrations over the sudden flooding bringing their lives to halt. Shailesh Kumar, a resident of JJ block, said he was unable to go to his work and blamed the Delhi Government for not doing enough for them. "We have informed all the concerned departments, including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Flood Control Department, Public Welfare Department, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), at midnight after the canal overflowed," a police official said. Taking serious note of the situation, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena expressed concerns over the breach of a branch of Munak Canal and instructed the Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to take the matter up with State Water Minister Atishi and Flood Control Department Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj.

"The breach in the Munak Canal underlines the absence of adequate maintenance of the Canal, which should have been undertaken by Delhi Jal Board (DJB) through Haryana Irrigation Department from time to time," a letter by the Principal Secretary to the LG read. An official of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) said, "A report was received regarding the damage in the lining of Western Yamuna Canal being maintained by Haryana Irrigation Department (HID) near Bawana in the early morning of June 11. This has resulted in flooding in the adjoining areas of Bawana JJ Colony." Informing that the field staff have been rushed to the site for taking immediate remedial measures, he said, "Water is being drained by temporarily puncturing the existing storm water drain, coordinated with NDRF,

MCD, SDM Narela, DJB, public representatives and local residents for providing relief from this situation. Resources such as JCB, Dewatering pump, drinking water tanker and mobile toilet have also been deployed at the location by DDA. Flow of water from Sonipat has reduced and authorities have requested Haryana to close gates on the canal to control the flow, officials said. The canal originates from the Yamuna river in Munak in Haryana's Karnal district. Delhi Minister Atishi visited the site and said, "We are at the entry point at the Munak Canal in Bawana. Last night between 12 am and 2 am, there was a breach in the embankment, the water entered the adjacent areas. This canal is maintained by Haryana Irrigation Dept, their team is here, the DJB team is here, the repair work



is being done." Assuring that the situation will be under control, she said, "In the next few hours, the repair will be completed. From tomorrow morning, water will start coming into the Canal. Three to four water treatment plants are affected, the production has

decreased. In the Dwarka area, normal water supply will resume by tomorrow evening. Inquiry is required to know whether there was foul play." The canal was also breached in June last year, affecting the water supply to several areas of Delhi for two days.

North west BJP MP Yogendra Chandolia reached among the people of Bawana and assured all possible help to the people. Trying to corner the AAP led Delhi government on the issue, he accused the AAP government and the Municipal Corporation of

Delhi (MCD) of not responding adequately. "Calls were made to the Municipal Corporation, water board officials, and flood irrigation, but only seven pumps were installed after 11 AM, which was insufficient," Chandolia stated.

Para-military forces to extend quota, age relaxation for ex-Agniveers soon

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The Agnipath scheme provides for recruiting youths between the age bracket of 17-and-half years and 21 for four years with a provision to retain 25 percent of them for 15 more years. Several opposition parties including the Congress have been targeting the government over the scheme wondering what will happen to 75 percent of the Agniveers after their four-year tenure ends as only 25 per cent of the total recruits will be retained for 15 years. Various central government agencies and departments have already announced plans to recruit former Agniveers. "They got four years of experience. They are fully disciplined and trained personnel. This is very good for the BSF as we are getting trained soldiers. After short training, they will be deployed along the border," said Border Security Force director general Agrawal. He said all the security forces will be benefitted by recruiting former Agniveers. "We are waiting for them to be deployed after giving conversion training, they will be deployed. 10 percent of the total vacancies will be reserved for them," he said. "There will be age relaxation for them as well. The first batch will get five years of age relaxation and the subsequent batches will get three years of age relaxation," he told DD News. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Director General Singh said all arrangements have been made in his force to recruit former Agniveers. "The recruitment rules have been accordingly amended. A reservation of 10 percent has been made for ex-Agniveers. They will also get relaxation in age. The first batch will get five years of relaxation while it will be three years afterwards," he said. Singh too said that there will be no physical efficiency test for the former Agniveers. "This is a welcome step for the force to recruit ex-Agniveers as they are Army trained and have already served in the three services. They will bring dedication and discipline from day one," he said. Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Daljit Singh Chaudhary said a quota has been fixed for ex-Agniveers in his force. "We have amended the recruitment rules accordingly. The first batch will be given an age relaxation of five years. And, there will be no physical efficiency test for them," he said. A defence ministry official said that no physical test would be required for recruitment of the former Agniveers into the paramilitary forces as such tests have already been done by the Army. They just will need a physical fitness certificate, he said.

Min empathises...

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The agency had earlier arrested the principal and vice principal of Jharkhand's Hazaribagh-based Oasis school in the case and two persons who allegedly lent premises to NEET candidates where burnt question papers were recovered by the Bihar Police.

Chemicals used for WMD seized in Tamil...

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Though the vessel was taken into control by the Customs Department at Kattupalli on 8 May 2024, the investigating agencies could complete the probe and identify the chemical only during the last few days. The consignment was seized by the Customs Department as it was found that the substance figured under the export control list SCOMET. Though officials of the ship told the security agencies that the chemical was for producing tear gas and riot control agents, the Indian officials were not convinced as there were reports that Pakistan and China were working on an offensive chemical and biological warfare program. An Australian investigator Anthony Clan had reported in 2020 itself that China and Pakistan have entered into a deal to expand biowarfare capabilities 'including running several research projects related to deadly agent anthrax'. Clan had said in his report that China's Wuhan Institute of Virology (the epicenter of the dreaded Covid-19 virus) and Pakistan's Defense

Science Technology Organization (DESTO), an exclusive military establishment for developing biological and chemical warfare against India in addition to manufacturing high-tech weapons and engineering to be used against India have entered into a strategic partnership to develop emerging infectious diseases and biological control of transmitted diseases. On Sunday, Pakistan's new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while presiding over a meeting convened to assess the progress of various MoUs signed with China said that a new era of Pakistan-China cooperation in various fields has dawned and it would lead to economic development and deepening of time-tested bilateral relationship. In March 2024, security agents posted at Nhava Seva Port near Mumbai had intercepted and seized a consignment from a Karachi-bound ship from China and the materials were found to be dual use consignment linked to Pakistan's nuclear and ballistic missile program.

Crucial meeting to...

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"I think that the old system should be retained to ensure better and integrated dominance of the area in a militancy environment..." said the senior Congress leader. According to official sources, the deliberations during the high-level security review meeting were focused on enhancing border security and synergy between the two State

Police Forces and the Border Guarding Force. The conference was attended by Spl DG BSF Western Command, YB Khurana, DGP J&K, RR Swain, DGP Punjab Gaurav Yadav. Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), J-K, Vijay Kumar, ADG (Law and Order), Punjab, Arpit Shukla and Inspector General-rank BSF officers of Punjab

SC summons Chief...

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"The chief and finance secretaries have to be personally present. Failing compliance, the court will be constrained to initiate contempt," it said. According to the order, the bench directed the top two bureaucrats of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Manipur, Odisha and Rajasthan to appear before it on August 23.

The bench made clear that it will not grant any more more extensions. It passed the orders after taking note of the submissions and perusing the note provided by lawyer K Parmeswar who is assisting the court as amicus curiae (a friend of court). At the outset, he also referred to the deduction of tax at source by the states on allowances which are due to the present and retired judicial officers. "Wherever exemptions are available under the Income Tax Act from deduction of TDS (tax deducted at source) on allowances, the state governments shall ensure that no deductions are made. Wherever TDS are wrongly deducted, the amount shall be

refunded to the judicial officers," the bench said. The bench heard submissions on compliance of the SNJPC by various states. It rejected the submissions of states like West Bengal, which sought one more year's time, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala on the alleged delay in complying with the recommendations on payment of arrears and other benefits to the judicial officers. The bench directed the defaulting states to report compliance by August 20 besides asking their chief secretaries and finance secretaries to appear personally on August 23. It rejected the vehement submission of Assam that the

order be deferred as the state was facing massive flood situations. The bench also did not allow the submission of Delhi that it was awaiting the Centre's approval. "We are not concerned with that. You sort it out with the Centre," the CJI said. On January 10, the top court, in its verdict, had said there was a need to maintain uniformity in service conditions of judicial officers across the country. It had directed the constitution of a two-judge committee in each high court for overseeing the implementation of the orders on pay, pension and other retirement benefits for the judicial officers according to the SNJPC.

Green temples use flower waste to turn women...

