



OPINION 6 INDIA'S PATH FROM TRADE TO INDUSTRY

WORLD 8 KIM, PUTIN VOW TO BEAT SANCTIONS TOGETHER

MONEY 10 HOUSING RENT GROWTH MODERATES IN TOP SEVEN CITIES

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## Heatwave sings North India

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

No respite is likely any time soon from an unrelenting heatwave scorching North India, with Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab bearing the brunt, warns the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The weather office has issued a red alert as temperatures threaten to skyrocket beyond 46 degrees Celsius, causing severe distress across the region, and making the year 2024 to be the hottest with the highest number of heatwaves in the past 15 years.

The IMD said on Tuesday that Delhi, which has been reeling under a blistering weather for the past few days, might experience slight relief intermittently brought by duststorms and scattered showers on Wednesday i.e. June 19. "But these will only provide temporary respite for a few hours or half a day," said the IMD statement.

The continuing severe heatwave conditions are proving a serious health threat for the vulnerable. In Bihar alone, 22 lives have been claimed by the extreme heat and oppressive humidity within just 24 hours, taking the heat-related deaths over 100 since the onset of the heatwaves in late March. Officials said India is in the middle of the longest heatwave it has seen since records began. Temperatures have crossed 50 degrees Celsius in some areas recently.

Relief from high temperatures is also unlikely at nights, said the IMD officials. "Unusually hot



### Capital power demand peaks up

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Extreme heatwave drove the National Capital's peak power demand on Tuesday afternoon to 8,647 MW, the highest ever for the city. The previous highest peak power demand of Delhi was 8,302 MW on May 29 this year. Delhi's peak power demand reached 8,000 MW for the first time on May 22, 2024. Notably, the peak power demand has been pushed over 8,000 MW eight times since May 22 and the national Capital's peak demand is

hovering over 7,000 megawatt for the past 30 days. According to the State Load Dispatch Centre data, at 3.22 pm on Tuesday, Delhi's peak power demand clocked 8,647 MW. It is the highest ever in the history of Delhi. The heatwave has also led to acute shortage water supply in the last one month. People in several parts of the city could be seen standing in long queues to fetch water from the tankers. The power outages have aggravated the situation here.

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nights is making life tougher for the people as they get little chance to recover from day-time heat if temperatures remain high overnight," he added. Warm to severe warm night conditions are very likely to remain in some parts of Uttar Pradesh and warm night conditions in isolated/some pockets of Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi on June 19th, while hot and humid weather is very likely over Odisha, and Bihar till June 20, said the IMD. In Delhi, the maximum temperature is likely to hover between 42 degrees Celsius and 45 degrees Celsius, which is over 5 degrees above the normal June temperature.

On Tuesday, the heat index, or the feels-like temperature, surged to nearly 50 degrees Celsius while the mercury had touched 45 degrees Celsius. The real relief will be expected only with the arrival of the monsoon, which is more than 12 days away from Delhi, the IMD official said. In Rajasthan, crippling heatwave continues with Ganganagar recording the highest maximum temperature at 46.2 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, the IMD said. The Jaipur Meteorological Centre has issued a warning of heatwave in many areas of the state for the next few days. The situation in other States, like Uttarakhnad, is also not very pleasant weather-wise with the most-visited Dehradun city recording a maximum temperature of 43.1 degrees Celsius.

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Members of various student unions take part in a protest rally over the alleged irregularities in NEET 2024 exam results, in Hyderabad, on Tuesday

### Lapses in NEET exam be dealt with thoroughly: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said negligence, if any, in the conduct of the NEET-UG 2024 examination should be dealt with thoroughly. "Even if there was 0.001 per cent negligence on the part of anyone in the conduct of the NEET-UG 2024 examination it should be dealt with thoroughly," said the apex court while hearing two separate petitions voicing grievances, including on grace marks given to students in the examination held on May 5. Observing that students have to labour hard while preparing for these examinations, a vacation bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice SVN Bhatti said that the litigation pertaining to the NEET (Undergraduate)-2024 examination ought not be treated as adversarial. The top court's remark came in the presence of the advocates

appearing for the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA). The NTA conducts the all India pre-medical entrance test. "We all know the labour which the children undergo, especially in preparing for these exams," the bench said, adding, "Imagine a person who has played fraud on the system becomes a doctor — he is more deleterious to society." "Representing an agency which is responsible for conducting the examination, you must stand firm. If there is a mistake, yes this is a mistake and this is the action we are going to take. At least that inspires confidence in your performance," the bench told the NTA's counsel. Stressing on timely action by the authority, the top court said the pleas would come up for hearing on July 8 along with other pending petitions, including those which have sought a direction to conduct the exam afresh.

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### Sensex, Nifty climb to lifetime highs

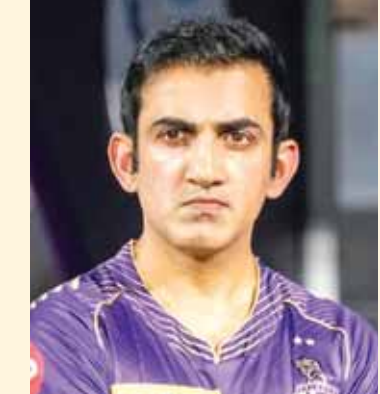
PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex closed above the 77,000 level for the first time, and broader Nifty scaled a fresh peak on Tuesday as key equity indices stayed on the record-breaking run powered by a rally in index majors ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Infosys. Besides, renewed foreign fund inflows amid a firm trend in global equities boosted investor confidence, traders said. In a range-bound session, Sensex and Nifty settled at their new closing all-time high levels amid intense demand for realty, consumer durable and utility stocks.

Rising for the third straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 308.37 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 77,301.14. During the day, it jumped 374 points or 0.48 per cent to hit the fresh lifetime peak of 77,366.77.

As many as 2,167 stocks advanced while 1,836 declined and 147 remained unchanged on the BSE. The NSE Nifty went up by 92.30 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a record closing high of 23,557.90 for the fourth straight session. It rallied 113.45 points or 0.48 per cent to hit the new all-time high of 23,579.05 during the day trade.

"The Indian market touched record highs again and is gradually expanding the gains achieved following the national election," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.



### Gambhir interviewed, set to be India coach soon

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir was on Tuesday interviewed by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) for the national team's head coach position. The interview took place over a zoom call with both Gambhir and Malhotra attending it virtually. "Yes, Gambhir appeared for the interview with the CAC. One round of discussions happened today. There is another round expected tomorrow," a BCCI source told PTI. Gambhir is believed to be the only candidate who is in contention and the announcement of his name is a mere formality which could happen in the next 48 hours.

The specifics of his interaction with CAC chairman Ashok Malhotra and his colleagues Jatin Paranjpe and Sulakshana Naik were not immediately known.

Both Paranjpe and Naik are based in Mumbai. The discussion, it is believed, was focussed on the roadmap he has in mind for the next three years, which will feature three ICC tournaments across formats. There is an Apex Council meeting on Tuesday evening and it is understood that secretary Jay Shah will apprise the members about the coach selection process before the final announcement is made. The CAC is also interviewing a few interested candidates for the North Zone selector's position. The 42-year-old Gambhir recently guided Kolkata Knight Riders to the IPL trophy as the team's mentor. Current India coach Rahul Dravid will be stepping down at the end of the team's T20 World Cup campaign in the Americas.

### BJP's brainstorming session over Speaker

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leaders and Union Ministers met at the residence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to discuss the strategy for the upcoming Parliament session, including the names of candidates for the Lok Sabha Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The Session of the Rajya Sabha will commence on June 27 and the Parliament Session will conclude on the 3rd of next month.

During the Session, oath and affirmation of newly elected members and election of Lok Sabha Speaker will take place. President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha and discussion on her address will also be held in the Session. Sources said the meeting was convened to discuss the strategy for the Parliament Session in the wake of aggressive posturing by the opposition led INDIA Bloc.

Among those who attended the meeting were Manohar Lal Khattar, Bhupender Yadav, Virendra Kumar, Piyush Goyal, Annapurna Devi, S Jaishankar, JD(U)'s Lalan Singh, and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) leader Chirag



Paswan. The election for the Lok Sabha Speaker's post will be held on June 26, two days after the beginning of the first Session of the Lower House. Singh has been given the responsibility to build a consensus for the election of the Speaker's post among alliance parties as well as Opposition parties. Meanwhile, the opposition INDIA Bloc is likely to field a candidate for the Speaker's post if the Deputy Speaker's post, as is the norm, is not given to them. It is learnt that BJP wants to name key leaders from Andhra Pradesh and Odisha — D Purandeshwari and Bhatruhari Mahtab — two States the party-led NDA swept in this round of elections — as a 'thank you' to the State units.

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### Farmers will turn India into world's third largest economy: Modi

RAMESH K SINGH ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that trust and support of the people were the Government's true assets and that farmers would play a crucial role in making India the world's third largest economy. The PM was addressing thousands of farmers from his parliamentary constituency (Varanasi) during his first visit since being sworn-in for a third term, at the Kisan Samman Sannam in Mehndiganj near Raja Talab on Tuesday evening.

Expressing his gratitude to the voters of Varanasi, Modi noted that they had elected him not only as their MP but also as the Prime Minister for the third consecutive term, a feat achieved after six decades. "I'll leave no stone unturned to meet the expectations of the people and work tirelessly to make India a developed nation," Modi said.

The PM attributed the success in winning a third term for his Government to the achievements of the past decade, which focused on the comprehensive growth of farmers, youth, women, and the poor. He highlighted the massive participation of about 64 crore voters in the world's largest democratic election, which he compared to being 1.5 times larger than the combined population of the G7 countries and 2.5 times larger than that of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with CM Yogi Adityanath attends the Kisan Samman Sannam, in Varanasi, on Tuesday

### PM Modi to lead yoga day celebrations from Srinagar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The tenth edition of the International Day of Yoga (IDY) will be celebrated in Srinagar on June 21, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the event at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC). It will be his first visit there after assuming charge for the third

term. Themed, 'Yoga for Self and Society' highlighting yoga's dual role in fostering individual and societal wellbeing will witness several events including the 'Yoga for Space'. With support of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a unique initiative called 'Yoga for Space' is being organised.

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the European Union. He also emphasised that around 30 crore women participated in the election, surpassing the entire population of the United States. During the event, the PM released the 17th installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), amounting to over ₹20,000 crore. Modi pointed out that the first file he signed after being sworn in for the third time authorised the release of this installment, demonstrating the government's commitment to farmer welfare.

He noted that around 9.26 crore farmers received the 17th installment through Direct Benefit Transfer. To date, more than 11 crore eligible farmer families have received benefits totalling over ₹ 3.04 lakh crore under PM-KISAN. The PM also awarded certificates to over 30,000 women from self-help groups (SHGs) as Krishi Sakhis, presenting the certificates on stage to five 'Krishi Sakhis' from different States.

He pointed out that this certification course aligns with the objectives of the 'Lakshmi Didi' programme. Later, Modi participated in the famous Ganga Aarti at Dashaswamedh Ghat and performed Ganga Pujan amidst chanting of Vedic mantras, reaffirming his bond with Varanasi as Maa Ganga's adopted son. He then visited the Kashi Vishwanath Temple to offer prayers.

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### Battling the heat with tribal ammunition

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

While most of us in the plains are having a tough time struggling to cope with blistering heat, the Kutia-Kondh tribes of Lanjigarh in Odisha's Kalahandi district have developed intricate strategies to endure the impact of heatwaves. These age-old and time-tested traditional methods range from application of castor oil for cooling to donning breathable attire and consuming locally cultivated foods such as millets and fermented rice, essential for maintaining hydration and warding off heat-related ailments. Odisha is currently experiencing scorching heat since May with some towns recording temperatures as high as 47

degrees Celsius. Kalahandi district is quite famous for its extremely hot weather during summer when the maximum temperature tops 45 degrees Celsius. This prompted a team of researchers from the Maa Manikeshwari University of Odisha to explore the effects of heatwaves and the coping mechanisms adopted by this particular tribe of Lanjigarh block's Batelima Panchayat. The researchers found that the Kondh tribals were drawing on traditional knowledge and practices such as constructing homes using eco-friendly materials like mud and palm leaves that helped effectively moderate indoor temperatures. These adaptive measures highlight their profound



connection to their surroundings and underscore their enduring resilience in navigating challenging climatic conditions over centuries, says research paper authors T Jyoti Rao, a research scholar, and Dr Madhulika Sahoo, an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology of the Maa Manikeshwari University in the State. They spend most of their time in forests for picking Kendu leaves, Siali leaves, Sal seeds, Mahua flowers, tamarind, etc. During interviews with the authors, the participants said that they found it difficult to deal with the searing heat in summer as their homes which were made of mud, baked clay tiles or paddy straws, which were eco-friendly and relatively

cooler during summer were replaced by concrete houses provided under government schemes. "Participants noted an increase in incidents of sunstroke, dehydration, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion during heatwaves. In order to protect themselves from heat stress, the tribal people adopt various coping mechanisms," said T Jyoti Rao. The researchers noted that the community used clay and cow dung in plastering the walls and floors for cooling purposes and built heat-resistant houses by using coconut, palm leaves, paddy straws and other natural fibres as reinforcements in mud houses which have low-weight and are breathable.

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# Speculation rife as Didi meets BJP MP at Cooch Behar

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a curious development Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met BJP Rajya Sabha member and president of Greater Cooch Behar People's Association Anant Roy at his residence in Cooch Behar. The two leaders met for about 35 minutes, sources said. The significant development comes close on the heels of the BJP getting a resounding defeat at the hands of the Trinamool Congress losing the Cooch Behar seat in North Bengal considered to be a strong bastion of the saffron outfit Banerjee who left for Siliguri on Monday evening to meet the passengers injured in the Kanchenjanga Express accident on Tuesday met Nagendra Roy also known as Anant Maharaj causing much flutter in the State BJP leadership.

The two leaders met hours after a team of central BJP leaders led by former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb and Ravishankar Prasad visited the district to inquire into the incidents of post electoral violence that has left hundreds of saffron workers injured or homeless. "The Chief Minister is a big dignitary and so Anant Maharaj welcomed him at his Chakchaka Palace with a traditional scarf and guwa paan (betel leaf)," local GCPA sources said not ruling out the possibilities of political talks taking place between the two leaders. "When two politicians meet they do not discuss IPL or films ... they have to discuss social and political issues," said a senior GCPA leader. The BJP State leadership however remained tightlipped even as the development came amid reports of mass exodus from the saffron outfit leading to the



TMC capturing about half-a-dozen panchayats in the past one week or so. Earlier the TMC The TMC wrested the Cooch Behar Lok Sabha seat from the former Union Minister Nisith

Pramanik provoking a political controversy as State BJP leader and MLA Shankar Ghosh showed how changing demographic pattern was influencing election results in many seats. The Tuesday's development

comes weeks after Maharaj criticizing the BJP for not doing a thing for the people of North Bengal, particularly the Rajbangshi and the Cooch Behar cause. Just before the elections he said: "the BJP has

done nothing for the Rajbangshi people in the past five years. I don't know why they don't keep their commitments. Our demand has always been for a separate state ... but the Union Government committed a Union Territory. The people want a separate State and the Government must give it to us... you cannot blame the State for this." Another GCPA leader Nirmal Roy too attacked the BJP for ignoring the cause of the people of North Bengal. "The BJP has failed to fulfill its promise of making North Bengal a separate Union Territory and Cooch Behar a state ... therefore there is no reason that our people will go to join their meeting. Therefore, I believe there is no reason for the people of Cooch Behar to attend their rallies," he said before a pre-election BJP rally. Meanwhile, in a curious devel-

opment the BJP workers protested against the visiting central inquiring into the post-poll violence in the state, alleging how the State leaders were not caring for their safety. "No State leaders are coming to see how we are and what we are facing and how we are being tortured and attacked by the TMC goons," the BJP men said. The central BJP team consists of Biplab Deb, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Rajya Sabha MPs Brij Lal and Kavita Patidar. Deb told reporters that post-poll violence had become a trend set by TMC after election results. In no other state such attacks took place he said adding, "the TMC should control this situation for peace to return." Deb also appealed to State Governor CV Ananda Bose to take action. The team would submit a report to the national BJP president JP Nadda.

## Railways to hold probe into WB train accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety would hold an inquiry into the Monday's train accident involving the Kanchenjanga Express and a goods train that left 10 people dead and more than 30 passengers injured. The Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northeast Frontier Railway, Janak Kumar Garg, will hold a statutory inquiry on June 19 from 10 am onwards a press release said adding "Members of the public having knowledge relating to the incident and any other matter connected therewith may appear and tender evidence at the inquiry on the dates mentioned or write to the chief commissioner of railway safety."

## Wayanad might get Priyanka as Rahul moves over to Raebareli

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Fifty-two-year-old Priyanka Gandhi Vadhra, younger daughter of Sonia Gandhi and sibling of Rahul Gandhi is being catapulted into parliamentary politics from Wayanad in Kerala. Since Rahul Gandhi who won from Wayanad in the recently held Lok Sabha election is vacating the constituency and retaining Rae Bareilly, a by election is due in Wayanad. The announcement made by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday evening was received with glee and enthusiasm by the electorate in Wayanad. "We wanted Priyanka Gandhi to contest from Wayanad in the eventuality of Rahul Gandhi leaving the constituency to retain Rae Bareilly. We had been assured by the Congress High Command that electorate in the constituency would get an equally happy news at the right time and they have announced the name of Priyanka Gandhi. We welcome Priyanka Gandhi with open hands and assure her that we will leave no stones unturned in our mission to make her win the constituency with mammoth majority," said Sadiq Ali Thangal, the supreme head of the Muslim League. It is an open secret that the



Congress High Command takes all decisions in consultation with the Muslim League. "We will see to it that Priyanka Gandhi overtakes the record majority of 4.32 lakh registered by Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 Lok Sabha poll," said Thangal. In the recent election Rahul Gandhi romped home with a majority of 3.64 lakh votes. All top leaders of the Congress in Kerala expressed their happiness over the decision of the party High Command to field Priyanka Gandhi from Kerala. K Muraleedharan, former MP who was relegated to third position by BJP's Suresh Gopi at Thrissur declared that he would be in the forefront of the campaign for Priyanka Gandhi. "When a member of the Nehru-Gandhi clan is contesting the election from Kerala, how can Congress workers sit idle?" asked Muraleedharan who had declined all party posts and offer of assembly

seats made by the KPCC leadership. People cutting across party lines said that they were happy that Priyanka Gandhi has chosen Wayanad as her battleground. "We will support even Raihan and Miraya (children of Priyanka and Robert Vadra) if they decide to contest elections from Kerana because of the strong bondage we have with the Gandhi family," said Pradeep, a staunch Congress worker. The election Commission of India is yet to come out with the schedule of the by poll. Annie Raja, the CPI leader who fought against Rahul Gandhi and fell by the wayside said it was not proper for Rahul Gandhi to contest from Wayanad if his heart was with Rae Bareilly. "The Left Democratic Front is fully capable of selecting an ideal candidate to contest against Priyanka Gandhi," said Annie Raja, though she remained non-committal about the possibilities of her taking another shot at Wayanad. K Surendran, president, Kerala BJP while blasting Rahul Gandhi for burdening the electorate with a bypoll said that the Congress had cheated the Wayanad electorate. Surendran was decimated by Rahul Gandhi in the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

## CDS releases Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan released the Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations during the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) meeting held here on Tuesday. The Joint Doctrine is a key-stone publication that will guide Commanders in conducting Cyberspace Operations in today's complex military operating environment. Development of Joint Doctrines is an important aspect of jointness and Integration, a step which is being actively pursued by the Indian Armed Forces. The Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations is a significant step to give impetus to the ongoing process. In addition to the traditional domains of warfare including Land, Sea, and Air, Cyberspace has emerged as a

crucial and challenging domain in modern warfare. Unlike territorial limits in the domains of land, sea, and air, cyberspace is a global common and hence has shared sovereignty. Hostile actions in cyberspace can impact the Nation's economy, cohesion, political decision making, and the Nation's ability to defend itself. Operations in cyberspace need to be dovetailed into the National Security fabric, to evolve the 'Ends, Ways and Means' to create advantage and influence events in all other operational environments and across all instruments of power. This doctrine lays emphasis on understanding military aspects of cyberspace operations and provides conceptual guidance to commanders, staff and practitioners in the planning, and conduct of operations in cyberspace, as also to raise awareness in our warfighters at all levels.

## GNDU establishes Student Counselling Cell to facilitate admission

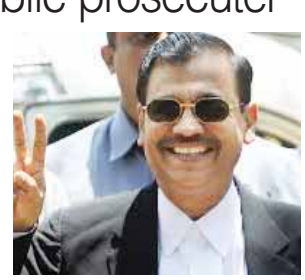
PNS ■ AMRITSAR

The Guru Nanak Dev University has established a Student Counselling Cell within the university premises. This cell aims to provide assistance and support to candidates seeking admission into various courses being run by the University, ensuring a smooth admission process. According to Prof Palwinder Singh, Dean, Academic Affairs, the registration process for admissions to various courses for the academic session 2024-25 is underway and counseling process will commence shortly. He said that this initiative has taken under guidance of the Vice Chancellor Prof Jaspal Singh Sandhu. The Student Counselling Cell will allow candidates to seek guidance and address queries. Prof Sandeep Sharma, Professor & Head, Computer Engineering & Technology is appointed Chairman and Dr Satnam Singh Deol from Political Science and Dr Vipin Kumar from Chemistry are Members. To avail assistance or seek clarification on admissions, students can contact on 8283859800, 84277-00177, 8146300146.

## Congress opposes Advocate Nikam's re-appointment as Maharashtra public prosecutor

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government's move to re-appoint Advocate Ujwal Nikam as Public Prosecutor within weeks after he unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls as a BJP candidate has sparked a controversy, with the Opposition Congress accusing the Eknath Shinde dispensation of setting a "bad precedent" by nominating Nikam in such an important position. Taking a serious exception to Nikam's re-appointment as the public prosecutor in cases he was handling prior to his nomination by the BJP as its candidate from Mumbai North-Central constituency, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole said: "Why the state government has chosen to appoint a BJP worker in the judicial process? The BJP-led government has set a wrong precedent by appointing a political party worker to the important post of public prosecutor." Addressing a news conference at the state Congress headquarters "Tilak Bhavan" at Dadar in north-central Mumbai, Patole demanded that the Shinde government reconsider its decision to re-appoint Nikam as the Public



Prosecutor. In the recent Lok Sabha poll from Mumbai North-Central constituency, Varsha Gaiwad of the Opposition Congress trounced Adv Nikam of the ruling BJP by a margin of 16,514 votes. While Varsha secured 4,45,545 votes, Nikam secured 4,29,031 votes. Office sources said that after he was nominated as the BJP candidate from Mumbai north-central constituency, Nikam had resigned from as many as 29 cases, including eight in Mumbai, in which he had been appointed as special prosecutor in May and had submitted his resignation to the law and judiciary department. Now, following his re-appointment as the Public Prosecutor, he would represent the Maharashtra government in all the 29 cases for which he was appearing before the various before his nomination as the BJP's Lok Sabha poll candidate.

## PM to lead yoga...

From Page 1

On that day all ISRO scientists/officers will perform Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) on IDY. The Gaganyaan project team will also be participating in IDY 2024. AYUSH Minister Prataprao Jadhav said at a press conference here on Tuesday. Jadhav pointed out that the theme for this yoga day highlights the promotion of a connection between the inner self and the outer world, extending beyond personal well-being to include the broader community. "Yoga nurtures physical, mental, and spiritual growth while promoting societal harmony. The enthusiastic participation of millions in recent years reflects the profound impact of yoga on communities," the Minister said. He also announced that the Prime Minister has written to each gram pradhan, encouraging grassroots participation and the spread of yoga in rural areas. On the occasion, Jadhav launched a 'Common Yoga Protocol Book in Braille' script to support visually impaired people to learn and practice yoga with convenience. The Minister also launched Professor Ayushman's comic on yoga. This book will help children to learn and

practice yoga with interest and entertainment. Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha said IDY is not only a celebration but also a concerted effort to bring about a behavioural change so that people adopt yoga in their lives so that they can get the benefits of yoga. He further highlighted the 'Whole of Government' approach to the IDY celebrations, emphasising the coordinated efforts across various Government departments and the active participation of State Governments to ensure an inclusive and widespread observance each year. The Ayush Ministry has already launched a video contest through MyGov Portal and MyBharat portal to raise awareness about yoga and to inspire people to prepare for and become active participants in the observation of IDY 2024. Families have to record up to one-minute harmonious yoga demonstration short videos as a part of the contest. The IDY celebration is done by a harmonious 45 minutes yoga demonstration called Common Yoga Protocol (CYP). Videos of CYP demonstrations are available on YouTube in 22 Indian languages, six UN languages and nine other foreign languages.

## BJP brainstorming...

From Page 1

BJP MP Om Birla presently holds the post of Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha has always been elected without any contest since Independence. So, if the Opposition INDIA bloc forces an election for the Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha on June 26, it would be the first such instance in the history of Independent India as the person to assume the crucial chair in the Lower House of the Parliament has always been chosen by a consensus between the ruling and opposition parties or alliances. Meanwhile, a separate meeting of the Maharashtra BJP core group was also held at the party headquarters to discuss the party's strategy for the assembly polls, due to be held in the state later this year, sources said.

## Lapses in NEET exam...

From Page 1

It said the NTA and the Centre would file their responses on these fresh petitions within two weeks. When one of the advocates appearing for some petitioners raised the issue pertaining to a question asked in the exam, the bench said, "They (NTA and Centre) will respond to it." "Let us understand the purpose of your submissions. In these matters, we are prepared to sit up into evening," it observed. While hearing separate petitions raising grievances over the NEET-UG 2024, the apex court had last week sought responses from the Centre and the NTA on a plea for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into allegations of question paper leak and other irregularities in the conduct of the exam. The Centre and the NTA had on June 13 told the top court that they had cancelled the grace marks given to 1,563 candidates who took the examination for admission to MBBS and other such courses. They will have the option to either take a retest or forgo the compensatory marks awarded to them for the loss of time, the Centre had said.

The examination was held on May 5 across 4,750 centres and around 24 lakh candidates took it. The results were expected to be declared on June 14 but were announced on June 4, apparently because the evaluation of the answer sheets got completed earlier. There have been allegations of question paper leaks in states like Bihar and other irregularities in the prestigious exam. The allegations have led to protests in several cities and filing of petitions in several high courts as also the Supreme Court. Scores of students protested in Delhi on June 10 seeking a probe into alleged irregularities. As many as 67 students scored a perfect 720, unprecedented in the NTA's history, six of them from a single centre in Haryana's Faridabad figuring in the list. This has raised suspicions of irregularities. It has been alleged that grace marks contributed to 67 students shoring the top rank. The NEET-UG examination is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country.

## Sena (UBT) reminds Centre about delay in renaming of Aurangabad, Navi Mumbai Airports

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Opposition Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) on Tuesday reminded the BJP-led NDA government about the considerable delay in renaming airports in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (erstwhile Aurangabad) and Navi Mumbai after Chhatrapati Shivaji's son Chhatrapati Sambhaji and late Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWP) leader D B Patil respectively. In a letter shot off to newly-appointed Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray said that with the inclusion of N Chandrababu Naidu-headed TDP into the NDA, his party was "looking at inclusive voices in governance and believe that democracy will be protected from within the NDA government too".

"Sir, I write to you, seeking your intervention on an issue that is truly simple, yet due to the malice of the BJP towards Maharashtra, has been pending for the past 4 years. Two airports were renamed by the MVA government, during its term, and the proposals were sent to the Union government thereafter," Aditya said. "The airport in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (then Aurangabad) was named 'Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Airport' and the new airport coming up in Navi Mumbai was named as the 'D.B. Patil International Airport,' Aditya wrote in his letter. "Repeated requests were made to implement the same, but the earlier BJP government, that has been anti-Maharashtra, did not pay heed to the requests made by the MVA government and the citizens of Maharashtra," the Sena (UBT) leader stated.

## Battling the heat...

From Page 1

Applying castor oil to hair and feet for cooling purposes, using thin cotton clothes, covering the whole body while exposed to the sun and using wet towels around the head and face while at work were the remedies followed by the tribal people. "Millets are among the major crops cultivated by these tribes. It is a staple food for them and integral to their culture. People cultivate (ragi, makka, kusla, rice, kandul, kating, gurji, jawri) while ragijau or mandapeja (dorcopeh) has been incorporated as a regular diet as it has a naturally cooling effect which lowers excess heat, and acidity and provides stability and energy," says the study. Consuming kushlabhat (a local grain) and pakhal (fermented water rice) during summer helps them combat extreme heat and prevent dehydration. They also frequently eat local greens like gandhri and borda saag (bauhinia

variegata) as leafy vegetables. Additionally, they drink taadi kallu (palm nectar) to cool themselves, note the authors. Known for his various green initiatives, Dr Heera Lal, Special Secretary, Irrigation Department of Uttar Pradesh who is not related to the study, appreciated the holistic approach adopted by the tribal community "Overall, these traditional practices whether it is about building materials, dietary habits, personal hygiene, and community support systems reflect the Kutia-Kondh's profound understanding of their environment and their ability to adapt to harsh climatic conditions." Dr Heera Lal emphasised the urgent need to revert to our traditional, sustainable practices before the escalating effects of climate change threaten our very existence. "Adopting the wisdom of our ancestors in harmonising with nature is crucial to preserving our planet for future generations," he said.

## Farmers will turn India into...

From Page 1

At the outset, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, and UP Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi welcomed the PM, describing him as the world's most popular leader. The function was attended by Governor Anandiben Patel, BJP State President Bhopendra Chaudhary, Deputy CMs Keshav Prasad Maurya & Brijesh Pathak, UP ministers Jaiveer Singh, Anil Rajbhar, Ravindra Jaiswal, Dr Dayashankar Mishra Dayalu, MLAs, MLCs, and other public representatives.

## Heatwave sings North...

From Page 1

Mussorie also sizzled at 43 degrees Celsius. Even hill towns like Pauri and Nainital are experiencing a heatwave with little to no rainfall in three months. Hill state of Himachal Pradesh is baking at 44 degrees Celsius - 6.7 degrees above average while in Jammu and Kashmir, Katra recorded a maximum temperature of 40.8 degrees Celsius. The mercury touched 44.3 degrees in Jammu. The weatherman said that respite from the sweeping heatwave was expected this

week but a shift in winds through the Arabian Sea has delayed the cooling down of the plains. "Another reason is that the monsoon has been stagnant over West Bengal since June 1. As long as the monsoon does not cover these areas, North India will remain under a continuous heatwave," former IMD Director General, KJ Ramesh told a news channel. He said that respite from the sweeping heatwave was expected this week but a shift in winds through the Arabian Sea has delayed the cooling down of the plains.

"After June 27, most areas of Uttar Pradesh will get relief followed by western UP, Delhi, Haryana and Punjab," he said. Meanwhile, amid heatwave pushing electricity demand, especially in the northern region, the Union Power Ministry on Tuesday said he had asked all utilities "to maintain a high state of alert and minimise forced outages of equipment." "The country's northern region has been experiencing high electricity demand due to heatwave since May 17, 2024, but despite these challenging conditions, the

highest-ever peak demand of 89 GW in the northern region was successfully met on June 17, 2024. It was made possible by importing 25-30 per cent of the region's power requirement from neighbouring regions, it said. In response to the increased electricity demand and to ensure adequate power availability across the country, the Ministry of Power has implemented a series of measures to meet the highest ever peak demand of 250 GW during the ongoing summer season.

# Persistent heatwave conditions drive peak power demand to all time high

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Persistent heatwave drove the national Capital's peak power demand on Tuesday afternoon to 8,647 MW, the highest ever for the city. The previous highest peak power demand of Delhi was 8,302 MW on May 29 this year. Delhi's peak power demand reached 8,000 MW for the first time on May 22, 2024. Notably, the peak power demand has been pushed over 8,000 MW eight times since May 22 and the national capital's peak demand is hovering over 7000 megawatt for the past 30 days.