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In Mahalakaleswar Temple, floral waste is processed into eco-friendly products by women from the Shiv Arpan Self-Help Group, providing them with meaningful livelihood. Similarly in Siddhivinayak Temple floral waste is transformed into natural dyes for textiles by initiatives like 'Adiv Pure Nature.' Kanpur-based 'Phool' collects 21 MT of floral

waste weekly from prominent temples including Hanuman Garhi, Kanak Bhawan, Nageshwar Nath Temple, Shri Kale Ram Temple, Gore Ram Temple, Bade Devkali Temple, Chhote Devkali Temple, and Swaminarayan Temple. It converts it into items like incense sticks and havan cups, while providing safe working conditions and benefits to their employees. Startups like Hyderabad-

based 'HolyWaste' and Delhi-NCR's 'Aaruhi' too have come forward in floral waste recycling, preventing thousands of kilograms of waste from ending up in water bodies or landfills each week. Poonam Sehrawat's startup, 'Aaruhi', focuses on innovative solutions for recycling floral waste from temples and other sources into useful products. Based in Delhi-NCR, 'Aaruhi'

collects significant quantities of floral waste from over 15 temples in the region. This waste, which would otherwise contribute to environmental pollution, is transformed through sustainable practices into various marketable items. These include natural dyes for textiles, contributing to the fashion industry's sustainable efforts. Floral waste generated in

182 temples in Tiruchi, Thanjavur, Perambalur and Karur districts in Tamil Nadu are being converted into organic manure and used in the respective temple gardens under the ITC Mission 'Sunehra Kal' Green Temple Initiative. According to a study, the amount of floral waste produced in the religious institutions and homes in India increases during festival and wedding

seasons. Dumping it directly in landfills along with other waste such as plastic and construction debris may delay degradation. Without sufficient exposure to air, the waste can take up to 30 years to decompose, and in the process release harmful greenhouse gases including methane. With Hyderabad's population growing, the city's limited landfills are overflowing, as per the research.

S Korea to deploy laser weapons to intercept North Korean drones

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea said Thursday it will begin deploying laser weapons systems designed to intercept North Korean drones, which have caused security concerns in the South in recent years. South Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration said that it will deploy at least one anti-air laser weapons system called "Block-I" by the end of this year and more in coming years. An agency statement said the "Block-I" system is capable of launching precision attacks on small incoming drones and multi-copters. It said the system, developed by local company Hanwha Aerospace, costs just 2,000 won (about \$1.50) per shot. "We face North Korea on our doorstep and its drones pose present threats to us, so that's why we've been aiming to build and

deploy laser weapons soon to cope with them," an agency official said, requesting anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to media on the issue. He said that other countries like the United States and Israel are ahead of South Korea in laser weapons technology, but their primary focus has been on higher-powered laser guns that can shoot down incoming ballistic missiles. South Korea also hopes to develop such anti-missile laser weapons, which its defense procurement agency called "a game changer" in future combat environments. The "Block-I" system is meant to hit circuit boards and other equipment in enemy drones to make them malfunction and crash on the ground. Tests of the weapons system in 2022-2023 were successful and proved its credibility, the official said. Some experts questioned the technol-

ogy. Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, doubts how effectively South Korea can use its laser weapons since its anti-air radar systems aren't advanced enough to detect North Korean drones well. He said the range of a laser weapon is relatively short, so high-power microwave weapons would be better when enemy drones are flown in large numbers simultaneously. Jung Chang Wook, head of the Korea Defense Study Forum think tank in Seoul, said South Korea is likely about five years away from acquiring a functioning laser weapon that can shoot down the drones used by North Korea. North Korea has periodically flown drones across its heavily fortified border with South Korea for several years, in what observers have called tests of South Korean readiness. In

December 2022, South Korea accused the North of sending drones across the border for the first time in five years. South Korea fired warning shots and launched fighter jets and helicopters but failed to shoot down any of the drones. In a key political meeting in December 2023, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to introduce various types of unmanned combat equipment such as attack drones for 2024. Foreign experts say Kim likely regards drones as a cheap yet effective method to trigger security jitters and an internal divide in South Korea. Animosities between the two Koreas, split along the world's most heavily fortified border, have deepened in recent months, with North Korea flying trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea in response to South Korean activists floating political leaflets via their own balloons.

Yemen Houthi rebels fire Iranian missile at Norwegian-flagged ship

AP ■ DUBAI

Yemen's Houthi rebels likely fired an Iranian-made anti-ship cruise missile at a Norwegian-flagged tanker in the Red Sea in December, an assault that now provides a public, evidence-based link between the ongoing rebel campaign against shipping and Tehran, the US military says. A report by the US Defence Intelligence Agency released Wednesday linked the attack on the Strinda, which set the vessel ablaze, to Tehran, the Houthi's main backer in Yemen's nearly decadelong war. The findings correspond with those of a Norway-based insurers group that also examined debris found on the Strinda. It comes as the Houthis continue their months-long campaign of attacks over the Israel-Hamas war, targeting ships in the Red Sea corridor, disrupting the USD 1 trillion flow of goods passing through it annually while also sparking the most intense combat the US Navy has seen since World War II. Iran's mission to the United Nations, responding to questions from The

Associated Press, again denied arming the Houthis despite the reports. "We are aware that (the Houthis) have significantly developed their military capabilities relying on their very own sources," the mission said. "The prolonged war against them is the primary factor behind the expansion of their military prowess." The Strinda was coming from Malaysia and was bound for the Suez Canal and then on to Italy with a cargo of palm oil when it was struck by a missile December 11. The attack sparked a major fire on board that the crew later extinguished without anyone being hurt. Debris found on board later was analysed by the US military. The DIA compared the pieces of the engine from the missile found on board to the Iranian Noor anti-ship ballistic cruise missile. "The Iranian Tolu-4 turbojet engine, used in the Noor (missile), has unique features — including the compressor stage and stator — that are consistent with engine debris recovered from the ... Houthi attack on the M/T Strinda," the DIA

report said. A stator is the stationary portion of an engine. Those pieces match images of a Tolu-4 engine that Iran displayed at the International Air and Space Show in Russia in 2017, the DIA said. Visually, the engines bore similarities in the photographs. The Noor was reverse engineered by Iran from the Chinese C-802 anti-ship missile, which Iran purchased from Beijing and began testing in 1996 before transfers stopped over a US pressure campaign. The Iranian version is believed to have a range of up to 170 kilometres, with an upgraded version called the Qader having a range up to 300 kilometres. The Houthis have a look-alike missile to the Qader called the Al-Mandeb 2 with a similar range. The Norwegian Shipowners' Mutual War Risks Insurance Association, known by the acronym DNK, also examined the debris following the Strinda attack. The association assessed it was "highly likely" the vessel had been hit by a C-802 or Noor anti-ship cruise missile.

'Trump will win if election is free and fair'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Observing that the June 27 presidential debate did have some impact on the popularity of Donald Trump, the head of "Sikh Americans for Trump" has said the former president's victory will depend on whether the election is free, fair and legal. "I think our community is very much in support. I have seen a lot of support in favour of President Trump. We are raising funds for President Trump. We are going to the convention soon," Maryland-based community leader Jasdeep Singh Jassee, head of "Sikh Americans for Trump," told PTI ahead of the Republican National Convention (RNC) in Milwaukee next week. Republican delegates from across the country, during the four-day RNC convention in Milwaukee, would formally nominate Trump as their presidential candidate for the November 5 general election. Incumbent President Joe Biden is the presumptive nominee of the Democratic party.

"We will be mobilising our team nationwide this time, even on the West Coast, in New York, Texas, in support of President Trump," said Jassee, who has been appointed on the finance committee for President Trump, the Trump 47. "We all knew about President Biden's issues that he had for the last four years, but it was very interesting to see... for the American public and media, to see it during the debate how much President Biden has declined his mental capacity and his thought processes, which was very evident throughout. But somehow, the American media was kind of controlling it and not letting the people know about it," he said in response to a question. "So right now, we see that the debate did have some impact on President Trump's popularity, but the country's overall situation, such as inflation, illegal immigration, a disorderly border at this time, the infrastructure, the violence and the crime that is happening in America, and also zero foreign

Top Biden fundraiser, says Democrats not going to win presidency with him

Washington (PTI): A top Hollywood fundraiser for US President Joe Biden called for a new Democratic presidential candidate on Wednesday, arguing that the party cannot win the White House in November with him as the nominee. "We are not going to win in November with this president. On top of that, we will not win the House, and we are going to lose the Senate. This is not only my opinion, this is the opinion of every senator and Congress member and governor who I have spoken with in private. Every single one, irrespective of what he or she is saying publicly," George Clooney, an actor, director and film producer, said in an op-ed in "The New York Times". Clooney, who

hosted a very successful fundraiser for Biden in June, said he observed a different Joe Biden at that event. "The one battle he cannot win is the fight against time. None of us can. It is devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fund-raiser was not the Joe 'big F-ing deal' Biden of 2010. He was not even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate," he wrote. "Was he tired? Yes. A cold? Maybe. But our party leaders need to stop telling us that 51 million people did not see what we just saw. We are all so terrified by the prospect of a second Trump term that we have opted to ignore every warning sign," Clooney said.

policy where America is not a leader anymore," he observed. "All of this has had an impact on Biden's campaign in addition to his debate performance and his physical and mental capacity. But again, the key issue is what President Trump said in the debate when he was asked a question, will you accept the verdict? He said if it is a fair, legal, and honest election, yes, I will. So again, the key is, if this election is going to be fair, honest or legal," Jassee said. "If that happens, then yes, President Trump will win, because that is what the American public wants. But if there is a swamp involved, or deep state involved, or vested interest involved, then we do not know what the result is going to be," Jassee said. According to him, this year, the support of the Indian community, South Asian community, Sikh community for Trump has gotten like four times more than what it was in 2020. "Now, people come up to me and say, hey, we want to be in your support.