According to the State Load Dispatch Centre data, at 3.22 PM on Tuesday, Delhi's peak power demand clocked 8,647 MW. It is the highest ever in the history of the national capital. Meanwhile, a power outage caused on Tuesday's afternoon due to a fire incident at 400 KV Mandola Grid Sub Station left the public gasping for breath in the scorching afternoon sun. The cooling load due to the increased use of air conditioners and coolers amid the relentless heat wave has led to a record rise in power



demand in the national capital. Since May 22, Delhi's peak power demand has crossed 8,000 MW eight times so far, discom officials said. "The power demand can be attributed to weather conditions that led residents to use more air conditioning and cooling appliances, pushing electricity consumption. It is estimated that air conditioning can contribute to 30-50 per cent of domestic and commercial power consumption," said a discom official. The peak power demand last

year in 2023 was 7,438 MW on August 22 which reveals the effect of hot summers on Delhiites this year. Heatwaves have become a recurring nightmare for Delhi residents. With temperatures consistently exceeding 45 degrees Celsius, air conditioners are running non-stop, leading to a surge in electricity consumption. Homes, offices, and commercial establishments are all contributing to the record-breaking demand. "BRPL and BYPL successful-

ly met the peak power demand in their respective areas. Peak power demand in BRPL area of South and West Delhi, which had clocked 3250 MW and 3389 MW during the summers of 2023 and 2022 respectively, is expected to reach around 3680 MW during the summers of 2024. On the other hand, in BYPL area of East and Central Delhi, the peak power demand, which had reached 1670 MW and 1752 MW during the summers of 2023 and

2022 respectively, is expected to touch around 1860 MW this year," BSES spokesperson said.

BSES spokesperson said that BSES is currently providing electricity supply to 50 lakh consumers and 2 crore residents in South, West, East and Central Delhi. On the peak demand, Spokesperson of Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL), said Tata power DDL has successfully met highest peak power demand of 2446 MW in its area. "The company has made adequate arrangements via long term and short term measures and will ensure seamless electricity supply amid severe heatwave in Delhi. The Tata Power DDL team is working round the clock to ensure uninterrupted power supply in its area of operation of North and Northwest Delhi," Tata Power DDL said. Usually, Delhi's peak power demand occurs in late June or early July, except for last year when it peaked in August. However, this year the trend changed due to weather conditions that increased the use of air conditioners and coolers, boosting electricity consumption.

## Fire incident at Mandola grid sub station causes power outage

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the national Capital experiencing severe heatwave, a power outage on Tuesday's afternoon in Delhi due to a fire incident at 400 KV Mandola Grid Sub Station affected several areas and left the public gasping for breath in the blistering heat.

According to Tata Power, which is supplying electricity to a seven million people in North Delhi, this led to disruption of power in areas like Narela, Bhalaswa, Burari, Badli, Dheerpur, Shakti Nagar, Swiss apartment, Civil Lines, Model Town, Kashmiri Gate, Shahjada Bagh, Delhi University, GTB Nagar area, Mukherjee Nagar and Jahangirpuri. This resulted in load shedding of 440 MW and affecting about four lakh Delhiites, starting at 2:11 pm. The power outage reportedly lasted for about an hour in the noon when temperature hov-



ered around 45 degrees celsius in the city. "Almost immediately, alternate supply was arranged from other grids and supply restoration started by 14.58 pm thereby having minimum impact on our consumers," said a Tata Power-DDL official. "On top priority, DTL grid sub-stations restored supply in a phased manner in the affected areas first at the 220 KV grid stations at Narela, Kashmiri Gate, Gopalpur and Subji Mandi. All of the

restoration work was completed within an hour. Tata Power-DDL restored some of its areas from other Grids leveraging their network, with support of DTL," they further stated. Delhi's peak power demand usually occurs in late June or early July, except for last year when it peaked in August. However, this year the trend changed due to weather conditions that increased the use of air conditioners and coolers, boosting electricity consumption.

## LG thanks Muslims for peaceful celebration of Eid-ul-Adha

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday thanked the people of the city, especially the Muslim community for befittingly celebrating Eid-ul-Adha on Monday and recorded his appreciation for Delhi Police and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) apart from other agencies for efficiently facilitating the same. Like in the case of Eid-ul-Fitr, when upon the request of LG, Namaaz was exclusively offered within mosques and Idgah premises, this time as well devotees did not offer the Eid-ul-Adha Namaaz on roads and stuck to mosques and Idgahs. In a stark departure from the past, there was no open slaughtering of sacrificial animals, and the MCD in close coordination



with the devotees and Police, ensured that the carcass of sacrificed animals were immediately picked up and disposed at identified dumping sites. It may be recalled that last year various locations in Delhi, especially those in North-East and North Shahdara Zone had witnessed gruesome sights of blood-drenched bodies and entrails of sacrificed animals, lined up in open on streets and

even main arterial roads. Similarly, Namaaz being offered on roads was a recurrent cause of traffic disruptions, tension and flare ups. The LG said this had been possible because of proactive cooperation by the Muslim community and its religious heads and underlined that in a diverse city like Delhi, everything could be achieved by dialogue and discussion.

## DDA urged for adoption of innovative measures for plantation of trees

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena directed the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) on Tuesday to adopt innovative means including identifying land where people could plant trees under the 'ek ped ma k naam' drive under the 'Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan'. He directed the agencies to distribute sapling to people free of cost and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) should be brought on board to ensure plantation and further monitoring of the growth. Saxena said that plantation should be done along railway tracks and along the boundary of school premises. "Agencies and departments



should identify land where people could come and plant trees under the 'ek ped ma k naam' drive launched by the Prime Minister on 5th June on the occasion of World Environment Day," he stated, adding that while DDA and NDMC were directed to identify such sites on their parks, forests and the Yamuna floodplain, the Education Department was advised to do the same in its schools and col-

lege premises.

He advised on planting of fruiting trees like bananas that start fruiting in a short time and guavas, jamun, mangoes and ber in the ridge and other forested areas, to ensure that animals also enjoy it. "This will, apart from minimising man-animal conflict, also ensure controlling the monkey menace in the city apart from addressing the issue of traffic snarls due to feeding of such animals by people on roads," he stated.

Saxena, who recently chaired an inter-departmental meeting to review the plantation exercise in Delhi, directed DDA and NDMC to adopt innovative methods while advising the Environment and Forests, Irrigation and Flood Control Department and Public Works Department to follow the same.

## AAP attacks Centre on scam in NEET exam

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Modi Government against the scam in the NEET exam. In the demonstration organised at Jantar Mantar, the party's MPs, MLAs and councillors burnt copies of the NEET paper and raised slogans against the central government and demanded the cancellation of the exam. AAP leaders burnt copies of the NEET paper and raised slogans against the central government, demanding the cancellation of the exam. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh alleged that this NEET exam is the "corruption of the Modi government." "The Ministry of Education and the NTA under it, along

with its leaders in BJP-ruled states, have messed up with the future of lakhs of children of the country. Therefore, our demand is that this NEET exam should be cancelled, and the exam should be held again," he said. Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj demanded that a Supreme Court monitored probe be initiated into the matter. "There are 24 lakh students, who appeared in the NEET exam. They prepared for 16 to 18 hours for the exam. Never before have people heard that someone paid a bribe to ace the exam," he said. Bharadwaj cited the example of Bihar where some aspirants received the exam's question paper and answers in a 'safe house' near Patna a day before it was conducted on May 5.

## 50 self-service baggage drop facilities launched at IGIA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) on Tuesday launched 50 self-service baggage-drop facilities at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, reducing wait time for passengers by 15 to 20 minutes. With this, the airport became the first airport in India and the second in the world after Canada's Toronto to implement this technology, the airport firm. The airport has installed 50 self-service bag drop units that are now operational across Terminal 1 and Terminal 3, ensuring a "seamless and efficient check-in experience," said DIAL, which is a subsidiary of GMR Airports Infrastructure Limited. The new one-step quick baggage drop solution reduces the check-in process to just 30 seconds from one minute,



DIAL said. As part of the new mechanism, the airport has installed around 50 Self-Service Bag Drop (SSBD) units across Terminal 1 and Terminal 3 for passengers. These units are currently available with three airlines --

Air India, IndiGo and Air India Express, it said. The conventional mechanism takes around one minute, under which travellers are able to bypass check-in desks, print boarding passes and collect baggage tags at common use

self-service (CUSS) kiosks. Upon reaching the baggage drop units, the operator said, passengers have to scan their boarding passes or face biometric cameras and proceed to drop their bags on the conveyor belt.

To make this process more efficient, DIAL has launched a quick drop solution facility, a one-step process that eliminates the need for boarding pass or biometric validation since these details are already available on the baggage tag, the airport operator said.

This reduces the processing time from about a minute to 30 seconds, it added. "We have introduced the Self-Service Bag Drop Quick Drop Solution at Delhi Airport, setting a new standard for passenger convenience and efficiency in India. This initiative is aimed at leveraging advanced technology to

enhance the travel experience. "The Quick Drop Solution not only speeds up the baggage drop process but also ensures a smoother journey for our passengers," said Videh Kumar Jaipuriar, CEO of DIAL. Under the new mechanism, passengers can collect and attach their luggage tags at CUSS kiosks upon arrival at the airport. After passengers place their bags onto the SBD conveyor belt, the system opens the respective airline's application on the SBD machine with a single click, the operator explained.

When the passengers agree to the dangerous goods self-declaration form with a single click, the SBD system internally checks all relevant criteria and business rules defined by the airlines, it said, adding once verification is complete, the bag is automatically processed.

## Fire breaks out at garment factory, no casualties

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A fire broke out at a garments factory in east Delhi's Gandhi Nagar area on Tuesday morning, officials said, adding that no casualty was reported. The fire department was informed at 9:55 am and six fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze in the four-storey factory, an official of the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said.

He said the fire was doused in two hours. Due to hanging wires and narrow lanes, the fire tenders faced a daunting task in reaching the spot.

A video surfaced on social media in which workers were seen snapping off the entangled wires in the lanes to make way for the fire tenders. "As soon as I spotted the fire, I immediately informed the authorities. Fire tenders were



delayed due to the narrow lanes here. I would request the government to send smaller fire tenders which could easily enter such lanes," local resident Manoj Jain told PTI Videos. Assistant Divisional Officer (DFS) Yashwant Singh Meena said the fire erupted on the first floor of the four-storey building. "The blaze soon spread to

the other floors. We managed to control it by 11:54 am. A cooling operation was conducted later," he added. Factory workers told the officials that the fire broke out due to the short circuit in the metre board on first floor but the actual reason will be ascertained only after the police probe, Meena said.

## City grapples with intense heat

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital continued to grapple with intense heatwave conditions on Tuesday as temperatures soared above 46 degrees Celsius. A day after Delhi felt like sizzling at 50 degrees, the heat index or the feels like temperature in the city was recorded at 48.8 degrees Celsius as the maximum temperature, 5.2 degrees above the normal. The minimum temperature in Delhi settled at 33.8 degrees Celsius, six notches above the season's average. While Aya nagar recorded a maximum temperature of 45 degrees Celsius, Lodi road recorded 44.1 degrees, Palam 44.4 degrees, Ridge 44.7 degrees, Jafarpur 45.5 degrees, Najafgarh 42.8 degrees, Pragati Maidan 43.1 degrees, Pusa 44.3 degrees, Rajghat 43.1 degrees, and Salwan public school 43.6 degrees.



degrees Celsius as the maximum temperature, 5.2 degrees above the normal. The minimum temperature in Delhi settled at 33.8 degrees Celsius, six notches above the season's average. While Aya nagar recorded a maximum temperature of 45 degrees Celsius, Lodi road recorded 44.1 degrees, Palam 44.4 degrees, Ridge 44.7 degrees, Jafarpur 45.5 degrees, Najafgarh 42.8 degrees, Pragati Maidan 43.1 degrees, Pusa 44.3 degrees, Rajghat 43.1 degrees, and Salwan public school 43.6 degrees.

## Ashwini Kumar appointed as MCD Commissioner

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs has appointed senior IAS officer Ashwini Kumar as the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Commissioner. Kumar will succeed IAS officer Gyanesh Bharti, who was transferred to the ministry of women and child development as the additional secretary earlier in March this year.

Kumar is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre of 1992. "I am directed to say that with approval from the competent authority, it is decided to appoint Ashwini Kumar, IAS (AGMUT) 1992 as Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, with immediate effect," read an order from the Home Ministry to the Raj Niwas.

## Hospitals witness influx of patients with heat-related problems

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hospitals in Delhi-NCR are seeing an influx of patients with complaints of heat stroke and heat exhaustion as the mercury continues to soar in the national capital, with doctors advising the elderly and immunocompromised patients to avoid stepping outdoors.

Last month, Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj had announced that the Delhi government-run hospitals will reserve two beds each for heat-stroke patients while five beds will be reserved at the LNJP Hospital.

Dr Ritu Saxena, deputy medical superintendent, LNJP Hospital, said, "We are getting eight to 10 patients every day. There are serious patients also who require ICU admission. Yesterday, we got two patients who were hospitalised and prior to that we had four ICU admissions.



"The patients who are developing severe illness are those who are elderly or have comorbidities like hypertension, diabetes and Coronary Artery Disease (CAD). We are also getting few patients from other hospitals like Babu Jagjivan Ram Hospital and Satyawadi Raja Harish Chandra Hospital," she said. The senior doctor said the rise has been in proportion with the intensifying of heatwave conditions. The CK Birla Hospital in Gurugram has been receiving one to two patients in OPD every day with heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat rash, even though they have not treated any heat stroke patients.

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# US delegation reaches Himachal to visit Dalai Lama

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

A US bipartisan delegation, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, reached Kangra, Himachal Pradesh on Tuesday to meet Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama in Dharamshala. China has all along protested against such interactions claiming Xijiang (Tibet) affairs are an internal matter of China. Republican chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Michael McCaul, is leading the bipartisan congressional delegation to India.

The delegation includes Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY), House Rules Committee Ranking Member Jim McGovern (D-MA), House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific Ranking Member Ami Bera (D-CA), and Reps. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA), and Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), the official press release of the House Foreign Affairs Committee read. "While there, the delegation will meet with His Holiness, the



14th Dalai Lama, Indian government officials, and representatives of US businesses in the country," it added. "India is the world's largest democracy and an important strategic partner of the United States," stated Chairman McCaul. "I look forward to meeting with government officials and the American business community to learn how we can continue to strengthen our relationship with India. I am also honoured to have the opportunity to meet with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama," the release quoted McCaul as saying.

McCaul said Tibetans are "democracy-loving people" who wish to practice their religion freely. "This visit should highlight the bipartisan support in the US Congress for Tibet to have a say in their own future," he added. "I look forward to joining Chairman McCaul and Speaker Emerita Pelosi to demonstrate the strong bipartisan support for the US-India relationship," stated Ranking Member Meeks. He said that the relationship between the US and India over the past 25 years has transformed into one of the most consequential.

"I'm also honoured to have a chance to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to hear his views on how the American People can help advance the Tibetan people's struggle for autonomy," he said. The Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama was scheduled to travel to the United States for medical treatment, his office said in a statement on June 3. According to the statement, no engagements will be scheduled from June 20 onward until further notice. "Update to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Schedule - This is to inform all concerned that no engage-

ments, including public audiences, will be scheduled from June 20 onwards until further notice. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is scheduled to travel to the United States for medical treatment on his knees," the office of Dalai Lama said in a social media post. American lawmakers have regularly been visiting Dharamshala in reflection of Washington's support of the Tibetan cause. China had reacted strongly when senior US diplomat on human rights Uzra Zeya had met the Tibetan spiritual leader last year, stating that "Xizang's (Tibet) affairs are purely internal affairs of China and no external forces have the right to interfere".

Tibet's government-in-exile is based in Dharamshala and it represents over one lakh Tibetans living in around 30 countries. The US has all along strongly supported the Tibetan cause and condemning all oppression and coercion of Tibetans by China. From 2002 to 2010, the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government held nine rounds of dialogue that did not produce any concrete outcomes. No formal talks have been held since then.

# PM-KISAN not some prasad being bestowed on farmers but their legitimate right: Cong

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the "recycling" of headlines before the release of the 17th instalment of PM-KISAN, saying it is not some "prasad" being bestowed on farmers but their legitimate right. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said as soon as the "one-third Pradhan Mantri" assumed office on 9th June, headlines screamed that the very first file he signed was to release the 17th instalment of PM-KISAN. "Today again the headlines scream that the 'one-third' Pradhan Mantri will release the 17th instalment of PM Kisan. This is how headlines keep getting recycled," Ramesh said in a post on X. "The non-biological PM is not bestowing some prasad on kisans. It is their legitimate right and entitlement," the Congress leader said. Prime Minister Modi will travel to his parliamentary constituency Varanasi on



Tuesday, his first visit after assuming office for the third consecutive term. During his visit, the prime minister will participate in the PM-Kisan Samman Sammelan and release Rs 20,000 crore as part of the income support scheme for over 9.26 crore farmers. After being sworn-in as Prime Minister for the third time, Modi signed his first file

authorising the release of the 17th instalment of PM Kisan Nidhi. In continuation of this commitment, Modi will release the installment amounting to more than Rs 20,000 crore to around 9.26 crore beneficiary farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) through Direct Benefit Transfer, according to an official statement.

OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- I, DELHI 4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI- 110 001  
**SALE PROCLAMATION**

T.R.C. No. 1413/2022

ICICI BANK LTD. VS. NITIN KUMAR ROY & ORS.

PROCLAMATION OF SALE UNDER RULE 38, 52(2) OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS DUE TO BANK AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ACT, 1993.

(CD 1) NITIN KUMAR ROY S/O BHANU PRATAP NARAIN ROY, R/O PLOT NO. 855, FLAT NO. 9, VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD- 201 001, U. P.  
(CD 2) ANUPAM ROY S/O BHANU PRATAP NARAIN ROY, R/O PLOT NO. 855, FLAT NO. 9, VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD- 201 001, U. P.  
(CD 3) M/S HRC HORIZONS, having its corporate office at : 902, NEW DELHI HOUSE, BARAKHAMBIA ROAD, NEW DELHI- 110 001

1. Whereas Transfer Recovery Certificate No. 1413/2022 in OA No. 199/2012 dated 14.08.2014 drawn by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal for the recovery of a sum of Rs. 15,05,742/- together with costs and future interest @ 12.75% P.a. simple, from the date of filing of OA i.e. 13.08.2012 till its realization along with cost from the Certificate debtors together with costs and charges as per recovery certificate.  
2. And whereas the undersigned has ordered the sale of property mentioned in the Schedule below in satisfaction of the said certificate.  
3. And whereas there will be due there under a sum of Rs. 15,05,742/- together with costs and future interest @ 12.75% P.a. simple, from the date of filing of OA i.e. 13.08.2012 till its realization along with cost, Notice is hereby given that in absence of any order of postponement, the property/properties as under shall be sold by e-auction and bidding shall take place through "On line Electronic Bidding" through the website <https://drt.auctiontiger.net> on 27.06.2024 between 12:00 P.M. and 01:00 P.M. with extensions of 5 minutes duration after 01:00 P.M., if required.  
4. The description of the property proposed to be e-auctioned is as follows:

S. No.	Description of property	Reserve Price	EMD
1.	Property bearing Flat No. F-8/3, PARK SIDE VILLAS, PLOT NO. 201, 120 FT, SHASTRI PURAM ROAD, VAYU VIHAR, AGRA.	Rs. 20,00,000.00/-	Rs. 2,00,000.00/-

5. The EMD shall be paid through Demand Draft/Pay Order in favour of Recovery Officer, DRT-I, Delhi-A/C T.R.C. No. 1413/2022 along with self-attested copy of Identity (voter-ID card/Driving license/ passport) which shall contain the address for future communication and self-attested copy of PAN Card must reach to the Office of the Recovery Officer, DRT- I, Delhi latest by 25.06.2024 before 05:00 P.M. The EMD received thereafter shall not be considered. The said deposit be adjusted in the case of successful bidders. The unsuccessful bidder shall take return of the EMD directly from the Registry, DRT-I, Delhi after receipt of such report from e-auction service provider/bank/financial institution on closure of the e-auction sale proceedings.  
6. The envelope containing EMD should be super-scribed "T.R.C.No. 1413/2022" along with the details of the sender i.e. address, e-mail ID and Mobile Number etc.  
7. Intending bidders shall hold a valid Login ID and Password to participate in the E-Auction email address and PAN Number. For details with regard to Login ID & Password, please contact M/s. e-P Procurement Technologies Ltd. (Auctiontiger) Ahmedabad, Contact No. 079-40230 812/11/10/09/08/07/06 Mobile 09002715034, E-mail: [wb@auctiontiger.net](mailto:wb@auctiontiger.net); [support@auctiontiger.net](mailto:support@auctiontiger.net).  
8. Prospective bidders are required to register themselves with the portal and obtain user ID/password well in advance, which is mandatory for bidding in above e-auction from M/s. e-Procurement Technologies Ltd. (Auctiontiger).  
9. Details of concerned bank officers/HelpLine numbers etc. are as under:-

Name & Designation	Email & Phone Nos.
MR. RAJEEV RANJAN	Email: <a href="mailto:ranjan.ra@icicibank.com">ranjan.ra@icicibank.com</a> Mobile No. 8584874809

10. What is proposed to be sold are the rights to which the certificate debtors are entitled in respect of the properties. The properties will be sold along with all liabilities, if any. The extent of the properties shown in the proclamation is as per the Recovery Certificate schedule. Recovery Officer shall not be responsible for any variation in the extent due to any reason. The properties will be sold on 'as is where is' and 'as is what is' condition.  
11. The property can be inspected by prospective bidder(s) before the date of sale for which the above named officer of the bank may be contacted.  
12. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids if found unreasonable or postpone the auction at any time without assigning any reason.  
13. EMD of unsuccessful bidders will be received by such bidders from the Registry of DRT-I, on identification/production of identity proof viz. PAN Card, Passport, Voter's ID, Valid Driving License or Photo Identity Card issued by Govt. and PSUs. Unsuccessful bidders shall ensure return of their EMD and, if not received within a reasonable time, immediately contact the Recovery Officer, DRT- I, Delhi/or the Bank.  
14. The sale will be of the property of the above named CDs as mentioned in the schedule below and the liabilities and claims attaching to the said property, so far as they have been ascertained, are those specified in the schedule against each lot.  
15. The property will be put up for the sale in the lots specified in the schedule. If the amount to be realized is satisfied by the sale of a portion of the property, the sale shall be immediately stopped with respect to the remainder. The sale also be stopped if, before any lot is knocked down, the arrears mentioned in the said certificate, interest costs (including cost of the sale) are tendered to the officer conducting the sale or proof is given to his satisfaction that the amount of such certificate, interest and costs have been paid to the undersigned.  
16. No officer or other person, having any duty to perform in connection with sale, however, either directly or indirectly bid for, acquire or attempt to acquire any interest in the property sold.  
17. The sale shall be subject to the conditions prescribed in the Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961 and the rules made there under and to the further following conditions: The particulars specified in the annexed schedule have been stated to the best of the information of the undersigned, but the undersigned shall not be answerable for any error, mis-statement or omission in this proclamation.  
18. The amount by which the biddings are to be increased shall be in multiple of Rs. 50,000 (Rs. Fifty Thousand only). In the event of any dispute arising as to the amount of bid, or as to the bidder, the lot shall at once be again put up to auction.  
19. The Successful/Highest bidder shall be declared to be the purchaser of any lot provided that further that the amount bid by him is not less than the reserve price. It shall be in the discretion of the undersigned to decline acceptance of the highest bid when the price offered appears so clearly inadequate as to make it inadvisable to do so.  
20. Successful/ highest bidder shall have to prepare DD/Pay order for 25% of the sale proceeds favouring Recovery Officer, DRT- I, Delhi, A/C T. R. C. No. 1413/2022 within 24 hours after close of e-auction and after adjusting the earnest money (EMD) and sending/depositing the same in the office of the Recovery Officer so as to reach within 3 days from the close of e-auction failing which the earnest money (EMD) shall be forfeited.  
21. The Successful/Highest Bidder shall deposit, through Demand Draft/Pay Order favouring Recovery Officer, DRT-I, Delhi A/C. T. R. C. 1413/2022, the balance 75% of the sale proceeds before the Recovery Officer, DRT-I on or before 15th day from the date of sale of the property, exclusive of such day, or if the 15th day be Sunday or other holiday, then on the first office day after the 15th day along with the poundage fee @ 2% upto Rs 1,000 and @ 1% on the excess of such gross amount over Rs 1000/- in favour of Registrar, DRT-I Delhi. (In case of deposit of balance amount of 75% through post the same should reach the Recovery Officer as above).  
22. In case of default of payment within the prescribed period, the property shall be resold, after the issue of fresh proclamation of sale. The deposit, after defraying the expenses of the sale, may, if the undersigned thinks fit, be forfeited to the Government and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may subsequently be sold.

**SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY**

Lot No.	Description of the property to be sold with the names of the co-owners where the property belongs to the defaulter and any other person as co-owners.	Revenue assessed upon the property or any part thereof	Details of any encumbrance to which property is liable	Claims, if any, which have been put forward to the property, and any known particulars bearing on its nature and value.
1.	Property bearing Flat No. F- 8/3, PARK SIDE VILLAS, PLOT NO. 201, 120 FT, SHASTRI PURAM ROAD, VAYU VIHAR, AGRA.		No information received.	

Given under my hand and seal on 26/04/2024.

RECOVERY OFFICER  
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- I, DELHI

# Arrests show that there has been corruption in examination: Rahul

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for maintaining "silence" on the NEET exam issue and asserted that his party is committed to strongly raising the voice of the youth from the streets to the Parliament for ensuring strong policies against paper leaks. The former Congress president said the arrests made in Bihar, Gujarat and Haryana clearly show that there has been organised corruption in the examination in a planned manner and added these BJP-ruled states have become the epicentre of paper leak," he claimed. In the manifesto, the Congress had guaranteed to secure the future of the youth by making strict laws against paper leaks. "Narendra Modi, as usual, is maintaining silence on the tampering with the future of more than 24 lakh students in the NEET examination," Gandhi said in a social media post in Hindi. "The arrests made in Bihar, Gujarat and Haryana clearly



show that there has been organised corruption in the examination in a planned manner and these BJP ruled states have become the epicentre of paper leak," he claimed. In the manifesto, the Congress had guaranteed to secure the future of the youth by making strict laws against paper leaks. "Narendra Modi, as usual, is maintaining silence on the tampering with the future of more than 24 lakh students in the NEET examination," Gandhi said in a social media post in Hindi. "The arrests made in Bihar, Gujarat and Haryana clearly

after the Supreme Court on Tuesday said even if there was "0.001 per cent negligence" on the part of anyone in the conduct of the NEET-UG 2024 examination, it should be thoroughly dealt with. Observing that students have to labour hard while preparing for these examinations, the apex court said the litigation pertaining to the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate)-2024 examination ought not be treated as adversarial. "Even if there is 0.001 per cent negligence on the part of anyone, it should be thoroughly dealt with," a vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and SVN Bhatti told the advocates appearing for the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA). It conducts the all India pre-medical entrance test. The bench was hearing two separate petitions raising grievances, including on grace marks given to the students in the examination held on May 5.

# Mann Ki Baat to resume from June 30: Modi

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said his 'Mann Ki Baat' monthly radio broadcast will resume from June 30 and urged people to share their ideas and inputs for it. "Delighted to share that after a gap of some months due to the elections, #MannKiBaat is back! This month's programme will take place on Sunday, 30th June," he said in a social media post. "I call upon all of you to share your ideas and inputs for the same. Write on the MyGov Open Forum, NaMo App or record your message on 1800 11 7800," Modi said. Prime Minister Modi's monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcast was last aired on February 25 and then took a break for the Lok



Sabha polls. In the 110th episode of the programme, Modi had asked first-time voters to poll in record numbers in the elections and said their maiden vote should be cast for the country. The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) guidelines of the Election Commission asks governments to not use official events or public-funded platforms for something that may be seen to give the ruling party publicity or political advantage.

# Bypolls to five legislative council vacancies in four States on July 12

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Tuesday announced the bypolls to fill five legislative council vacancies in four States will be held on July 12. Elections to three of the five seats were necessitated due to the resignation of members of legislative council (MLCs) and to the remaining two due to disqualification. In Karnataka, former chief minister Jagadish Shettar had resigned as an MLC in January. He had quit the BJP and joined the Congress after being denied a ticket to contest the election from the Dharwad Central Assembly seat which he represented. Shettar had later



rejoined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha polls and won the parliamentary election. A vacancy was created in the Uttar Pradesh legislative council when Swami Prasad Maurya quit the Samajwadi Party and resigned from the House in February. One seat each in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh fell vacant due to the disqualification of sitting members.

# Maliwal seeks time from INDIA Bloc leaders to discuss assault

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Tuesday sought time from INDIA Bloc leaders to discuss the alleged assault against her by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar. In a letter to INDIA bloc leaders like Rahul Gandhi and Sharad Pawar, Maliwal complained she was subjected to "victim shaming and character assassination" for speaking up against the abuse. "Instead of finding support, I was confronted with incessant attacks on my character and victim shaming orchestrated by the leaders and volunteers of my own party," she wrote. Posting the letter addressed to the leaders on X (formerly Twitter), she stated, "For the



last 18 years, I have worked on the ground and in 9 years, I have heard 1.7 lakh cases in the Women's Commission. Without fearing anyone and bowing before anyone, I have raised the Women's Commission to a very high position. But it is very sad that first I was beaten badly at the Chief Minister's house, then my character was assassinated." "Today I have written a letter on this subject to all the big leaders of the INDIA

alliance. I have asked for a meeting time with everyone," she further wrote. Sharing her distress to Rahul and Pawar, the letter read, "Unfortunately, after becoming a Member of Parliament, I was assaulted by the PA of the Chief Minister of Delhi at his residence on 13 May, 2024. Following this traumatic incident, I took the necessary step of filing a police complaint." Maliwal elaborated on how she was faced by incessant attacks on her character by AAP leaders. "Regrettably, instead of finding support, I was confronted with incessant attacks on my character and victim shaming orchestrated by the leaders and volunteers of my own party.

# Congress accuses Central Government of destroying Indian Railways

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Accusing the Central Government of "destroying" Indian Railways, the Congress on Tuesday demanded Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav's resignation in the wake of the Kanchanjunga Express accident and said that he has no moral right to remain in the position. The opposition party also took a swipe at Vaishnav for reaching the accident site riding pillion on a motorcycle, asking whether he is a rail minister or a "reel minister". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said whenever there is a train accident, Modi government's railway minister reaches the spot under the glare of cameras and behaves as if every-

thing is fine. Kharge also posed seven questions to the government and demanded answers.

After a major accident like Balasore, why was not even a single kilometer of the much-hyped 'Kavach' anti-train collision system added, he asked. "Why are nearly 3 lakh posts vacant in the Railways, why were they not filled in the last 10 years? According to the NCRB (2022) report, 1,00,000 people have died in rail accidents between 2017 and 2021 alone! Who will take responsibility for this?" the Congress chief asked. The Railway Board itself has admitted that the long working hours of loco pilots due to acute shortage of manpower are the main reason for the increasing number of accidents, he said and asked why were the posts not filled.



"In its 323rd report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee had criticised the Railways for the 'neglect' shown by the Railway Board towards the recommendations of the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS). It was underlined that the CRS investigates only 8%-10% of accidents, why was the CRS not strengthened?" Kharge asked. According to the CAG, why was 75% funding reduced in

the 'Rashtriya Rail Suraksha Kosh' (RRSK), while Rs 20,000 crore was to be made available every year, he asked. "Why has travelling by train in the common Sleeper Class become very expensive? Why has the number of Sleeper Coaches been reduced? The Railway Minister recently said to use police force against the people 'overcrowding' rail coaches. But does he not know that 2.7 crore people had to cancel their tickets last year due to abysmal shortage of seats — a direct result of Modi government's policy to reduce coaches?" Kharge said. Addressing a Press conference at the AICC headquarters, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said the Railways is perhaps the most preferred mode of transport as far as the middle class, lower middle class and the

poor are concerned simply because it is the most economical means of transportation. She showed pictures of the Balasore train accident last June and of Monday's accident, and asked what had changed between this period. Shrinate said that as many as 1,117 railway accidents had taken place since 2014-23, which means an accident every three days. "Who is going to take the moral responsibility for this? We have seen the railway ministers in the past own up moral responsibility and resign from their position of power. But here we have a minister who does not miss an opportunity even in the time of plight and tragedy to make reels. He is not the rail minister, he is the reels minister of India," Shrinate said.