Oil tanker held by Iran heads toward international waters

AP ■ DUBAI

An oil tanker held by Iran seized was sailing Thursday toward international waters, tracking data showed. The Marshall Islands-flagged tanker Advantage Sweet traveled toward the Strait of Hormuz, where it was seized in April 2023 by Iran's navy while carrying \$50 million worth of oil from Kuwait for Chevron Corp. That's according to tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press. Iran did not acknowledge the ship's departure. It came after an Iranian court on Thursday ordered the U.S. government to pay over \$6.7 billion in compensation over a Swedish company stopping its supply of special dressings and bandages for those afflicted by a rare skin disorder after Washington imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Iran's government initially said it

seized the Advantage Sweet because it hit another vessel, something not supported by any evidence. Then Iranian officials linked the Advantage Sweet's seizure to the court case that was decided Thursday. A report by the state-run IRNA news agency described the \$6.7 billion order as being filed on behalf of 300 plaintiffs, including family members of victims and those physically and emotionally damaged. IRNA said about 20 patients died after the Swedish company's decision. Epidermolysis bullosa is a rare genetic condition that causes blisters all over the body and eyes. It can be incredibly painful and kill those afflicted. The young who suffer from the disease are known as "butterfly children" as their skin can appear as fragile as a butterfly's wing. The order comes as U.S. judges have issued rulings that call for billions of dollars

to be paid by Iran over attacks linked to Tehran, as well as those detained by Iran and used as pawns in negotiations between the countries — something Iran has responded to with competing lawsuits accusing the U.S. of involvement in a 2017 Islamic State group attack. The United Nations' highest court also last year rejected Tehran's legal bid to free up some \$2 billion in Iranian Central Bank assets frozen by U.S. authorities. In 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, apparently sparking the Swedish company to withdraw from the Iranian market. Iran now says it locally produces the bandages. Chevron, based in San Ramon, California, has maintained that the Advantage Sweet was "seized under false pretenses." It since has written off the cargo as a loss.

Fire breaks out in spire of medieval cathedral in Rouen

AP ■ PARIS

A fire broke out Thursday in the spire of the medieval cathedral in Rouen, a major landmark in northern France that was under renovation, but authorities said it was quickly brought under control. Witnesses told French television they saw smoke emanating from the spire just after midday, and recalled a devastating fire in 2019 at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris that toppled its spire and collapsed its roof. Rouen's 12th century cathedral, which is considered to be a Gothic masterpiece, is widely beloved, not least because of a series of paintings by impressionist Claude Monet capturing its asymmetrical western facade. It is also the tallest church in France, and among the tallest

cathedrals in the entire world — and renowned for its three towers, each constructed in a different style. Mayor Nicolas Mayer-Rossignol first posted on the social media platform X around midday that "the beginning of a fire is underway on the spire of the cathedral of Rouen." Less than 90 minutes later, Stephane Gouezec, of the Seine-Maritime firefighters, said the source of the blaze had been located — some 120 metres high — and the fire contained. Crews were working to ensure there were no remaining "hot spots," he added. But he told reporters the risk of the flames spreading was low because the fire was in an area where there was mostly metal. Gouezec said construction workers were the first to notice the fire and alerted authorities.

British Indian MPs swear oath on 'Bhagavad Gita, Gutka & Bible'

PTI ■ LONDON

Newly elected Indian-origin MPs to the House of Commons have been pledging their allegiance to the British Crown as a symbol of loyalty to the country, choosing to swear on holy texts or to affirm their oath during the first week of a new Parliament. A new copy of the 'Bhagavad Gita' presented to Speaker Lindsay Hoyle by Shailesh Vara, former Conservative Party member of Parliament who lost his Cambridgeshire seat in last week's general election, featured early on as Rishi Sunak was among the first British Indian MPs to take his oath as Leader of the Opposition on Tuesday. Holding the text in his right hand, the former prime minister read out the customary text: "I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King

Charles, his heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God." First-time MP Kanishka Narayan, who is the first Indian-origin member of Parliament to represent Wales in the Westminster Parliament after winning the Vale of Glamorgan seat for Labour, also chose the 'Gita' for his oath, as did new Tory MP from Leicester Shivani Raja. Bob Blackman, a Tory veteran who represents Harrow East in London and has chaired the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Hindus, chose to hold both the 'Gita' and the 'King James Bible' for his oath-taking ceremony. "This 'Bhagavad Gita' has been specially blessed in a temple in India and will be used by Hindu MPs entering Parliament following this General Election and those who will enter in the generations to come," said Shailesh Vara, when he recent-

ly presented the holy text blessed at the Mayapur temple headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Some of the British Sikh MPs such as Tan Dhesi and first-timers Gurinder Singh Josan, Harpreet Uppal, Satvir Kaur and Warinder Singh Juss chose to swear their oath to the Sikh scriptures but without holding any text in their hands. Preet Kaur Gill, with her head covered with a red scarf, chose to hold the cloth-wrapped 'Sundar Gutka' prayer book during her swearing-in. Sojan Joseph, the mental health nurse from Kerala who has been elected Labour MP from Ashford in Kent, chose the 'New Testament' biblical text to swear his oath. Meanwhile, the 'King James Bible' was chosen by re-elected Conservatives Priti Patel and Claire Coutinho, as well as Liberal Democrat Munira

Wilson. MPs can opt for a non-religious affirmation, as did the two new Independent MPs with their roots in India, Shokat Adam and Iqbal Mahmood, along with many others including Tory MP Gagan Mohindra and Labour's Lisa Nandy and Seema Malhotra. First-timers like Tory MP Dr Neil Shastri-Hunt and Labour's Jeevun Sandher and Sonia Kumar also chose to affirm their pledge of allegiance. The affirmation reads: "I do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles, his heirs and successors, according to law." All elected MPs, including 29 of Indian heritage, have been queuing up in the Commons chamber since Tuesday to complete this protocol before they can officially take their seats in Parliament.

US Coast Guard patrol spots Chinese naval ships off Alaska island

Anchorage (AP): A US Coast Guard cutter on routine patrol in the Bering Sea came across several Chinese military ships in international waters but within the US exclusive economic zone, officials said Wednesday. The crew detected three vessels approximately 124 miles (200 kilometers) north of the Amchitka Pass in the Aleutian Islands, the Coast Guard said in a statement. A short time later, a helicopter aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak spotted a fourth ship approximately 84 miles (135 kilometers) north of the Amukta Pass. All four of the People's Republic of China vessels were "transiting in international waters but still inside the US Exclusive Economic Zone," which extends 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) from the U.S. shoreline, the statement said. "The Chinese naval presence operated in accordance with international rules and norms," said Rear

Adm. Megan Dean, Seventeenth Coast Guard District commander. "We met presence with presence to ensure there were no disruptions to US interests in the maritime environment around Alaska." U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kimball is a 418-foot (127-meter) ship based in Honolulu. This wasn't the first time Chinese naval ships have sailed near Alaska waters. In September 2022, the Kimball spotted guided missile cruiser from China in the Bering Sea. And in Sept. 2021, Coast Guard cutters in the Bering Sea and North Pacific Ocean encountered Chinese ships, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) off the Aleutian Islands. The US military routinely conducts what it calls freedom of navigation operations in disputed waters in Asia that China claims as its own, deploying Navy ships to sail through waterways such as the South China Sea.