# We don't oppose quota: Maharashtra Minister after meeting OBC activists

## Renukaswamy murder case: No need for CBI probe: Karnataka Minister

**PTI N CHHATRAPATI SAMBAHJINGAR**

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Dhananjay Munde has said the government is not against reservation for anyone and the demands of two activists agitating for protection of the OBC quota will be kept before the government.

Amid the Maratha reservation demand under the OBC category, two activists from the Other Backward Classes have been sitting on a fast in Maharashtra's Jalna district, seeking an assurance that their quota will not be affected.

On Monday, NCP MLA Dhananjay Munde along with his cousin and BJP leader Pankaja Munde met OBC activists Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare, who have been sitting on a fast since June 13 at Wadigodri village in Jalna district.

The OBC activists have seeking a written assurance



from the government that their quota will not be affected.

"We don't oppose giving reservation to anyone. The state government has also clarified it numerous times. But even after that, misunderstandings are being created among communities, hence the government should clarify what is going to happen on this (quota) issue and it should be communicated to all the communities," the agriculture minister said after meeting the agitators.

The misunderstandings

providing 10 per cent reservation for the Marathas in education and government jobs under a separate category.

Activist Manoj Jarange has been demanding implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as "sage soyare" (blood relatives) of the Maratha community members and a law to identify Kunbis as Marathas. Kunbi, an agrarian group, falls under the OBC category, and Jarange has been demanding that Kunbi certificates be issued to all Marathas, thus making them eligible for quota benefits.

Hake and Waghmare said they are not against the reservation for Marathas, but it should not disturb the OBC quota. The OBC activists have been demanding scrapping of the government's draft notification that recognises Kunbis as "sage soyare" of the Maratha community members.

**PTI CHITRADURGA (KARNATAKA)**

Karnataka Home Minister KG Parameshwara on Tuesday said there was no need to hand over the Renukaswamy murder case to the CBI as the police were doing a good job in their investigation without succumbing to any pressure.

Parameshwara and a State BJP delegation led by its President B Y Vijayendra met the parents and wife of Renukaswamy, whose body was found in Bengaluru on June nine, separately and consoled them.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda indicated that Renukaswamy was murdered in a "horrific, brutal and barbaric" manner. Speaking to reporters here, Parameshwara said 17 people, including Kannada actor Darshan and his friend Pavithra Gowda, have been arrested in connection with the case.

According to police sources, Renukaswamy, a fan of Darshan, had allegedly sent some obscene messages to Gowda on social media, which infuriated the 47-year-old actor.

"I came here to console the family. This is a painful incident not only for the family but also for all of us. So far, 17 people have been arrested. They are being interrogated thoroughly," Parameshwara said.

"Our policemen have done a good job. They did not succumb to any pressure while doing their job. Hence,



there is no need to hand over the case to the CBI," the Minister said in response to a question on the possibility of handing it over to the premier investigation agency.

He said Renukaswamy's family members have demanded justice and a Government job. The victim got married only a year ago and his wife is pregnant.

"I will discuss with the Chief Minister (Siddaramaiah) regarding demand for job," Parameshwara said. Earlier, the BJP delegation urged the government to provide compensation to Renukaswamy's family and a government job to his wife.

They sought a fair probe into his murder and demanded that the guilty be punished. From the party Rs two lakh was given to the family of Renukaswamy.

under any pressure. The investigation has to happen without losing track, and the guilty and the murderers should be punished," he added.

Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru, Dayananda said: "It is a heinous crime committed in a horrific manner and we have to ensure that the accused in the case are punished and we have to deliver justice to the victim's family and our officers and staff are working in this direction."

"With regard to the investigation of the murder case (Renukaswamy murder) registered in Kamakshipalya police station, wherein an individual has been killed in a very brutal and barbaric way, so far the police have arrested 17 persons and all the 17 persons have been taken into police custody and their interrogation is being done," he said.

Meanwhile, as part of the ongoing probe into the case, police took accused Nagaraj and Lakshman to a hotel in the district headquarters town of Mysuru, from where Darshan was picked up on June 11, for sport inspection.

According to sources, police gathered information and also CCTV camera footage from the hotel.

# Video shows party worker washing feet of Maharashtra Congress chief, kicks up row



**PTI AKOLA**

The incident took place on Monday when Patole was at Wadegaon in the district to take part in an event.

The video shows the party worker pouring water on Patole's feet and cleaning them with his hands while the Congress leader is stepping out of a car in Akola district of the state, with the ruling BJP targeting him for "insulting" the workers of his party.

his feet got muddied after taking part in a procession of the holy symbolic footprints of Saint Gajanan Maharaj.

One of the workers put water from a bottle as there was no tap available nearby, he said. Patole also hit out at the government saying that while the farmers are burdened by loans and need to be brought out of their plight, the ruling dispensation was not at all concerned.

Targeting Patole, BJP Mumbai uploaded the video on X and said, "What a misfortune, Congress is repeatedly insulting the workers whose might it uses to contest elections."

It is very shameful that Congress' Maharashtra chief Nana Patole made a worker

wash his muddied feet, it said, and asked where it was the real culture of the grand old party.

BJP leader Chitra Wagh also targeted Patole over the act.

# Gujarat: Homeopath pays Rs16.32 lakh for MBBS admission, gets fake degree; 4 booked



**PTI MEHSANA (GUJARAT)**

A case has been registered against four persons for allegedly cheating a homeopath in Gujarat's Mehsana who paid Rs 16.32 lakh to get admission to a medical course in Uttar Pradesh but received a fake degree instead.

Based on a complaint lodged by one Suresh Patel (41), who holds the degree of Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery (BHMS), the Nandasan police on June 14 registered a case under sections 406 (breach of trust) and 420 (cheating), inspector J G Vaghela said.

The police have named Dr Premkumar Rajput, a resident of Nainital, Dr Shaukat Khan of Moradabad, and south Delhi residents Arun Kumar and Anand Kumar as accused in the first information report (FIR).

As per the FIR in 2018, Patel, who works at a private hospital in Nandasan village, came across a website offering admissions into an MBBS course at Bundelkhand University in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.

Patel telephoned Dr Rajput, whose number was given on the website, to get more details, and following several conversations over the phone, he agreed to pay the fees, it stated.

The accused told Patel that he would earn a degree from the Bundelkhand University after completing the five-and-a-half-year course, and the complainant was ready to leave his job and move to UP for studies.

Patel deposited Rs 16.32 lakh in different bank accounts provided by the accused between July 2018 and March 2019, and they assured him that the course would

commence soon.

However, Dr Rajput and others could not be contacted, and their phones got switched off soon after the FIR stated.

In March 2019, Patel received a courier at his workplace, and he found mark sheets, a degree certificate with training and registration certificates in his name.

The certificates had registration numbers issued by the Medical Council of India (MCI) and Gujarat Medical Council, it was stated.

The MCI and the university administration later confirmed that the documents were fake.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Smt. Ganeshwari Devi is the G.P.A. Holder of Shop Bearing No. 1, on 11/6/2 area measuring 50 sq. yds. out of Kharsa No. 58/1, situated in village Hastadi Delhiabad known as Mohan Garden Block-I, Phase-I, Uttar New Delhi-110027. She is in possession above said plot through GPA/ATS, WILL dated 19.09.1994 executed by Sh. Bhopal Singh Negi in favour of Smt. Ganeshwari Devi in the presence of the undersigned.

Subsequently, Sh. Vijay Singh & Smt. Geeta Devi in the process of mortgaging the said SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd.) Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client.

If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 07-day period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; and/or by e-mail: 011-20-3101683; e-mail: accounts@lvnorth.in

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that my Jagjeet Singh is in process to purchase the Second Floor without Roof Rights of Property Bearing No. 44/B, Area Measuring 100 sq. yds., situated at Tihar-II, Ashok Nagar, New Delhi-110018 (avaluing loan from TCMFI) from Sajal Dhillon, who having acquired the same via Sale Deed dated 10.11.2023 executed by Gopal Krishan (Doc. No. 2023/251/28654) of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (registrable) registered otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Unit No. FF-2, First Floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vashi, G.B. U.P. Mob. 98110063351

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, Sikander Siraj Ahmed F-40, Block-E Swami Shradhanand Park Bhalwsa Dairy Delhi 42 have changed my name to Sikander KH-767-778, Block -A, Shaheed Bhagatsingh Public School Rajeev Nagar Bhalwsa Dairy Delhi-42.

PD(531)C

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

In pursuance of Section 41 (j) of DCS Act, 2003 and Rule 92 (5) of DCS Rule, 2007, General Public is hereby informed that Sh. Uggur Sain Narang s/o late Sh. B.R. Narang having membership No.514 in New Friends CHBS Ltd., New Delhi died on 29.4.2024 as mentioned in the FIR No.0072 dated 28.2.2016. As per Society's record late Sh. Uggur Sain Narang has not nominated any person against the property No.D-900. New Friends Colony New Delhi 110025. As per provisions contained DCS Act & Rule, if anyone has any claim or objection in respect of property No.D-900, N.F.C. may come forward in the office of Management Committee of New Friends Colony at 91, Ram Lal Jaggi (Opp. House No.D-896), New Friends Colony, New Delhi-25 (within 15 days of publishing of this public notice. In case no claimant/nominee of late Uggur Sain Narang is existing, the Management Committee has right to decide the matter within 30 days i.e. 45 days of publishing of this public notice.

The New Friends Co-op. Housing Building Society Ltd. 91, Ram Lal Jaggi New Friends Colony Opp. D-896, New Delhi - 110025

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that my client Ravinder Jain, Narender Jain, Arvind Jain and Adarsh Jain are in process to avail the credit facility against their Eastern Side partition Built up Property bearing No. 4-B, Area Measuring 504.50 Sq. Yds. Situated at Flag Staff Road, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054 acquired the same Sale Deed dated 27.05.2007 executed by S.J. Jain (Doc. No. 3750), whereas they have lost the below chain of documents pertaining to the said property:

1. Copy of Sale Deed dated 08.03.1945 executed by Daulatt Ram Gupta in favour of A.A. Ruschke (Doc No. 3655)

2. Copy of Will dated 01.02.1996 executed by Pyarelal in favour of Devedar Kumar, Neeraj Kumar and Rajiv Kumar (Doc No. 5083)

3. Copy of Death Certificate dated 28.08.1996 of late Pyarelal

4. Copy of Legal heir certificate of late Pyarelal

5. Copy of death certificate dated 29.05.1984 of late Janaki Devi

6. Copy of Probate of Will executed by Pyarelal in favour of Devedar Kumar, Neeraj Kumar and Rajiv Kumar

7. Copy of Mutation Letter dated 20.12.2002 issued by MCD in favour of Devedar Kumar, Neeraj Kumar and Rajiv Kumar

If anyone do find the above mentioned documents please intimate to undersigned within 7 days

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Unit No. FF-2, First Floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vashi, G.B. U.P. Mob. 98110063351

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Rakesh Kumar is the G.P.A. Holder of Shop Bearing No. 1, on Ground Floor, without roof rights, Part of Property Bearing No. A-1/81, area measuring 12022, out of Kharsa No. 13/91, situated in the area of Village Mirzapur, Aadi Khasi, Vijay Enclave, Mahavir Enclave, Part-II, New Delhi. He is in Possession of said Floor through a Notarized GPA/ATS dated 01.06.2021 executed by Mrs. Kavita Devi in favour of Mr. Rakesh Kumar in respect of the Shop No. 1 & 2. Mr. Rakesh Kumar intends to transfer the ownership by way of Sale Deed of aforementioned property to Mr. Shivani Shara and Mr. Praveen Kumar. Subsequently, Mr. Shivani Shara and Mr. Praveen Kumar are in the process of mortgaging the said SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd.) Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client.

If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 07-day period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; and/or by e-mail: 011-20-3101683; e-mail: accounts@lvnorth.in

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Smt. Ganeshwari Devi is the G.P.A. Holder of Shop Bearing No. 1, on 11/6/2 area measuring 50 sq. yds. out of Kharsa No. 58/1, situated in village Hastadi Delhiabad known as Mohan Garden Block-I, Phase-I, Uttar New Delhi-110027. She is in possession above said plot through GPA/ATS, WILL dated 19.09.1994 executed by Sh. Bhopal Singh Negi in favour of Smt. Ganeshwari Devi in the presence of the undersigned.

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Unit No. FF-2, First Floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vashi, G.B. U.P. Mob. 98110063351

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that my client Ravinder Jain, Narender Jain, Arvind Jain and Adarsh Jain are in process to avail the credit facility against their Eastern Side partition Built up Property bearing No. 4-B, Area Measuring 504.50 Sq. Yds. Situated at Flag Staff Road, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054 acquired the same Sale Deed dated 27.05.2007 executed by S.J. Jain (Doc. No. 3750), whereas they have lost the below chain of documents pertaining to the said property:

1. Copy of Sale Deed dated 08.03.1945 executed by Daulatt Ram Gupta in favour of A.A. Ruschke (Doc No. 3655)

2. Copy of Will dated 01.02.1996 executed by Pyarelal in favour of Devedar Kumar, Neeraj Kumar and Rajiv Kumar (Doc No. 5083)

3. Copy of Death Certificate dated 28.08.1996 of late Pyarelal

4. Copy of Legal heir certificate of late Pyarelal

5. Copy of death certificate dated 29.05.1984 of late Janaki Devi

6. Copy of Probate of Will executed by Pyarelal in favour of Devedar Kumar, Neeraj Kumar and Rajiv Kumar

7. Copy of Mutation Letter dated 20.12.2002 issued by MCD in favour of Devedar Kumar, Neeraj Kumar and Rajiv Kumar

If anyone do find the above mentioned documents please intimate to undersigned within 7 days

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Unit No. FF-2, First Floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vashi, G.B. U.P. Mob. 98110063351

**Public Notice**

This is to inform the general public that my client, Kulbir Singh, S/o Chanan Singh, R/o B-1216, Janakpuri, Delhi-110058, have severed all relations and hereby disown his son Gurelan Singh and his wife Parmita Singh due to their constant fighting and disturbing the peace of the home. Parmita Singh has belittled my Client and his wife and has made their lives a living hell, in this age they cannot bear this misbehavior and cruelty. I have already executed a duly notarized Declaration dated 31.10.2023 to this effect. Both of the aforementioned Gurelan Singh & Parmita Singh are hereby debarred and disowned from all of my Client's movable and immovable assets, which are self-acquired. Anybody dealing with Gurelan Singh and Parmita Singh will do so at their own peril, risk and responsibility.

TARUN GARG (Advocate) D/2139/2020, UIN: 11637/3, Block 39, Naiwala, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005, Ph.-8285832757

**GOVT. OF ASSAM**

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING), ASSAM CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03**

No. 1/594189/2024

**PRESS NOTICE**

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Building), Assam, on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids for the work detailed in the table below, from contractors having experience in similar nature of work. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Value of Work	Completion Period	Bid Security	Tender Processing Fee
1.	Construction of Convention Centre cum State Guest House at Guwahati, Assam (Balance Work)	Rs. 2,55,66,84,967.00	18 (eighteen) months	2% of value of work for General and 1% of value of work for Reserved category	Rs. 30,000.00

N.B:- (i) Value of work may vary at the time of uploading the detail NIT for which no claim will be entertained. (ii) This Press Notice will be a part of the Bidding Document.