UK mulls tighter crossbow laws after 3 women killed in attack

AP ■ LONDON

A man suspected of killing the wife and daughters of a BBC radio sports commentator with a crossbow was being treated in a hospital Thursday after being found injured in a cemetery some 15 miles (22 kilometers) from the scene of the crimes. Police had spent almost a day hunting for Kyle Clifford after the attack on Carol Hunt, 61, and her daughters Hannah, 28 and Louise, 25 at their home in Bushey, northwest of London. Police and ambulance crews called to the suburban cul-de-sac on Tuesday evening tried to save them, but they were pronounced dead at the scene. After a frantic search across a swath of London's northern fringe, Clifford, 26, was found Wednesday in the Enfield area of north London, near his home. Footage from Sky News showed the suspect being carried on a stretcher out of Lavender Hill

Cemetery. Armed police officers, forensic personnel and ambulance staff had massed around the cemetery through the day. Police did not say how he was injured, but stressed that they had not fired any shots. They said Clifford has not yet been arrested. "Following extensive inquiries, the suspect has been located and nobody else is being sought in connection with the investigation at this time," said Detective Inspector Justine Jenkins from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit. Police did not say how or whether Clifford was connected to the women, but said they believed the attack was targeted. British media reported that Clifford was an ex-boyfriend of one of the victims. Jenkins said the investigation was moving "at pace" and that formal identification of the victims had yet to take place. The BBC confirmed

the victims were the family of its sports commentator John Hunt. Hunt is the main racing commentator for BBC 5 Live, the corporation's main news and sports radio channel. His voice is known to millions through his coverage of the world famous Grand National and The Derby. Shocked neighbors came late Wednesday to lay flowers near the scene of the attack. "They were the loveliest, gentlest family," said Su Kehinde, who lives nearby. "They were the meekest human beings. They did not deserve this. They were beautiful souls." People in Britain do not need a license to own a crossbow, but it is illegal to carry one in public without a reasonable excuse. The new Labour Party government, which took office last week, said it would "swiftly consider" findings of a recently launched review into whether controls on owning crossbows should be tightened.

AP ■ BELGRADE

Weather alerts, forest fires, melting pavement in cities: A sizzling heat wave has sent temperatures in parts of central and southern Europe soaring toward 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in some places. From Italy to Romania, authorities warned people to be cautious, drive carefully if going on holiday, drink plenty of water and avoid going out during the hottest hours of the day. Italian authorities declared a red weather alert in seven cities on Thursday, mostly in the central parts of the country but also the capital Rome and Trieste in the northeast. The heat conditions are aggravated by humidity and could affect healthy people as well as those with health conditions, authorities warned. Similar warnings were issued in neighboring Croatia and further east and south.

Croatia's main tourism resort, the southern Adriatic Sea town of Dubrovnik, recorded 28 degrees Celsius (82.4 Fahrenheit) at dawn, signalling there won't be relief when the sun goes down. Forest fires have been reported this week in Albania, near the border with Greece, as well as in Bosnia and Italy. Meteorologists said temperatures were even higher than officially reported in big cities where sizzling concrete radiates the heat above the ground and the asphalt softens under one's feet. "It was impossible to breathe yesterday," said Antonela Spicanovic, from the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica, where temperatures reached 39C (102F) on Wednesday. The city seemed deserted with many of its residents staying indoors or heading for the Adriatic Sea coast or the mountains. "I spend my days in the apartment, under

the air conditioning," said Dorde Stanišić, an electrical engineer also from Podgorica. "It's hell outside." Mendim Rugova, a meteorologist from neighboring Kosovo, said temperatures in the country have risen on average by 2.5 degrees since the 1980s. He said the current heat wave could last until the end of July. "In the region we could see temperatures above 40C, in parts of Albania, Northern Macedonia, in Greece and also in parts of Serbia," he predicted. In Czechia's capital of Prague, where temperatures reached 34C Wednesday before dropping slightly Thursday, the city zoo delivered ten tons of ice to provide much-needed relief for the animals. The ice was strategically placed around the zoo Wednesday creating cool spots where animals could find refuge from unusually high temperatures.

In the Romanian capital Bucharest, street thermometers showed 42C (107F) on Tuesday and Wednesday though the official measurements were a few degrees lower. Neighboring Serbia reported record temperatures so far this summer, with thermostats at 35C (95F) Thursday morning in the north of the country. In the capital Belgrade, doctors reported treating people who collapsed, felt dizzy or complained of headaches due to the heat. Serbian authorities have said that the use of air conditioning led to huge power consumption similar to levels normally seen in winter, when many in the Balkan country use electricity for heating. During a previous heat wave last month, Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia and Albania faced a major power outage amid the overload and a collapse of a regional distribution line.

Woman who swept to sea while swimming at beach rescued

Tokyo (AP): A Chinese woman who was swept out to sea while swimming at a Japanese beach was rescued 37 hours later after drifting in a swimming ring more than 80 kilometers (50 miles) in the Pacific Ocean, officials said Thursday. Japan's coast guard launched a search for the woman, identified only as a Chinese national in her 20s, after receiving a call Monday night from her friend saying she had disappeared while swimming at Shimoda, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) southwest of Tokyo. The woman was spotted by a cargo ship early Wednesday, about 36 hours after she disappeared, off the southern tip of Boso Peninsula, the coast guard said. The cargo ship asked a passing LPG tanker, the Kakuwa Maru No. 8, to help.

Sensex, Nifty settle marginally down

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty closed marginally down in a volatile session on Thursday as investors booked profits in heavyweights ahead of the announcement of key financial results for the June quarter. Retreating from early highs, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed lower by 27.43 points or 0.03 per cent at 79,897.34. The index climbed 245.32 points to hit a high of 80,170.09 in early trade but later lost momentum due to selling in index heavyweights. The barometer hit a day's low of 79,464.38, down by 460.39 points from the last close. The NSE Nifty edged down 8.50 points or 0.03 per cent to settle at 24,315.95. The broader index gyrated between a high of 24,402.65 and a low of 24,193.75 in day trade."The main indices are trading in a narrow range, struggling to justify its premium valuation ahead of the Q1 earnings season, which is forecast to be subdued," Vinod Nair, Head



of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Among Sensex shares, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Nestle, NTPC, Power Grid, NTPC, UltraTech Cement and Larsen & Toubro were the biggest laggards. The prominent gainers were ITC, Tata Motors, Asian Paints and Titan. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher. European markets were trading in positive territory. US markets ended significantly higher on

Wednesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 583.96 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.21 per cent to USD 85.26 a barrel. The BSE benchmark closed lower by 426.87 points or 0.53 per cent at 79,924.77 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty dropped 108.75 points or 0.45 per cent to settle at 24,324.45. Both the benchmark indices had hit their record high levels in opening deals on Wednesday.

Gold rises on jewellers' buying, positive overseas trend

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price rose Rs 50 to Rs 75,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday driven by jewellers' buying and a firm trend in the international markets, according to All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had settled at Rs 75,050 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Silver prices also climbed by Rs 100 to Rs 94,500 per kg. It had closed at Rs 94,400 per kg in the previous session. In sarafa markets, the yellow metal was trading at Rs 75,100 per 10 grams, up by Rs 50 against the previous close, the association said. Traders said gold rallied due to fresh demand from local jewellers and a firm trend in overseas markets. In the global markets, spot gold was trading higher at USD 2,389.20 per ounce, up by USD 9.50 per ounce. Gold prices firmed for a third consecutive session with investors awaiting US inflation data due later in the day for more insights on the Federal Reserve's interest rate path, Manav Modi, Senior Analyst, Commodity Research, said.

India's oil, gas exploration offers USD 100 bn opportunity: Hardeep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday called for stepping up oil and gas hunt to cut India's reliance on imports and making available fuel at an affordable and sustainable way. Speaking at the Urja Varta conference, he said the exploration and production (E&P) sector is integral in the journey towards energy self-sufficiency, which is critical for sustained economic growth. "E&P offers investment opportunities worth USD 100 billion by 2030," he said. Stating that India's exploration and production potential still lies untapped, he said, "I find it strange that India is so heavily reliant on oil imports despite the abundant geological resources available to us." The Indian sedimentary basins hold about 651.8 million tonnes of crude oil and 1138.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas, he said. Puri said only 10 per cent of our sedimentary basin area is under exploration, which will rise to 16 per cent by 2024-end after the current bid ends. "The focus of our exploratory endeavours must pivot



towards discovering 'Yet to Find' resources," he said. India imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil needs. Crude oil is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries. "The government is doing its part to catalyse investments in E&P. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has instituted sweeping reforms, empowering stakeholders to contribute to our nation's progress," he said, adding "We intend to increase India's exploration acreage to 1 million sq. Km. By 2030." The minister said since its inception in 2015, the Discovered Small Field (DSF) Policy has garnered

investments of approximately USD 2 billion and brought in 29 new players in the field. "The opening up of the erstwhile no-go areas has paved the way for exploration activities in previously restricted zones, fostering investments, notably in regions such as the Andamans," he said. Puri announced formation of a Joint Working Group (JWG), comprising representatives from private E&P operators, the National Oil Companies, MoPNG, and DGH to examine issues relating to the ease of doing business in E&P, adequacy of policies and procedures, and the need for their revision.

FinMin notifies GSTR-1A to amend outward supply form

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry has notified the GSTR-1A form which will give an option to taxpayers to amend outward supply or sales return form. Last month, the GST Council had recommended providing a new optional facility by way of form GSTR-1A to facilitate the taxpayers to amend the details in form GSTR-1 for a tax period and/ or to declare additional details. GSTR-1A will, however, have to be filed before filing of return in GSTR-3B for the said tax period. The finance ministry on July 10 notified the GSTR-1A form. Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has introduced a significant enhancement to the GST compliance framework with the optional facility of form GSTR-1A. "By facilitating timely corrections, form GSTR-1A ensures that the correct tax liability is auto-populated in form GSTR-3B, reducing manual errors and fostering a streamlined compliance process," he said.

Sebi to auction HBN Dairies properties; fixes reserve price at ₹67.70 cr



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi will auction eight properties of HBN Dairies & Allied Ltd next month for a reserve price of Rs 67.70 crore. The move is a part of Sebi's effort to recover money raised by HBN Dairies through illicit collective investment schemes. This came after the Supreme Court in its order dated May 14, 2024, authorised Sebi to sell the assets of HBN Dairies & Allied Ltd (HBN) with the active involvement of the liquidator. The markets watchdog initiated the process for the sale of assets after HBN Dairies & Allied Ltd and its directors — Harmender Singh Sran, Amandeep Singh Sran, Manjeet Kaur Sran and Jasbeer Kaur — failed to refund the investors' money. The properties to go under the hammer include a shopping mall-cum-multiplex, hotel, plots and commercial shops, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a notice on Wednesday. The properties were located in New Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra and were

auctioned at a reserve price of Rs 67.70 crore. Quikr Realty has been engaged by Sebi to assist it in the e-auction, while C1 India has been appointed as the e-auction service provider, the regulator said in a notice. As per the notice, the regulator said bidders should make independent enquiries regarding the encumbrances, litigations, attachments and acquisition liabilities of the properties put on action prior to submitting their bid. "Sale or auction shall be through online bidding. Bidders can participate in the e-auction from anywhere," the regulator noted. The markets watchdog is inviting bids for the sale of properties in the recovery proceedings against HBN Dairies & Allied Ltd and its directors. Sebi said the auction will be conducted online on August 13 from 11 am to 1 pm. The company had illegally mobilised Rs 1,136 crore from gullible investors through schemes involving purchase of cattle to earn huge returns from the sale of ghee. By indulging in these activities, HBN Dairies & Allied had flouted the regulatory norms.

Budget needs to take steps to address lower than expected growth in consumption: CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government needs to take steps such as reviewing personal income tax slabs in the upcoming Union Budget to drive private consumption, which in turn will drive private investment, Godrej & Boyce Executive Director & CEO, Anil G Verma said on Thursday. He also expressed optimism that the government will build upon the solid foundation laid by the interim budget, which

focused on boosting infrastructure development, maintaining fiscal prudence, and laid progressive emphasis on women, youth, farmers, and the underprivileged through skilling, welfare measures and financial assistance. "The important area that needs to be addressed now, amongst others, is the continued lower-than-expected growth in private consumption," Verma said in a statement. Asserting that private consumption drives private



investment, he said, "Therefore, I am hopeful that the GoI (government of India) will take steps that boost consumption through a slew of measures that could include optimising GST rates, reviewing of personal income tax slabs and reassessment of the interest rates to provide EMI relief to the large masses whose purchases of assets such as homes and consumer durables are through loans." These steps will not only provide tailwinds to the

consumer durables industry but also have a multiplier effect on the industries that serve them, through increased capacity utilisation and hence also pave the way for private investments to flow in at a faster pace, Verma said. Looking ahead, he said, "I hope that the upcoming budget continues to prioritise these areas while also introducing policies that promote innovation, production-linked incentives (PLIs), and sustainable practices.

Procurement through GeM crosses ₹1.24 lakh cr in Q1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the procurement of goods and services through government's portal GeM crossing Rs 1.24 lakh crore in first quarter of 2024-25, the platform will become world's largest by the end of this fiscal, a senior official said on Thursday. The Government e-Market (GeM) portal was launched on August 9, 2016, for online purchases of goods and services by all central government ministries and departments. "GeM has clocked a gross merchandise value of Rs 1,24,761 lakh crore at the end of first quarter, representing a quarter-on-quarter growth of 136 per cent over last year's Rs 52,670 crore," GeM CEO Prashant Kumar Singh told reporters here. He said that going by this pace, it will become the world's largest platform. South Korea's KONEPS is the largest such platform in the world. GeM stands at the second position. It is followed by Singapore's GeBIZ. He added that the procurement by central ministries including CPSEs surpassed Rs 1 lakh crore



milestone in this period with ministries of coal, defence and petroleum and gas emerging as the top procurers in this quarter. "Of this Rs 1 lakh crore, CPSEs share accounted for more than Rs 91,000 crore," Singh said, adding during the first quarter, services segment has been the prime mover. Services buying crossed Rs 80,500 during the quarter. In 2023-24, the procurement from this portal had crossed Rs 4 lakh crore. Talking about the initiatives of the portal, Singh said that carrying forward its vision of reaching out to the last mile sellers and with an aim to further simplify public

procurement, they are planning to roll out 'GeM SAHAYAK' programme which aims at creating a pan-India network of 6,000-7,000 trained and certified accredited trainers. The Sahayaks, he said, would offer their services to potential and existing GeM sellers in navigating on the portal and enhancing business opportunities. Buyers too will benefit from their services in terms of creation of bids and other value-added services, Singh said. To further promote ease of doing business, he said the platform has drastically reduced transaction charges leviable on sellers.

As per the new revenue policy of GeM, the sellers/service providers will be charged only 0.30 per cent of the order value (previously 0.45 per cent) on orders worth more than Rs 5 lakh. He added that these transaction charges would be capped at Rs 3 lakh as against Rs 72.50 lakh being charged earlier. "This reduction in transaction charges levied on the GeM platform by almost 33 per cent to 96 per cent would greatly benefit our sellers and is likely to make their offerings more competitive in the marketplace," Singh said. To promote the government's initiative of "vocal for local," the platform has added a page of "The Aabhar Collection". It showcases over 120 exquisite and hand-crafted gift items and hampers, featuring select products from One District One Product (ODOP) and Geographical Indication (GI) categories with prices ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 25,000 to be used by government buyers for all their official events/ ceremonies. Further, he said, to maintain its pole position in the public procurement space, GeM is all

set to deploy its generative AI-based chat bot — GeMAI — in the coming quarter. The AI tool has been trained to provide solutions based on a nuanced analysis of queries raised by buyers and sellers through various complaint and feedback mechanisms. "Conversational analytics and business intelligence using generative AI are also being harnessed to build a robust AI-powered chat bot," he said. GeM has over 1.5 lakh government buyers and over 62 lakh sellers and service providers offering a wide range of products and services. Currently, government departments, ministries, public sector units, state governments, and central armed police forces are allowed to carry out transactions through this portal. The portal provides a wide range of products from office stationery to vehicles. Automobiles, computers and office furniture are some of the major product categories. Services, including transportation, hiring of helicopter services, logistics, waste management, webcasting and analytical, are listed on the portal.

REC Limited avails green loan facility

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

In a significant step towards sustainable development in India, REC Limited, a leader in the Indian power sector, has successfully availed a green loan of JPY 31.96 Billion (equivalent to USD 200 million) to finance eligible green projects in India. This strategic investment reinforces REC's commitment to foster sustainable growth, in alignment with the Company's Green Finance Framework. This green facility is a first of its kind successful collaboration between an Indian government entity and Deutsche Bank AG, GIFT City branch. This facility sets a benchmark in the Indian public sector landscape for similar green financing transactions, highlighting a growing commitment to sustainable financing. The facility also marks one of the first JPY-denominated green loan transaction for Deutsche Bank AG, GIFT City.

MSME can play role in making India leading electronic manufacturing hub: Secretary, MeitY

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Manufacturing will play a major role in the structural transformation of the Indian economy and electronics will be an important sector driving this transition, according to S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India. "We should enhance domestic value-add in electronics from 18-20 per cent to 35-40 per cent within the next five years. MSMEs will play a crucial role in this effort and have a huge role to play in electronics components manufacturing," he said, during his address at the CII MSME Growth Summit in New Delhi.