Spl. Chief Engineer, PWD (Bldg.), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

Janasanyog/C/612/24/19-Jun-24

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shah Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rostok Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	Smriti Goel/ Anshul Goel/ LBNOD00005432552	Flat/ Unit No. 35, Ground Floor, Situated in Complex Know As "Dhanya Up Residents Employees Co-Operative House Building Society", Constructed Upon Plot No. E-001, Sector 42, Noida Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh- 201301/ June 14, 2024	February 26, 2024 Rs. 29,01,185/-	Delhi NCR/ Muzaffarnagar

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: June 19, 2024 Place: Delhi/ NCR

Sincerely Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 229A, A/C Bose Road, Kolkata- 700020, [www.icicibank.com](http://www.icicibank.com)

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	Nalinakant Nayak/ Bishnu Charan Nayak/ A-2151	Flat No. A/408, Fourth Floor, Tower Named Kanak Palace in "Kalyani Residency" Project, Plot No. 135B, Khata No. 419/872, M.S. Khata No. 131, Odisha Sarkan Khatwa No. 1, P.S. No. 112, P.S. Bhadrak, Muzka Gabasahi, Tahasil Bhadrak, D.S.R. Office Bhadrak, District Bhadrak, Odisha, Addressing on Area Plinth Area is About 862 Sq. Ft. (Super Built Up Area About 1040 Sq. Ft. Approximately) Together With Parking Space/ Garage "C-408" Assigned as on Stilt Floor Alongwith Proprietary Undivided, Impartibly Share Transfer is AO.012 Decs/ Date of Symbolic 13.06.2024	January 31, 2024 Rs. 17,36,350/-	New Delhi

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: June 19, 2024 Place: New Delhi

Sincerely Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A strategic shift

Priyanka Gandhi to contest from Wayanad as Rahul Gandhi retains Raebareli Lok Sabha seat

It is official. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, has been announced as the party's candidate for the Wayanad constituency in Kerala for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. This move comes as her brother, Rahul Gandhi, retains Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh. Priyanka Gandhi's candidature from Wayanad represents a calculated risk by the Congress to consolidate its influence in South India while retaining a foothold in the North. Wayanad, a constituency known for its high literacy rate and diverse demographics, is seen as a relatively secure seat for Congress. For Rahul Gandhi, retaining Raebareli, a Congress bastion, allows him to focus on Uttar Pradesh. This would ensure continuity and stability for the party in a seat that has been pivotal for the Gandhi family. Whereas by fielding Priyanka Gandhi in Wayanad, the party aims to bolster its appeal among the youth and the women electorate in Kerala. The state has been a site of intense political competition, especially with the rise of regional parties and the Left Democratic Front (LDF). All three members in Parliament (Sonia Gandhi has moved to Rajya Sabha) indeed give Congress baiters a chance to accuse it of dynastic politics however at this point Congress seems to be more focussed on future electoral calculus. The BJP's downside in the UP gives it more reasons to focus on the crucial state where it has an alliance with the Samajwadi party. Rahul Gandhi's presence in Raibareli directly links him to the state whereas Priyanka Gandhi's presence in the south would help it retain the turf. Priyanka's debut in electoral politics shows that she is getting more and more into active politics. This signals that she is geared up



to be part of core decision-making and would not be confined to electioneering and assisting her brother Rahul on an ad hoc basis.

However, the road to Uttar Pradesh and for that matter retaining the lost glory of Congress is still a distant dream as most of its vote bank has either shifted or usurped by the regional parties which have become strong. This move could also signify a more prominent role for Priyanka in national politics, potentially setting the stage for her to take on greater responsibilities within the party. While these moves are strategically sound, Congress still faces significant challenges. The BJP's robust organizational machinery and resources present a formidable opposition. Additionally, regional parties continue to pose a challenge, potentially splitting the vote in key constituencies. Besides, Congress will need to address internal dissent and present a unified front to maximise its electoral potential. The real challenge is to offer a coherent and compelling vision that can galvanise support across diverse demographics and rejuvenate its cadre. A lot needs to be done on the organisational level as the party's cadre has been in disarray for a long time. The upcoming state elections in Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jharkhand will serve as a crucial test for these new strategies and the effectiveness of their implementation.

### PICTALK



Farmers prepare bunches of harvested litchi, at an orchard, in Nadia

PTI

## Elder abuse remains an underreported crisis

There is a pressing need for unified and comprehensive action to safeguard the dignity and well-being of our elders

Every year on June 15th, the world comes together to recognise and address a silent yet pervasive issue: elder abuse. Despite numerous policies and initiatives aimed at safeguarding our seniors, elder abuse remains a deeply troubling issue, with alarming statistics underscoring the urgent need for concerted action.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) transcends mere awareness raising, it educates the public on various forms of elder abuse, empowering communities to identify and address these issues effectively. WEAAD also serves as a critical tool for policy advocacy, reminding policymakers of their responsibility to enact and enforce laws that protect older adults and ensure they receive adequate support. Despite global efforts like WEAAD, elder abuse remains a disturbing reality. The World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 6 older adults experiences abuse in community settings, with even higher rates in institutions. However, these figures likely underestimate the true scope of the problem,



as elder abuse is vastly underreported due to fear, shame, or lack of awareness. In India, a society traditionally known for cherishing its elders, a HelpAge India survey revealed a startling reality. Approximately 71% of elderly respondents reported experiencing abuse, primarily by family members, particularly sons and daughters-in-law. This trend contradicts India's strong family values and respect for elders. Addressing elder abuse requires a multifaceted approach involving awareness, education, legal measures, and societal change. Both the elderly and the younger generations play critical roles in this effort. The elderly must be educated about their rights and the forms of abuse they might face. Empowering elders with

knowledge can help them recognise abuse and take steps to protect themselves. The younger generation must be educated about the importance of respecting and caring for the elderly. Schools, colleges, and community organisations can play a significant role in fostering empathy and understanding. Programmes that promote intergenerational bonding and respect can help bridge the gap and reduce incidents of abuse. Building strong community support systems can provide a safety net for older adults. Community centers, senior citizen groups, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can offer a range of services, from counseling and legal advice to recreational activities and social engagement opportunities. Efforts should be made to create an environment where elder abuse can be reported without fear of stigma or retaliation. Helplines, dedicated to elder support units within police departments, and community-based intervention programs can play a pivotal role in this regard. The Indian government has implemented various initia-

tives to address elder care needs. The National Programme for Healthcare of the Elderly (NPHCE) improves healthcare access, while the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007) safeguards elder rights. Policies like the National Action Plan for Senior Citizens promote active aging. However, challenges remain. The gap between policy and implementation is significant. Inadequate infrastructure, undertrained personnel, and insufficient funding hinder service delivery. Furthermore, awareness programs are needed, particularly in rural areas, to educate elderly people about their rights and available support. A comprehensive approach is crucial, addressing not only healthcare but also the social and psychological aspects of aging. Collaboration between the government, NGOs, and the private sector is essential to bridge these gaps and ensure proper care for India's elderly population.

(The writer is Founder & President Wishes and Blessings NGO; views are personal)



GEETANJALI CHOPRA

# India's path from trade to industry

Transforming traders into industrialists poses significant challenges. While traders prioritise high profits, industrialists require a long-term vision



PRAFULL GORADIA

India has a large enough trading class. In fact, the Hindu caste hierarchy has traditionally allotted an entire arena of activity, i.e., economic, to the Vaishyas and Baniyas, Chettiars and Shettys, but that doesn't mean that they are all—or most of them—are potential entrepreneurs or successful industrialists. The reality is that it is difficult to buy the proposition that a first rate trader can easily develop into a first-class industrialist. The latter's priority is a rapid turnaround of turnover, ideally accompanied by high profit margins. An industrialist must have a long-term vision, patience for profits to turn in, and a virtually unlimited scope for expansion. Above all, he must have the nerve as well as the packet to absorb losses in the short term.

The only common factor between an industrialist and a trader is a sense of money. This would partly explain why the Government of India took so long to divest itself of the ownership of Air India; the programme for the privatization of this "national carrier" has been slow. This again explains why the government has been having to focus its concentration on making the good old public sector more and more efficient, including the ordnance factories. A lot of the new expansion, especially in defence production has had to be undertaken in a kind of partnership with the large and established industrial houses. It was not so long ago that members of the intelligentsia used to say that a people whose ruler was a trader, would end up as a pauper. This, in actuality, was the story of the Indian economy until the Modi administration took charge. Choosing the right industry, running it efficiently with integrity are the sine qua non of success. The emphasis on these factors waxes or wanes with changes in ministries and/or governments. No ministry can claim to be forever engaged in policymaking on a single issue or industry. Incidentally, a leading management scientist had some time ago said that public institutions quite



often keep their doors open for the leakage of money. If this factor is to be kept in mind, a typical public sector unit or institution should not be expanded. If the state has to invest willy-nilly, the President of India certainly should not hold any shares. Banks and insurance companies like the LIC, GIC, etc., should invest, so that there is no obvious gateway to corruption.

For long years, the majority of Larsen & Toubro's (L&T) shares were held by financial institutions, but hardly anyone knew this fact. The general impression was that L&T was a private sector company, like any other. There was no door available for misuse by political or bureaucratic agencies or factors. Another problem caused by the President of India holding shares, is that willy-nilly, the management tends to be directed by a joint secretary. A normal bureaucrat might have many virtues, but is seldom inclined to lay emphasis upon the delivery of results in the same way as an industrial manager would have to. The former is primarily, and mostly, concerned with rules and procedures. Profits come lower in



CHOOSING THE RIGHT INDUSTRY, RUNNING IT EFFICIENTLY WITH INTEGRITY ARE THE SINE QUA NON OF SUCCESS. THE EMPHASIS ON THESE FACTORS WAXES OR WANES WITH CHANGES IN MINISTRIES AND/OR GOVERNMENTS

his priority. Moreover, the bureaucrat's job is secure and therefore, he does not expect his head to roll if he cannot explain the losses the public sector company under his belt might have made. Although, he might spend a sleepless night or two if his head clerk were to point out a lapse in procedure. Being answerable to the minister, the bureaucrat does not have the ultimate authority, although he is influential day to day. Yet, anyone with contacts with the minister, i.e., the political executive, can influence the joint secretary. This does not add up to business management. On the other hand, banks and financial institutions investing in public sector units (PSUs) would be looking at how much they are earning on their investments. Otherwise, they wouldn't have any influence or any substantial contact with the PSU. In answer to this discussion, a suggestion emerges that proven top executives in the private sector could be given a chance to set up large industries. Instead of the country merely waiting for capable entrepreneurs to emerge

spontaneously, the successful top executives near their retiring age from their private sector assignments, would have a reputation, and a proven record of managing a large industry. Let the candidate invest 5 per cent of the estimated initial capital; another 5 per cent may be given as founder shares, making it a total of 10 per cent. But before that, it would be for him or her to discover the right project in answer to the country's needs. If foreign technology is needed, the executive's reputation should help him to locate the right foreign partner who could provide not only technology, but also some management, and possibly some investment, and reserve say, 26 per cent for financial institutions like banks, etc., and other the rest to the public. Some experiments might succeed while others might not. Some top executive candidates may discover that they are not equal to the challenge, and may even sell off their shares to a more confident entrepreneur. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### UNRELENTING HEAT WAVE

Madam — Apropos the news story "No let up in heat wave in Punjab, Haryana; Bathinda reels at 46.9 degrees Celsius," published on June 17, this is my response. The scorching heat wave sweeping across Punjab and Haryana for several days shows no signs of abating. Bathinda, in Punjab, reached a staggering 46.9 degrees Celsius on Monday, making it the hottest place in the region. Pindara in Haryana's Jind district also recorded the same temperature, solidifying the intense heat conditions in the state. Chandigarh, the shared capital of both states, experienced a maximum temperature of 44.5 degrees Celsius. Other cities in Punjab, such as Faridkot, Pathankot, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Patiala, Gurdaspur, and Ferozepur, also faced severe heat, with temperatures ranging from 43.8 to 46 degrees Celsius. In Haryana, Faridabad and Sirsa were particularly affected, recording maximum temperatures of 46.6 degrees Celsius and 46.2 degrees Celsius, respectively. Mahendragarh, Hisar, Gurugram, and Kurukshetra also experienced high temperatures, ranging from 43.8 to 46.2 degrees Celsius. The unrelenting heat wave has undoubtedly taken a toll on the residents of these regions, with people urged to take necessary precautions to avoid heat-related illnesses. The authorities must prioritize the public's well-being and ensure that adequate measures are in place to combat extreme weather conditions.

Pradyumand Singh | New Delhi

#### ILLFOUNDED EVM CONTROVERSY

Madam — Apropos, "Musk's EVM remark sparks row in India," The Pioneer, Jun 17. The controversies over Electronic Voting Machines EVM have come to the fore again, in the wake of the billionaire tech magnate Elon Musk's sweeping comment that EVMs should be shunned from using for elections as they are liable to be hacked. The Opposition found fresh ammo to target EVMs. But, it is time for our politicians especially, AICC former

#### HP's new centre of excellence



Apropos the news story "Govt to establish a centre of excellence for the education of differently abled in Kandaghat: Himachal CM Sukhu," published on June 17, this is my

response. The announcement of a "centre of excellence" for differently abled individuals in Himachal Pradesh is a commendable move by the state government. This initiative signifies a commitment to inclusive education and comprehensive support for those often left on the margins of society. By ensuring quality education, residential accommodations, and facilities tailored to the needs of Divyangjans, the state is setting a precedent for others to follow. The Chief Minister's assurance of timely completion and allocation of resources reflects a proactive approach to social welfare. This project not only promises to empower 300 differently-abled students but also demonstrates the government's dedication to the rights and integration of marginalized groups. It is heartening to witness such efforts towards building a more equitable society.

Kularani Kapoor | Ranchi

hard times when expenses go above your neck. You are in a good job, earn a fat salary and have a bright future. Yet, none of this is evident when you look at your savings. This is because young people often find it difficult to save in the initial years of their careers. Studies reveal that discretionary spending can be as high as 18-20% of the income for young people. A 2021 study by Assocham revealed that almost 35% of the urban youth spend up to Rs25,000 a month on clothing alone. Some say you should just note down the card details and then cut the card into pieces so that you can't use it anymore. To save money, keep your card in a paper sleeve with family photos as a reminder. Having served 38 years in banking, I learned that saving before spending is crucial. Cultivate saving habits for a secure, peaceful future. Save today for a better tomorrow.

CK Subramanian | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL PROGRESS

Early childhood care and education is vital for India's development and prosperity



VENITA KAUL

India's perceived rise in international stature and its potential evolution into a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) is largely attributed to its demographic advantages. With over 50% of its population below the age of 25, India benefits from a youthful and dynamic workforce. This article explores the crucial areas that must be addressed to achieve the vision of a Viksit Bharat, focusing on nurturing human capital through investments in health and education, particularly in early childhood care and education (ECCE). Given the concerning statistics that only 44% of grade 5 students can read at a grade 2 level, it is imperative to identify and strengthen pathways that will allow India to fully leverage its demographic dividend.

The National Education Policy (2020) rightly emphasizes the significance of early childhood, particularly the period before six years of age, as a critical phase in human development. Neuroscientific research indicates that this period is when the brain develops most rapidly, and its foundational architecture is formed. The brain's potential is significantly influenced by the nutritional, health, educational opportunities, and environmental experiences a child is exposed to in these formative years. Investing in high-quality ECCE not only enhances school learning outcomes but also positively impacts a child's overall personality development and social adjustment in the long term. Positive childhood experiences facilitated by quality ECCE programs lead to better social adjustment in work and family settings and increased economic prosperity in adulthood. Conversely, neuroscience suggests that adverse childhood experiences can lead to toxic stress, resulting in poor social and learning outcomes and higher rates of juvenile delinquency.



The benefits of ECCE extend beyond individual development to society at large. Quality early childhood care and education can help bridge and even close the social equity gap in children's learning, particularly in underprivileged contexts. Educating and skilling children from a young age can lead to higher economic growth and improved living standards across socio-economic strata. A World Bank study in India highlighted a return of INR 25 for every rupee invested in ECCE, with similar trends observed in global studies.

A report by Save the Children indicates that an ideal expenditure of 1.5 to 2.2% of GDP on ECCE is necessary, yet current spending is a mere 0.1%. This significant shortfall hinders the goal of spending INR 32,500 per child annually to achieve universal ECCE by 2030.

**Making ECCE Accessible and Available to All Children**

To bridge the significant gaps in ECCE implementation, several steps must be taken by the government:

1. **Legal Inclusion:** ECCE should be made an enforceable right by incorporating it into the RTE Act, 2009. This would ensure greater accessibility for marginalized socio-economic groups and hold state governments and institutions accountable for non-compliance.
2. **Increased Public Spending:** Current investment levels are insufficient to achieve universal early care for children by 2030. Public expenditure on ECCE needs substantial increases to meet these targets.
3. **Enhanced Social Infrastructure:** The lack of adequate social infrastructure contributes to the exclusion of young children from accessing ECCE and continuing their education. Investments in this area are crucial for providing universal access to quality early childhood education. Universalizing high-quality ECCE is akin to laying a solid foundation for India's future. It is time for political parties to commit to rectifying the exclusion of ECCE and support its inclusion as a fundamental right for every Indian child. After all, how can we build our dream of a Viksit Bharat without establishing a strong foundation?