Rupee falls 5 paise to close at 83.56 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee settled for the day 5 paise lower at 83.56 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a weak tone in domestic markets and a recovery in crude oil prices. Forex traders said rupee traded with a slight negative bias on profit booking in the domestic market, which may result in foreign fund outflows. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.49, but lost ground and touched an intraday low of 83.59 against the American currency during the session. It finally settled at 83.56 (provisional) against the



dollar, 5 paise lower than its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee stayed range-bound and settled 2 paise lower at 83.51 against the US dollar. "Elevated crude oil prices may also weigh on the rupee. However, soft US Dollar and positive Asian currencies may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from inflation and weekly unemployment claims data

from the US. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.35 to Rs 83.80," said Anuj Choudhary -- Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.16 per cent lower at 104.87. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.24 per cent higher at

USD 85.28 per barrel. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended the day 27.43 points, or 0.03 per cent, lower at 79,897.34 points. The broader NSE Nifty settled 8.50 points, or 0.03 per cent, down at 24,315.95 points. "The domestic indices fell for the second consecutive session after hitting record highs on Tuesday. However, FII inflows and a soft tone in the US Dollar cushioned the downside," Choudhary said. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Wednesday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 583.96 crore, according to exchange data.

Auto component industry to see moderate growth this fiscal: ICRA

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Red Sea crisis is likely to impact the margins of the auto component industry over the next few quarters amid higher container rates and shipping time, credit ratings agency ICRA said on Thursday, projecting a moderate growth for the industry this fiscal. Close to two-thirds of the auto component exports are made to North America and Europe, and one-third of the imports is made from these regions, as per the ratings agency. "The disruption along the Red Sea route has resulted in a surge in container rates by 2-3 times in YTD (year-to-date) this calendar year compared to CY2023, while shipping time has also increased by around

two weeks," ICRA said. The operating margins are set for a year-on-year improvement of around 50 basis-points in FY2025, benefitting from better operating leverage, higher content per vehicle, and value additions, while remaining exposed to any sharp volatility in commodity prices and foreign exchange rates, it said. Also, the industry's liquidity position, according to ICRA, remains comfortable, especially across tier-I players supported by stable cash flows and earnings. ICRA said it expects the growth in revenues of the Indian auto component industry to ease to 5-7 per cent this fiscal, from the highs of around 14 per cent in FY 2023-24. "Demand from domestic

original equipment manufacturers (OEM) constitutes over 50 per cent of sales for the Indian auto component industry and the pace of growth in the segment is expected to moderate in FY2025," said Details, Vinutaa S, Vice President and Sector Head for corporate ratings at ICRA Limited. The ratings agency said these growth projections are based on the sample of 46 auto ancillaries with aggregate annual revenues of over Rs 3,00,000 crore in FY2024. The aging of vehicles and increased sales of used vehicles in global markets are also expected to aid in the export of components for the replacement segment in overseas markets, according to the ratings agency.

PARIS IS MY FOURTH AND PROBABLY LAST OLYMPICS: MANPREET

PTI ■ BENGALURU

He has no plans to retire anytime soon but former Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh very well knows that the Paris Games will be his fourth and last Olympics, and wants to give his best one last time at the world's biggest sporting extravaganza. Manpreet, 32, was the captain of the Indian team that broke a 41-year-old Olympic medal drought in Tokyo by bagging the bronze. Besides, he has been a member of the team that won 2014 and 2022 Asian Games gold medals. "I never thought that I would be able to play four Olympics. It is every player's dream to play in the Olympics and win medals. I consider myself very lucky that this is my fourth Olympics," Manpreet told PTI Bhasha. "I am going to Paris thinking as if it is my last Olympics and I have to give my best. I haven't thought about quitting the game yet and my complete focus is on the Paris Games," the experienced midfielder, who made his debut for India in 2011 at the age of just 19, said. But the journey from Mithapur village in Jalandhar to Paris has not been a smooth sailing for Manpreet. He had to fight poverty, false allegations and witness mother's struggles to make a mark in his career. After the Tokyo Olympics, Manpreet had to endure the worst phase of his career when

former coach Sjoerd Marijne levelled serious allegations against him. Marijne accused that Manpreet asked a player to underperform so that his friends could get in the team during 2018 Commonwealth Games, an allegation which both the men and women's teams jointly denied, stating that the Dutchman did so to publicise his book. "That was the most difficult phase for me. I could never even think of such things. I was broken and lost faith in everyone. I told (PR) Sreejesh with whom I share everything. My mother also encouraged me to keep playing to fulfil my father's dream and my whole team supported me," said Manpreet. "In bad times, the support of the family and team is very important because at that time the player finds himself very lonely. When the team stands together, it gives a lot of encouragement and also helps in making a comeback. We have also seen Hardik Pandya making a great comeback recently." "When I look back now, it seems like a dream. I come from a humble background where we have seen struggles for the basic needs. "Father used to work as a carpenter in Dubai but had returned from there due to medical reasons. My mother struggled a lot and both my brothers also played hockey but they left due to financial problems," said Manpreet, who was the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent at Tokyo



Olympics along with boxing legend MC Mary Kom. Manpreet is no longer captain of the side with Harmanpreet Singh taking over the responsibility, but the star midfielder knows his role in the team as one of the senior-most member. "Even if I am not the captain now, it does not make any difference. Every player has his own role in hockey. The effort is to take everyone along. Being a senior, we have to inspire the youngsters," he said. Manpreet, who idolises Pargat Singh, who too hails from Mithapur, said they followed the same process which they did during Tokyo in terms of preparation for Paris Games. "Before the Tokyo Olympics, we spent maximum time together due to COVID that resulted in excellent team bonding. We will continue the same because 11 players are the same who were in Tokyo. We are sharing our experiences with the five debutants," he said. India have been placed in tough pool in the Paris Olympics along side Australia, Belgium, Argentina, New Zealand and Ireland. "Our pool is tough and we cannot take any team lightly. New Zealand has defeated us in the World Cup and Ireland has recently defeated Belgium. Our focus is on ourselves as to how we can execute our strategy," he said. "We get less chances against good teams but converting 50-50 chances is the mark of a champion. We are well prepared to do that in Paris."



Sindhu's smash speed, Jena's throw celebrated in Mumbai ahead of Olympics

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ace badminton player PV Sindhu, javelin thrower Kishore Jena and hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh are some of the athletes whose feats are being celebrated in the city in leadup to the Paris Olympics, starting July 26. An outdoor campaign was launched here on Thursday to celebrate the 'champions of the game' by sports goods manufacturing company Puma, which has partnered with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as their official footwear partner for the Olympics. A total of 45 Indian athletes bound for the Olympics will represent the German company, whose 'See the Game Like We Do' campaign aims to

celebrate the feats of the sportspersons here. "(The) double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu's powerful smash, Olympic bronze medallist and hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh's ability to stop the fastest balls with ease with a series of larger-than-life outdoor spectacles across Mumbai, as it shows Asian Games medalist Kishore Jena's throw, equivalent to the height of a skyscraper," Puma said in a release. "Sindhu's speed of a smash at 349 kmph is 3x the speed of Mumbai's iconic Central Line route. Her exemplary achievement is visualised across the coaches with imagery splashed across coaches of the local train on this route," it added. Jena's best throw at 87.54m will

be commemorated with his image on the facade of a similar sized structure in Prabhadevi. Sreejesh been illustrated on a digital billboard on the Eastern Express Highway (EEH) serving the cities of Mumbai and Thane. Over 100 Indian athletes will receive podium and travel footwear, trolleys, backpacks, sippers, yoga mats, headbands, wristbands, socks and towels, designed to maximise their training and comfort during the Paris Olympics. "The IOA is deeply committed to enhancing India's medal prospects at the Paris Olympics, and such collaborations are a crucial step towards achieving that goal," IOA president PT Usha said.

With a late goal fit for a king, England reaches another Euro final by beating Netherlands 2-1

AP ■ DORTMUND

England is into another European Championship final after its latest dramatic, come-from-behind win that even took King Charles III on a roller coaster ride. Ollie Watkins, who came on for captain Harry Kane in a bold call by England coach Gareth Southgate, scored in the first minute of stoppage time to earn England a 2-1 win over the Netherlands on Wednesday and a shot at Spain in the title match. In the knockout stage at Euro 2024, England has scored a stoppage-time equalizer through Jude Bellingham before edging past Slovakia in the last 16 and needed a penalty-shootout to see off Switzerland in the quarterfinals. The English are keeping their supporters back home on the edge of their seats as the men's team moves closer to a first title since the 1966 World Cup - and that includes its monarch. "If I may encourage you to secure victory before the need for any last minute wonder-goals or another penalties drama, I am sure the stresses on the nation's collective heart rate and blood pressure would be greatly alleviated!" the king said in a congratulatory message soon after the game in Dortmund. Watkins' goal was fit for a king. He had only made one previous appearance at Euro 2024 - as a substitute in the



group game against Denmark - so it was a surprise when he was introduced by Southgate in the 80th minute in England's biggest match so far. The gamble paid off. Fed by another substitute in Cole Palmer, Watkins took a touch with his back to goal just inside the area and, from a tight angle, smashed a fierce shot into the bottom corner. "Unbelievable - I've been waiting for that moment for weeks," said Watkins, the Aston Villa striker who was the fourth-equal top scorer in the Premier League last season. "It's taken a lot of hard work to

get to where I am today. I got the opportunity and took it with both hands." It was painful for Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman. "I had a feeling toward the end of the match that maybe we could score," Koeman said, "and for sure in extra time I'd have put money on us." England will play Lamine Yamal and Spain in Sunday's final in Berlin. It will be the nation's first title match on foreign soil, having won the World Cup in 1966 and lost to Italy in the Euro 2020 final - both times at Wembley Stadium.