(The writer is Professor Emerita Ambedkar University; views are personal)

## Heatwave could severely impact the economy



AS MITTAL

The ongoing scorching heat could undermine economic activity and underscores the critical need for climate-responsive action to safeguard both people and productivity

It's scorching hot today!" For many of us, this exclamation expresses our annoyance at the occasional inconveniences of the year's hottest months. The blistering heat waves across the country, especially in Northern India, persist as the maximum temperature soared to over 52 degrees Celsius in Delhi and Rajasthan, the highest of this season which caused a couple of people to die due to suspected heat-related ailments.

Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh are also reeling with heat waves. Conditions are expected to worsen as the Meteorological Department predicts temperatures in northwest India also reached nearly 50 degrees Celsius, posing a threat to the millions of workers engaged in farming, construction, and industrial operations, signifying distress. For many economies, this poses a significant threat to productivity. Therefore there is an urgent need for a climate-responsive action plan.

Effect on workforce and economy: The World Bank's report unequivocally states that as temperatures steadily rise in India due to climate change, the country is experiencing higher temperatures every year. By 2030, over 160-200 million people across the country could be exposed to lethal heat waves annually. Additionally, around 34 million people in India are projected to face job losses due to heat stress-related declines in productivity.

The impacts of rising average temperatures are being felt differently across various occupations and employment sectors. Jobs involving high levels of physical exertion or prolonged outdoor work are particularly affected by increasing heat levels. Specifically, agricultural and construction work, as well as work in steel plants and brick clans, are expected to be the worst affected.

According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 1995, the working hours lost in India due to heat stress were 5.87% in agriculture and construction, 2.95% in industry, and 0.63% in services. These numbers are anticipated to increase to 9.04% in agriculture and construction, 5.29% in industry, and 1.48% in services by 2030. Heat stress is increasingly becoming an obstacle to economic activity. It reduces the ability of businesses to operate during the hottest hours, and temperature rises are expected to further diminish labour productivity, potentially rendering some agricultural areas unproductive and displacing a large number of farm workers. The global economic losses due to heat stress at work were estimated at US\$ 280 billion in 1995, and this figure is projected to increase to US\$ 2,400 billion in 2030.

Currently, the annual food loss due to heat during transportation is close to \$13 billion. By 2037, the demand for cooling is likely to be eight times more than current levels. This means there will be a demand for a new air conditioner every 15 seconds, leading to an expected rise of 435% in annual greenhouse gas emissions over the next two decades. Recognizing this challenge, India must deploy new strategic sustainable solutions to help people adapt to rising temperatures.

Scope of sustainable solutions: The World Bank study, "Climate Investment



THE WORLD BANK REPORT ALSO STAUNCHLY ADVOCATES FOR ACCELERATING THE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF RURAL ECONOMIES BY PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE, OR 'GREEN,' BUSINESSES

Opportunities in India's Cooling Sector", clearly indicates that utilizing alternative and innovative energy-efficient technologies is the key to combating the heat wave crisis. This approach has the potential to open an investment opportunity of \$1.6 trillion by 2040, significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create nearly 3.7 million jobs.

The study strongly suggests that a more energy-efficient pathway could lead to a substantial reduction in expected CO2 levels over the next two decades. India's cooling strategy can save lives and livelihoods, reduce carbon emissions, and position India as a global hub for green cooling manufacturing. The report proposes a sustainable roadmap for cooling that could effectively reduce 300 million tons of carbon dioxide annually by 2040.

In 2019, the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) was launched to implement decisive and sustainable cooling measures across various sectors.

These measures include indoor cooling in buildings, cold chain solar refrigeration in the agriculture and pharmaceuticals sector, and air-conditioning in passenger transport.

The plan aims to reduce the demand for electricity-driven cooling by up to 25 per cent by 2037-38, potentially creating 2 million jobs for trained technicians and reducing the demand for refrigerants by around 31 per cent over the next two decades. Adopting climate-responsive cooling techniques: It is imperative to adopt climate-responsive

cooling techniques as the standard in both private and government-funded constructions to ensure that those at the bottom of the economic ladder are not disproportionately affected by rising temperatures.

The report strongly advocates for the widespread adoption of such changes in India's affordable housing program, which could benefit over 11 million urban homes and over 29 million rural houses that the government aims to construct.

Public-private investments in district-level cooling technologies are crucial. These cutting-edge technologies produce chilled water in a central plant, which is then distributed to multiple buildings through underground insulated pipes. This drastically reduces the cost of providing cooling to individual buildings and can slash electricity bills by 20-30 per cent compared to the most efficient conventional cooling solution. The Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA) office in Chandigarh stands as a prime example of a climate-responsive building, delivering a cooling effect in the hottest months and warmth in winter.

This example can be replicated at large in future green building construction. To combat rising food and pharmaceutical waste during transportation due to higher temperatures, the World Bank report unequivocally recommends addressing gaps in cold chain distribution networks. Investing in pre-cooling and refrigerated transport can substantially decrease food loss by

about 76 per cent and reduce carbon emissions by 16 per cent. India is resolute in its aim to phase out the production and use of ozone-depleting hydrochlorofluorocarbons, used as coolants in air conditioners and refrigerators. The report emphasizes the urgency of improving servicing, maintenance, and disposal of equipment that uses hydrochlorofluorocarbons, alongside a swift shift to alternative options with a lower global warming footprint.

**The way forward:**

It is crucial to comprehend the implications of climate change for the workplace, particularly for those most affected and vulnerable.

The World Bank report also staunchly advocates for accelerating the structural transformation of rural economies by promoting the development of responsible and sustainable, or "green," businesses.

This will reduce the exposure of agricultural workers to high temperatures and minimize physical exertion in such conditions. Other imperative policy measures include skills development, fostering an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, and substantial public investment in infrastructure to address the climate crisis.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy & Planning Board and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are personal)

## Startups must innovate and execute for commercial success

India's startup ecosystem has emerged as a dynamic force but despite its rapid evolution, it still navigates challenges typical of nascent market

The startup ecosystem in India has made significant progress in the past decade, though it still trails behind global benchmarks. The potential for growth is vast, bolstered by supportive government initiatives such as tax exemptions and financial subsidies. Many funders are committed to nurturing India's youth and anticipate a surge in startup numbers over the next decade due to these favourable policies and our dedicated efforts.

Many startups falter because young entrepreneurs, brimming with promising ideas, lack essential knowledge in operations, financial management, and resource utilization. Fresh out of college, they aspire to make a difference but often lack critical skills for suc-



SUBHAKAR ALAPATI

cess. Drawing from my over 12 years of experience and a robust network, I can say with confidence that young Indian entrepreneurs have the mettle to succeed, all they need is method. They need to focus not only on funding but also on cultivating expertise in finance, operations, and overall business management to bridge crucial knowledge gaps and foster growth. The primary challenge lies in

their dearth of operational and financial management skills among young entrepreneurs, who struggle with executing their innovative ideas. I would like them to address this gap. This is where funders like YEA pitch in by offering comprehensive mentoring alongside financial support. Mentors must guide startups in enhancing operational efficiency, managing finances, and leveraging governmental incentives, thereby enhancing their prospects for success.

Today, many startups in India are spearheaded by young entrepreneurs lacking experience in company management and operations. Funders like us prioritise delivering detailed operational plans to these individuals, who possess great ideas but require guid-



ance in execution. They need to grasp cost dynamics, optimise operations for efficiency, and access resources to ensure our investments are well-utilised. Additionally, funders provide expertise in financial management and navigate them through governmental policies, such as tax exemptions. As funding needs evolve at various stages, our extensive network enables us to secure

additional funds from external investors, ensuring sustained success. Most funders like YEA seek innovative ideas capable of disrupting industries, not mere replicas of existing models. Our rigorous selection process involves meticulous scrutiny, including detailed proposals, questionnaires, and presentations. Once selected, startups benefit from personalised

mentorship and gain access to the network of experts and resources. This comprehensive support aims to foster sustainable growth and eventual success.

We funders recognise the pivotal role of genuine innovation in entrepreneurship. Our stringent selection criteria filter through numerous applications to identify truly groundbreaking ideas. We often encounter applications proposing generic concepts lacking substantial differentiation, which we regretfully have to decline. Our focus remains on nurturing startups with the potential to become the next Google or Facebook—ventures with unique propositions and scalable models. Entrepreneurship demands more than passion; it requires

meticulous planning, resilience, and patience. Success is not instantaneous but evolves through iterative refinement and adaptation. Entrepreneurs must remain steadfast in their vision, continuously learn and adapt, and seek mentorship to navigate challenges effectively.

To aspiring entrepreneurs, both new and seasoned, I emphasize that while interest and intent are commendable, launching and sustaining a company demands much more. It necessitates thoughtful planning, unwavering commitment over time, and resilience in the face of challenges like funding setbacks or idea evolution. Drawing from my own journey as a first-generation entrepreneur, Today's startups often aim for

rapid multi million or billion-dollar success, yet such achievements are rarely immediate.

It's encouraging to witness more individuals embrace entrepreneurship, yet true success hinges on sustained commitment, focus, and perseverance. Securing funding marks just the beginning of an entrepreneur's journey, not its conclusion. Entrepreneurs must recognise that building a thriving enterprise demands continual effort to benefit themselves, investors, clients, and stakeholders alike.

(The writer is president of the Young Entrepreneurs Association and initiated Rs 500 million investment fund aimed at nurturing and mentoring promising Indian startups; views are personal)

# Kim, Putin vow to beat sanctions together

AP ■ SEOUL



Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked North Korea for supporting his actions in Ukraine and said their countries will cooperate closely to overcome US-led sanctions as he headed to Pyongyang on Tuesday for a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Putin's comments appeared in an op-ed piece in North Korean state media hours before he was expected to arrive for a two-day visit as the countries deepen their alignment in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with Washington. Putin, who will be making his first trip to North Korea in 24 years, said he highly appreciates its firm support of his invasion of Ukraine. He said the countries would continue to "resolutely oppose" what he described as Western ambitions "to hinder the establish-

ment of a multipolarized world order based on mutual respect for justice." Putin also said Russia and North Korea will develop trade and payment systems "that are not controlled by the West" and jointly oppose sanctions against the countries, which he described as "unilateral and illegal restrictive measures."

North Korea is under heavy UN Security Council economic sanctions over its nuclear weapons and missile programs, while Russia is also grappling with sanctions by the United States and its Western partners over its aggression in Ukraine. Putin said the countries will also expand cooperation in tourism, culture and educa-

tion. Before heading to North Korea, Putin earlier on Tuesday travelled to Yakutsk, a city in eastern Russia, where he was reportedly planning to meet the local governor, Aisen Nikolayev, and receive briefings on the region's technology and defense-related projects. Putin's visit comes amid growing concerns about an arms arrangement in which Pyongyang provides Moscow with badly needed munitions to fuel Russia's war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program. Military, economic and other exchanges between North Korea and Russia have sharply increased since Kim visited the Russian Far East in September for a meeting with Putin, their first since 2019. US and South Korean officials

have accused the North of providing Russia with artillery, missiles and other military equipment to help prolong the war in Ukraine, possibly in return for key military technologies and aid. Both Pyongyang and Moscow have denied accusations about North Korean weapons transfers, which would violate multiple UN Security Council sanctions Russia previously endorsed. Along with China, Russia has provided political cover for Kim's continuing efforts to advance his nuclear arsenal, repeatedly blocking US-led efforts to impose fresh UN sanctions on the North over its weapons tests. In March, a Russian veto at the United Nations ended monitoring of UN sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear program, prompting Western accusations that Moscow is seeking to avoid scrutiny as it buys weapons from

Pyongyang for use in Ukraine. US and South Korean officials have said they are discussing options for a new mechanism for monitoring the North. Earlier this year, Putin sent Kim a high-end Aurus Senat limousine, which he had shown to the North Korean leader when they met in September. Observers said the shipment violated a UN resolution banning the supply of luxury items to North Korea. John Kirby, spokesperson of the US National Security Council, said the deepening relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang is concerning, "not just because of the impacts it's going to have on the Ukrainian people, because we know North Korean ballistic missiles are still being used to hit Ukrainian targets, but because there could be some reciprocity here that could affect security on the Korean Peninsula."

# S Korean soldiers fire warning shots North Korean troops intrude for a 2nd time this month

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean soldiers fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers who temporarily crossed the rivals' land border on Tuesday for the second time this month, South Korea's military said. The South's military observed increased North Korean construction activities along their heavily armed border to install reinforced anti-tank barriers, reinforced roads and plant land mines. The work has gone on uninterrupted despite several explosions caused by mines that killed or injured an unspecified number of North Korean soldiers, said the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff. According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, around 20 to 30 North Korean soldiers, while engaging in unspecified construction work on the northern side of the border, briefly crossed the military demarcation line that bisects the countries as of 8:30 a.m. It said the North Korean soldiers retreated after the South broadcasts warnings and fired warning shots and the South's military didn't spot any suspicious activity after that. The South also fired warning shots on June 11 after another group of North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the MDL. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said that Tuesday's incident occurred in a different area along the central front-line region. It said it doesn't believe the North Korean soldiers intruded the border intentionally and that the North did not return fire. The South's military has said the border area is dense with

overgrown trees and plants that may have obscured the visibility of North Korean soldiers and caused them to cross the border. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said it suspects North Korea will expand its border construction activities, which started around April and is possibly aimed at making it harder for North Korean civilians or soldiers to defect to the South as Pyongyang's leadership attempts to strengthen its control over its people. "Our military is closely monitoring North Korean military activities in the frontline area while guarding against accidental situations," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. The border intrusions come as tensions rise between the war-divided rivals, who in recent weeks have engaged in Cold War-style psychological warfare and made it clear they are no longer bound by their landmark military agreement in 2018 to reduce tensions. The Korea's heavily fortified border, referred to as the Demilitarized Zone, has occasionally been a site of bloodshed and violent confrontations between the rivals. The military demarcation line marks the border between the two Koreas within the DMZ, which is 248 kilometers (154 miles) long and 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) wide. The zone is strewn with an estimated 2 million mines and also guarded by barbed wire fences, tank traps and combat troops on both sides. It's a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

# 3rd trial begins in alleged far-right coup plot in Germany

Berlin (AP): Eight people accused of involvement in a suspected far-right plot to topple the German government went on trial in Munich on Tuesday, in the last of three trials in the sprawling case.

The eight Germans, six men and two women, are charged with "preparation of high treasonous undertaking." They also face charges of membership in or founding a terrorist organization, and some of them are charged with preparing a serious act of violence. The case came to light in late 2022, shocking the country, and a total of 26 people are now in court. The alleged ringleaders and most prominent suspects, among them a self-styled prince and a former far-right lawmaker, went on trial in Frankfurt last month. A trial of nine people in Stuttgart that began at the end of April is focusing on the "military arm" of the plot. All are expected to be lengthy proceedings. At the Munich state court, 55 trial sessions have been set so far through the end of January, German news agency dpa reported. Prosecutors have said the suspects believed in "conspiracy myths" including Reich Citizens and QAnon ideology, and were convinced that Germany is ruled by a so-called deep state. Adherents of the Reich Citizens movement reject Germany's postwar constitution and have called for bringing down the government, while QAnon is a global conspiracy theory with roots in the United States.