"It's going to be unbelievably tough - a really difficult game," Kane said of the title match, with Spain widely regarded as the best team at the tournament. "One more game to make history." The sea of orange in the giant South Stand at Dortmund's Westfalenstadion fell silent for the first time after Watkins' late goal. It housed the most vocal of the Dutch supporters who dominated the city center before marching in their thousands to the stadium ahead of the game. Police reported three separate clashes between fans from both

countries in the city. It gave the occasion the feeling of a home match for the Dutch and England was up against it even more after the 21-year-old Xavi Simons became the second youngest scorer for the Netherlands at a Euros. The Paris Saint-Germain midfielder dispossessed Declan Rice about 40 meters (yards) out, drove forward and unleashed a shot into the far corner from outside the area. Compared to the 16-year-old Yamal, Spain's new superstar, Simons is a soccer veteran but this was another case of a young player shining on the big stage at the Euros. Kane has had plenty of big moments at major tournaments and he had another when he slotted home a penalty after Denzel Dumfries' outstretched leg made contact with Kane's foot as the England striker attempted a shot. Kane became the sixth player to be on three goals for the tournament. An open first half, which saw Dumfries and England's Phil Foden hit the goal frame, made way for a tight and tense second half that had a huge two-minute spell when Bukayo Saka had a goal disallowed before Kane and Foden were taken off. It might rank as Southgate's best call in his eight-year England tenure. And that the goal was set up by Palmer, who entered as a substitute the same time as Watkins, will have made it even sweeter.

Colombia beats Uruguay 1-0 and will face Messi and Argentina in Copa America final

AP ■ CHARLOTTE (NORTH CAROLINA)

Jefferson Lerma scored in the 39th minute, and Colombia played a man short the entire second half in a 1-0 win over Uruguay on Wednesday night to reach the Copa America final against Lionel Messi and Argentina. Daniel Muñoz was ejected in first-half stoppage time for his second yellow card, but Colombia held on to reach the championship for the first time since winning its only Copa title as host in 2001. Colombia extended its unbeaten streak to a team record 28 games, one more than from 1992-94 and the longest current streak in men's international soccer. In a contentious match that included seven yellow cards and one red, players from both teams pushed and shoved in a scrum on the field at the final whistle. Darwin Núñez and about a dozen Uruguay teammates went into the stands as fans brawled. A video showed Núñez hitting a fan in Colombian team colors. Defending champion Argentina and Colombia meet Sunday night at Miami Gardens, Florida. The Albiceleste are seeking a record 16th Copa title and are looking to join Spain from 2008-12 as the only

countries to win three straight major championships. Uruguay stays in Charlotte to meet Canada in Saturday night's third-place match. Before an overwhelmingly pro-Colombia crowd of 70,644 that filled Bank of America Stadium with yellow jerseys and flags, Uruguay fell behind for the first time in the tournament. James Rodríguez's corner kick was headed in from short range by Lerma, who outjumped José María Giménez for his third international goal and second of the tournament. Rodríguez has six assists in the tournament -- triple the total of any other player. Muñoz received his first yellow card from Mexican referee César Ramos in the 31st minute for a reckless slide tackle on Maximiliano Araújo and his second for elbowing Manuel Ugarte in the stomach. Rodríguez was given a yellow card in the 55th minute for arguing with Ramos when the referee failed to stop play after Richard Ríos was kicked on a shin by Darwin Núñez. Ríos was removed on a stretcher, re-entered the match, then went down in another challenge and was



substituted in the 62nd minute. Rodríguez was removed at the same time to keep him eligible for the final. Colombia goalkeeper Camilo Vargas didn't have to make his first save until he stopped Nicolás de la Cruz in the 68th minute. Luis Suárez, Uruguay's career leader with 68 goals, entered in the 66th minute and hit the outside of a post with a shot in the 71st. He grasped his head in his hands in disgust. Colombia's Mateus Uribe, another second-half sub, put an open shot wide in the 88th, and Uribe's open shot in the fourth minute of stoppage time ricocheted off the body of sliding goalkeeper Sergio Rochet and then the crossbar. Uruguay moved Rochet up the field in the final minute, desperate for a goal. The match was played in 90-degree heat on a surface that was converted from artificial turf to grass in the weeks leading up to the game. Players on the NFL's Carolina Panthers have been outspoken about soccer teams having the luxury of playing on grass on their home field. NFL games at venue are played on artificial turf, which players say leaves them more suscep.

STARC EXPRESSES DISPLEASURE AT BEING DROPPED FOR T20 WC GAME AGAINST AFGHANISTAN

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian pacer Mitchell Starc has expressed his displeasure at being dropped for the crucial T20 World Cup Super Eights match against Afghanistan in the Caribbean, saying he was not one bit amused by the team management's decision. The 2021 T20 World Cup champions suffered a shocking 21-run loss to Afghanistan, which dealt a massive blow to Australia's chances of entering the semifinals. Australia had replaced Starc with Ashton Agar for the match but the left-arm spinner, despite tying down the Afghanistan batters, could not take any wickets. "No -- two World Cups in a row," Starc was quoted as saying by Sydney Morning Herald on Willow Talk podcast when quizzed about his omission and whether he was amused by the decision. "Just the match-up, they (team management) saw previous games on that ground in St Vincent with spin playing a part and obviously Ash (Ashton) and the left-armer enticing them to make a change," he added. This was the second occasion in a row where the Australian pacer was dropped for a T20 World Cup match against Afghanistan, with the previous one being in Adelaide in 2022 where also the hosts failed to reach the last four stage. Agar and the two Australian



pace spearheads, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins, were unable to break the partnership between openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and

Ibrahim Zadran, who ended up making 118 runs. "I think Ash bowled pretty well in the powerplay. They probably played the spin quite

well and batting first probably assessed the conditions a little bit better than we did, and had a couple of stumbles that in the end cost us the game," said

Starc. "It was probably the fielding that cost us again that game. That meant we had to win against India and we fell short

there as well." Australia then went on to lose to India in Super Eights and were later eliminated from the competition. Starc also expressed his displeasure with the scheduling of the tournament and pre seeding that saw them advance to the pre determined group despite topping the group stage. "We finished ahead of England (in the group stage) and end up where we were pre-seeded as the second side. All of a sudden, you're in a different group." "The argument was it was because it was so hard to get around the West Indies, so fans knew where your team was playing. "So then why don't you have the chock-a-block tournament at the front... And then spread it out at the back end? We had the two night games and the third was a day game, so it wasn't the best preparation. We had a delayed flight out of St Vincent, it was a 90-minute drive from the airport to the hotel in St Lucia, and then we had a 10 o'clock toss. He added that the travelling between venues in the West Indies is always difficult. "I think that was probably maybe a misread [by organisers], the fact that the front half of the tournament was more spread out, and then you hit the super eights and ... travel around the West Indies is probably not the easiest thing to do, certainly not to travel home from."

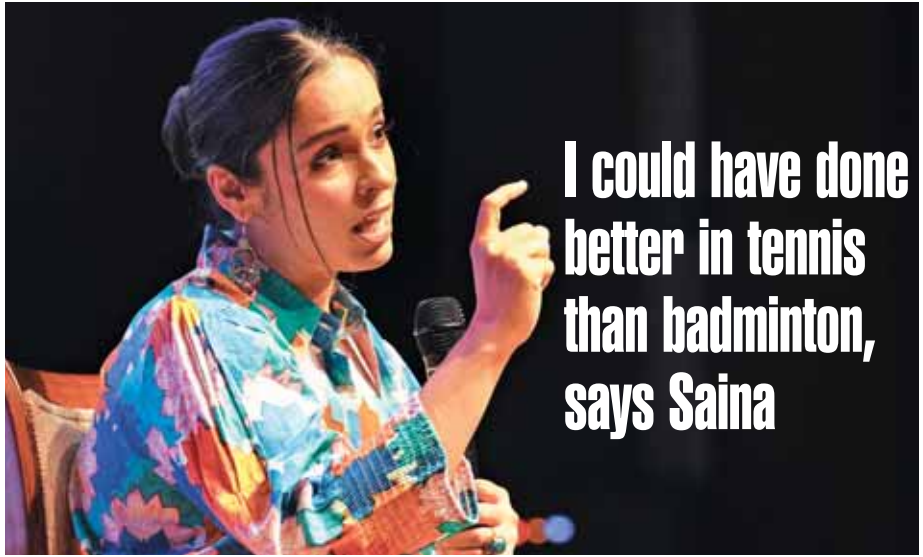


Shocked by that amazing catch: Avesh on Bishnoi's wonder grab in India's win against Zimbabwe

PTI ■ HARARE

Ravi Bishnoi's fielding has always had a touch of athleticism but he took it to a different plane in the third T20I against Zimbabwe when he leapt to pluck a screamer off Avesh Khan to dismiss Brian Bennett, leaving his India teammate in awe. India defeated Zimbabwe by 23 runs on Wednesday to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series but the talk in the dressing room was Bishnoi's astonishing catch to dismiss the Zimbabwe top-order batter, reducing the hosts to 19 for 3 in the fourth over. The pacer said he was left "shocked" for a moment. "When he took the catch, I don't think he got the reaction time. I also did not get the reaction time (to see what happened). I was, in fact, shocked how he took that catch," said Avesh, who took two wickets as India restricted Zimbabwe to 159/6 in the chase of 182. Avesh added that the wicket

should be credited to Bishnoi's account for the sheer effort. "He is a good fielder, works a lot on his fielding. The catch that he took, the scoreboard will show that it was taken by me, but it should be credited in his (Bishnoi's) account," added Avesh in a video posted by BCCI. India skipper Shubman Gill said it was a truly amazing effort from Bishnoi and showed that the leg-spinner was enjoying his fielding. "Very happy with the team's win to go 2-1 up in the series and the catch that Bishi (Bishnoi) took was absolutely remarkable. It was truly delightful to watch. "Cricket is definitely a team sport and it's more so a team sport when you're fielding. So, it's very important to have fun when you are fielding. If you are having fun then you are always in the game," added the captain. Washington Sundar said he had the best view of the catch as he was positioned at mid-on.



I could have done better in tennis than badminton, says Saina

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traillblazing Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal feels she would have perhaps excelled more as a sports person if she had picked a tennis racquet instead of playing badminton. Nehwal has an impressive resume as a badminton player. Not only she became the first Indian woman shuttler to be ranked No. 1 in the world, she was the first woman athlete from the country to win an Olympic medal. "Sometimes I feel that it would have been good if my parents had put me in tennis," Saina said during her "Her Story-My Story" talk at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. "There is more money and I had more strength I think. I could have done better in tennis than badminton," she

added. While Saina has inspired many to take up badminton, the 34-year-old herself didn't have anyone to look up to when she picked the racquet at the age of 8. "When I started, I didn't have any role models to look up to. No one to look up to and say 'I want to be world number one or be an Olympic medallist,' I hadn't seen anyone do that in badminton before me," Saina said. Beside the London Olympics bronze, Nehwal also won a silver at the World Championships and multiple Commonwealth Games gold, including two in the women's singles. She urged the youngsters present to explore a career in sports. "I always tell children to

concentrate on games. China wins 60-70 medals. We only get 3-4. There are so many doctors and engineers, their names don't come in newspapers," she said. "I want girls to especially to come forward and start getting fit and get into sports. Now we are there for the children, there are world number ones, Olympic champions and so many medallist to look up to," she added. Reflecting on her career, she said her hard work compensated for the lack of talent. "I loved hard work, I was not the most talented person, I need to practice a lot. If a talented player is doing something 100 times I had to do it 1000 times. But I like hard work. My coaches like my never give up attitude."

Indian Racing Festival: Ganguly buys Kolkata Royal Tigers team

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was on Thursday unveiled as the owner of the Kolkata Royal Tigers ahead of the Indian Racing Festival 2024, scheduled between August and September this year. Apart from the debutant Kolkata racing team, the event will see participation from seven other outfits based at Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Kochi, and Ahmedabad. The racing festival encompasses two main championships — Indian

Racing League (IRL) and the Formula 4 Indian Championship (F4IC). Expressing his enthusiasm for the association, Ganguly, the former BCCI president said: "I am truly excited to embark on this journey with the Kolkata team in the Indian Racing Festival. "Motorsports has always been a passion of mine and together with the Kolkata Royal Tigers, we aim to build a strong legacy in the Indian Racing Festival and inspire a new generation of motorsport enthusiasts." Akhilesh Reddy, Chairman and Managing Director of



Racing Promotions Pvt Ltd (RPPL), welcomed Ganguly to the racing fold. "We are thrilled to announce Sourav Ganguly as the owner of the Kolkata franchise. His visionary leadership and commitment to excellence, shaped by years of legendary cricketing success, brings unparalleled dynamism to the Indian Racing Festival," he said. It may be recalled that veteran India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has recently acquired stakes in American Gambits, a team that will take part in the second edition of the Global Chess League.

Mumbai City FC ropes in Greek striker Nikolaos Karelis

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai City FC on Thursday announced roping in Greek striker Nikolaos Karelis ahead of the upcoming Indian Super League season. The 32-year-old, also known as Nikos Karelis, is set for his maiden stint in India. He began his youth career with Ergotelis and made his senior professional debut with them in 2007. Karelis has played for seven more clubs including stints in Russia (Amkar Perm), Belgium (Genk), England (Brentford) and the

Netherlands (ADO Den Haag). Mumbai City FC will be his eighth club. Karelis has netted 103 goals in 361 professional matches along with 29 assists, while his best performance at a club came for Panathinaikos, for whom he scored 36 goals in 114 competitive games. The 2014-15 season was his standout when Karelis scored 19 goals in 50 contests. He won the Greek Cup with Panathinaikos in 2013-14. Later, he also won two titles with the Greek club PAOK in 2018-19 (Super League Greece and Greek Cup). Karelis was last associated with



another Greek club Panetolikos, where he was adjudged its player of the season in 2022-23. "The team has achieved significant success over the past few years, and I am eager to contribute to its continued success in the upcoming season," Karelis said in a release. MCFC head coach Petr Kratky said, "Nikos is a highly talented player who perfectly matches the requirements we expect from our forwards. He has experience playing in various European countries and has consistently proven his calibre in different leagues."

Carlos faces Daniil and Novak plays Lorenzo in Wimbledon's semis

AP ■ LONDON

Carlos Alcaraz's ability to hit any type of shot, from any position on the court, on any surface, keeps fans on the edge of their seats. Keeps other players guessing, too. Alcaraz delights in all of that - he loves putting on a show just as much as he enjoys knowing he makes the guys on the other side of the net uncomfortable - and figures it can only help him in the Wimbledon semifinals against Daniil Medvedev on Friday. It's beneficial, Alcaraz said, that opponents need to focus on whether he'll be "able to be back (in) the point or ... Able to hit an unbelievable shot." "For me," he said, "it's great that they're thinking about it."

Alcaraz, the No. 3 seed, is seeking a second consecutive trophy at the All England Club and fourth Grand Slam title overall. His triumph last month at the French Open made him, at 21, the youngest man to collect a major trophy on hard, grass and clay courts. Medvedev, who is seeded No. 5 and defeated No. 1 Jannik Sinner in the quarterfinals, won the 2021 U.S. Open but is just 1-5 in major finals. The other match Friday will be No. 2 Novak Djokovic, who has won seven of his men's-record 24 Slam championships at Wimbledon, against No. 25 Lorenzo Musetti, making his debut in a major semifinal. "Against him, you are probably more stressed, because he's probably the best



player ever - or one of the best players ever," said the 22-year-old Musetti, who beat Taylor Fritz in five sets on Wednesday, while Djokovic got the day off because his foe, Alex de Minaur, withdrew with an injured hip. "You walk on court with a different mentality," said Musetti, whose 1-5 record against Djokovic includes a five-set loss at this year's French Open that ended at after 3 a.m. "If I play in a certain way, I could have my shot in the next round." Alcaraz vs. Medvedev is a rematch from last year's semifinals, when Alcaraz won in straight sets before getting past Djokovic in the final. It also offers a contrast between a talented attacker (Alcaraz) and a consummate

defender (Medvedev). "The most difficult thing about facing Daniil, or the most special thing about him, is he can reach every ball," Alcaraz said. "Well, he is like a wall. Every ball bounces back." Asked what Alcaraz's best quality is, Medvedev began this way: "To be honest, everything." That sounds like an exaggeration. Might not be. "That's where it's tough to play against him, because you know whatever shot you hit, he can hit a winner from there. So you try to make his life difficult. You try to hit the shot as good as you can. Maybe he goes for it and he cannot make it," said Medvedev, who has won just two of their previous six encounters.