The defendants in the Munich case include Ruth L. and Thomas T, alleged founding members of the group who prosecutors say co-led a so-called "transcommunication" department in the group's extended leadership. That was allegedly responsible for the "spiritual examination" of new members and for advising Heinrich XIII Prince Reuss, whom investigators say the group planned to install as Germany's provisional new leader. The group planned to storm into the parliament building in Berlin and arrest lawmakers, according to pros-

# Ex-Thai PM indicted on charge of royal defamation

AP ■ BANGKOK



Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was granted release on bail hours after he was formally indicted on Tuesday on a charge of defaming the country's monarchy in one of several court cases that have rattled Thai politics. Thaksin, an influential political figure despite being ousted from power in a coup 18 years ago, reported himself to prosecutors on Tuesday morning and was indicted, Prayuth Bejraguna, a spokesperson for the Office of the Attorney General, said at a news conference. Thaksin, 74, voluntarily returned to Thailand last year from self-imposed exile and served virtually all of his sentence on corruption-related charges in a hospital rather than prison on medical grounds. He was granted

release on parole in February. Since then, Thaksin has maintained a high profile and is seen as the unofficial power behind the party leading the government, Pheu Thai. He has travelled the country making public appearances and political observations that could upset the powerful conservative establishment that was behind his 2006 ouster. His removal from power had

started a deep political polarisation in Thailand. Thaksin's opponents, who were generally staunch royalists, accused him of corruption, abuse of power and disrespecting then-King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who died in 2016. Prosecution of the long-ago lese majeste case is seen by some analysts as a warning from Thaksin's enemies that he should tone down his political activities. Thaksin's lawyer, Winyat Chatmontree, told reporters that Thaksin was ready to enter the judicial process. The Criminal Court said Thaksin's bail release was approved with a bond of 500,000 baht (USD 13,000) under the condition that he cannot travel out of Thailand unless approved by court. His passport was confiscated. The law on defaming the monarchy, an offense known as lese majeste, is punishable by

three to 15 years in prison. It is among the harshest such laws globally and increasingly has been used in Thailand to punish government critics. Winyat said his client is "not worried, and he's always maintained that he hasn't done anything wrong. He's come here with full confidence in fighting his case". Thaksin was originally charged with lese majeste in 2016 for remarks he made a year earlier to journalists in South Korea. The case was not pursued at that time because he went into exile in 2008 to avoid punishment from cases he decried as political. His case is just one of the several that have complicated Thai politics since the Pheu Thai government took office after the Senate — a conservative, military-appointed body — successfully blocked the progressive Move Forward party,

which captured most votes, from taking power last year. Move Forward is now facing dissolution after the Election Commission asked the Constitutional Court to rule whether it is guilty of attempting to overthrow the system of constitutional monarchy by campaigning to amend the lese majeste law. Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin, who is from Pheu Thai, meanwhile, is being probed over his appointment of a Cabinet member who had been imprisoned for bribery. If found culpable, Srettha could be forced out of his position. Thailand's courts, especially the Constitutional Court, are considered bulwarks of the royalist establishment, which has used them and nominally independent state agencies such as the Election Commission to cripple political opponents.

# Half a million immigrants could get US citizenship under new plan from Biden

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden is taking an expansive election year step to offer relief to potentially hundreds of thousands of immigrants without legal status in the US, aiming to balance his own aggressive crackdown on the southern border earlier this month that enraged advocates and many Democratic lawmakers. The White House announced Tuesday that the Biden administration will, in the coming months, allow certain spouses of US citizens without legal status to apply for permanent residency and eventually citizenship. The move could affect upwards of half a million immigrants, according to senior administration officials. To qualify, an immigrant must have lived in the United States for 10 years as of Monday and be married to a US citizen. If a qualifying immigrant's application is approved, he or she would have three years to apply for a green card and receive a temporary work permit and be shielded from deportation in the meantime. About 50,000 noncitizen children with a parent who is

married to a US citizen could also potentially qualify for the same process, according to senior administration officials who briefed reporters on the proposal on the condition of anonymity. There is no requirement on how long the couple must have been married, and no one becomes eligible after Monday. That means immigrants who reach that 10-year mark after Monday will not qualify for the program, according to the officials.



President Joe Biden meets with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in the Oval Office at the White House, Monday. AP/PTI

Senior administration officials said they anticipate the process will be open for applications by the end of the summer, and fees to apply have yet to be determined. Biden will speak about his plans at a Tuesday event at the White House, which will also mark the 12th anniversary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, a popular Obama-era directive that offered deportation protections and temporary work per-

mits for young immigrants who lack legal status. White House officials privately encouraged Democrats in the House, which is in recess this week, to travel back to Washington to attend the announcement. The move could eventually make citizens of many of the estimated 1.1 million people who are married in to US citizens but, until now, must leave the country for years to obtain legal status. Claudia Zuniga, of Houston, married a man who was in the United States since 2007 but left for Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, after they wed in 2017 to bide time until he could return legally. Zuniga, 35, said her family's life "did a 180-degree turn" when her husband moved to Mexico. Reuniting with her husband "would be a dream come true." "My husband could be with us," she said. "We could focus on the well-being of our children." The Democratic president will also announce new regulations that will allow certain DACA beneficiaries and other young immigrants to more easily qualify for long-established work visas.

# S Korea orders doctors who joined protracted strike to return to work

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean officials issued return-to-work orders for doctors participating in a one-day walkout on Tuesday as part of a protracted strike against government plans to boost medical school admissions, starting next year. Since February, more than 12,000 trainee doctors have remained on strike amid a deepening standoff with government officials, who want to grow the country's number of doctors by up to 10,000 by 2035. Many reject the plan, saying schools won't be able to handle the increased flow and that the quality of the country's medical services would suffer. About 4 per cent of the country's 36,000 private medical facilities, categorised as clinics, have told authorities they would participate in a one-day strike on Tuesday, according to South Korea's Health and Welfare Ministry. The strike came a day after hundreds of medical school professors at four major hospitals affiliated with Seoul National University entered an indefinite walkout, raising concerns about disruptions in medical services. South Korean Deputy Health Minister Jun Byung-wang

said the one-day strike by clinics and the walkout by SNU-affiliated medical professors haven't immediately caused significant problems in medical services. He accused the protracted strike of threatening to destroy a "trusting relationship between doctors and patients our society has built for long." "We cannot allow unlimited freedom to the medical profession," Jun said on Tuesday. "Since they benefit from a medical licensing system that limits the supply (of doctors) and ensures their monopoly of the profession, doctors must uphold their end of professional and ethical responsibilities and legal obligations under the medical law." Under South Korean law, doctors defying return-to-work orders can face suspensions of their licenses or other punishment. Jun said they planned to request hospitals to pursue damage suits against the striking medical professors if their walkouts prolong and disrupt medical services. He said hospitals that fail to sufficiently respond to the walkouts may face disadvantages in health insurance compensation and that the government plans to push legal action against any hospital that cancels reserved treat-

ments with patients without notifying them in advance. In a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, President Yoon Suk Yeol called the monthslong strike "regrettable" and warned that his government will sternly respond to "illegal activities that abandon patients". The striking doctors suffered a significant legal setback last month when the Seoul High Court rejected their request to block the government plan, which would raise the yearly medical school enrollment quota by 2,000 from the current cap of 3,058. South Korea's doctor-to-patient ratio is among the lowest in the developed world. Government officials say the country significantly needs more doctors to cope with the fast-aging population and have downplayed doctors' concerns about a possible decline in future incomes. The striking doctors are a fraction of all doctors in South Korea, estimated to number between 115,000 and 140,000. Still, the walkouts have resulted in cancellations of numerous surgeries and other treatments at some large hospitals, which are more dependent on junior doctors and trainees.

# Tens of millions in US under dangerous heat warnings

AP ■ PHOENIX

Extreme heat alerts continued for tens of millions of people in the United States on Tuesday as cities including Chicago broke records at the start of a week of sweltering weather. States in the Midwest started to bake Monday in what the National Weather Service called a dangerous and long duration heat wave that was expected to stretch from Iowa to Maine into at least Friday. On Monday, Chicago broke a 1957 temperature record with a high of 97 degrees Fahrenheit (36.1 degrees Celsius). Hot and muggy conditions will continue this week with peak heat indexes near 100 F (37.7 C) at times, the National Weather Service in Chicago said in a post on social platform X. The heat didn't stop people in Chicago's Grant Park from ordering the hottest dishes off

the menu at the food truck where Emmanuel Ramos is a cook, WBBM-TV reported. "They be ordering the hottest stuff on the hottest day," he said. "They order ramen, corn — they just want everything hot. I don't know why," said Ramos. "Right now, something that would be good is the smoothies." The U.S. last year saw the most heat waves, consisting of abnormally hot weather lasting more than two days, since 1936. Officials warned residents to take precautions. Much of the Midwest and Northeast were under heat warnings or watches with officials announcing the opening of cooling centers and urging people to limit outdoor activities when possible and to check in with family members and neighbors who may be vulnerable to the heat. The heat has been especially

dangerous in recent years in Phoenix, where 645 people died from heat-related causes in 2023, which was a record. Temperatures there hit 112 F (44.4 C) on Saturday. Weather service forecasters say the first two weeks of June in Phoenix were the hottest start to the month on record there. A meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Phoenix, Ted Whittock, advised reducing time outdoors between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., staying hydrated and wearing light, looser fitting clothing. More than 100 cooling centers were open in the city and surrounding county, including two new overnight ones. In Southern California, firefighters increased their containment of a large wildfire in mountains north of Los Angeles on Monday after a weekend of explosive, wind-driven growth along Interstate 5.

# China targets farmers in response to EU tariffs on electric cars

AP ■ BEIJING

The Chinese government is taking aim at European farmers instead of German automakers by launching an investigation into European Union pork imports, just days after the EU said it plans to impose provisional tariffs on China-made electric vehicles. The Commerce Ministry didn't mention the EV tariffs when it announced Monday that it is opening an anti-dumping investigation into pork from Europe, but the move is widely seen as a response to the EU move on electric cars. It also gives China a bargaining chip in any trade negotiations. China could have slapped a 25 per cent duty on imports of gasoline-powered vehicles with large engines in the name of combating climate change, a step that would have hit Mercedes and BMW hard. In choosing not to do so, at



least for now, the government may be acknowledging the public opposition of the German auto industry to the EU tariffs, as well as its sizeable production in China.

The Chinese market is a major one for German automakers, and the head of the country's auto association, the VDA, described the June 12 EU tariff announce-

ment as a further step away from global cooperation. "The risk of a global trade conflict is rising further as a result of this measure," Hildegard Muller said in a statement. The investigation of EU pork imports will cover various products including fresh and frozen pork meat, intestines and other internal organs. The announcement says it is expected to take one year, with a possible six-month extension. Olof Gill, a spokesperson on trade for the European Commission, told journalists in Brussels that EU farm subsidies "are strictly in line with our WTO obligations" and that the commission would follow the investigation very closely and intervene as needed to ensure that the Chinese probe complies with World Trade Organization rules. Chinese officials have said the EU investigation into subsidies for electric vehicle

production in China is "typical protectionist behavior" that disregards WTO rules. The EU plans to impose provisional tariffs of 17.4 per cent to 38.1 per cent on EVs from China for four months starting July 4. They would apply to vehicles exported to Europe by both Chinese and foreign brands, including Tesla. EU exports of pork products to China hit a peak in 2020 at 7.4 billion Euros (USD 7.9 billion). Since then they have dropped, hitting 2.5 billion Euros (USD 2.6 billion) last year. Almost half of that total came from Spain. "We must avoid an escalation of trade countermeasures," said Spanish Economy Minister Carlos Cuerpo. The Spanish pork industry association Interporc said in a statement that it would "offer complete collaboration with Chinese authorities" and provide them with any documents they required.



# Talks by EU leaders on job nominees ends sans result

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Leaders of European Union countries reached no final agreement on candidates for the bloc's top jobs Monday, but several praised the record of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and she appeared on track to secure their endorsement later this month for a second term in office.

"There is no agreement tonight at this stage," EU Council President Charles Michel said after chairing an informal dinner summit in Brussels.

The 27 leaders were weighing the fallout from the recent European elections and how to take those results into account as they nominate candidates for the top posts.

"This conversation was today a useful step to prepare the next European Council," Michel said, referring to the next meeting of EU presidents and prime ministers June 27-28. He refused to be drawn out on the chances of von der Leyen and others, saying only: "It will be clarified next week."

The June 6-9 elections saw the European Parliament shift to the right and dealt major blows to mainstream governing parties in Paris and Berlin. The Franco-German motor that usually propels EU politics along was notably weakened, and hard right parties there gained ground.

Under the EU's complicated division of powers, the leaders get to nominate the next president of the commission, which is responsible for drawing up EU policy on everything from climate to the colossal shared budget.

"I'm positive about Ursula von der Leyen," Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told reporters as he arrived for the meeting.

Over the last five years, Von der Leyen led a huge drive to secure billions of COVID-19 vaccine doses during the pandemic, set up an economic recovery fund and drummed up support for Ukraine in its war with Russia, including by backing Kyiv's future EU membership.

But Rutte added: "I'm not saying that we support her. There is a big possibility that we will,



but it will be of course a question of how the whole package will emerge."

That package involves three other top jobs: Michel's post as Council president; EU foreign policy chief, currently Josep Borrell of Spain, from the centre-left; and president of the European Parliament, currently the conservative Roberta Metsola from Malta.

The council president's job is to broker deals between the 27 member states, while the top diplomat represents the EU on the world stage. Under the EU's treaties, the leaders' choice of candidates should reflect the results of the election, sharing the posts among the winners.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz dodged questions about whether he personally endorsed von der Leyen for a second term, but underlined that his backing would depend on her working with mainstream parties rather than right-wing parties.

Ahead of the election, many socialist and Green lawmakers criticized von der Leyen for trying to win the support of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who is from the right-wing populist Brothers of Italy party.

"What is clear is that there cannot be a commission presidency based on the support of right-wing and right-wing populist parties," Scholz said.

Several leaders had said they did not expect a final agreement on the nominees Monday night, but they did insist the process should not drag on.

"It's important that we bring clarity quickly to these matters," Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said.

"I don't think there'll be any

gratitude from Irish citizens or European citizens if politicians were in Brussels are talking for weeks on end about who's going to do what role when there are so many pressing issues on a European and global level," he said.

Von der Leyen, a German conservative who did not speak to reporters as she arrived at the summit, is well placed after a strong showing for her centre-right European People's Party parliamentary group.

But nothing is guaranteed. Von der Leyen's presidential style has at times riled her commission colleagues, and she is deeply unpopular in some corners of the EU Parliament, where she will need the support of 361 of the 720 lawmakers to keep her job.

In Brussels, names for the big posts have circulated for months.

Former Portuguese Socialist Prime Minister Antonio Costa is frequently mentioned for the role of council president.

Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, well known for her tough line on Russia, has been floated as the bloc's potential top diplomat. Metsola wants to lead the parliament again.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said mainstream parties — like the European People's Party he hails from, the centre-left Socialists and Democrats, and the pro-business liberals — still hold a majority in the assembly, despite hard right successes in France and Germany.

"My feeling is that it's enough to arrange the whole new (job) landscape, including the president of the commission," he told reporters ahead of the meeting.

# Ukraine claims its drones hit Russian oil facility, sparking huge blaze

Kyiv (AP)

Ukraine claimed responsibility on Tuesday for an overnight drone attack on a Russian oil facility that started a massive blaze in the latest long-range strike by Kyiv's forces on a border region.

Ukraine has in recent months stepped up aerial assaults on Russian soil, targeting refineries and oil terminals in an effort to slow down the Kremlin's war machine. Moscow's army is pressing hard along the front line in eastern Ukraine, where a shortage of troops and ammunition in the third year of war has made defenders vulnerable. The attack set fire to an oil reservoir in Russia's Rostov region and more than 200 firefighters were at the scene, according to Rostov Gov. Vasily Golubev. The blaze covered an area of 5,000 square meters

(55,000 square feet) but there were no casualties, Russia's Emergency Ministry said.

A Ukrainian official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give the information to the media, said the attack was a special operation of Ukraine's Security Service, known as SBU. The drones targeted two Rostov oil depots that have 22 oil reservoirs, the official said. It was not possible to independently confirm the claim.

Kyiv officials normally decline comment about attacks on Russian territory, though they sometimes refer obliquely to them. Ukrainian drone developers have been extending the weapons' range for months, as Kyiv attempts to compensate for its battlefield disadvantage.

# NATO troops join drills in Baltic Sea region

AP ■ WARSAW (POLAND)



Some 9,000 troops from 20 NATO countries have been participating this month in military exercises in the Baltic Sea region, which has become strategically sensitive following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Sweden, which had joined the drills in the past, took part in the Baltops exercises for the first time in June as a full NATO member after joining the trans-Atlantic military alliance earlier this year. The weeks of training include sea mine sweeps, submarine detection and landings.

The exercises by navy, air force and ground troops are being held on the Baltic Sea, as well as in Sweden and its strategic island of Gotland, and in Lithuania, Poland and Germany. They will run through Thursday and include some 50 navy ships and

45 aircraft and helicopters. The drills are organised by NATO's Naval Striking and Support Forces and the US 6th fleet. Major gas pipelines run across the Baltic seabed from Poland and Norway to Germany, Russia and other European nations. "The dynamic challenges of the Baltic Region demand a refined, precise, and efficient amphibious capability; and that is exactly what we conducted in Sweden

today. The landing location was intentional: NATO's presence on Gotland Island is vital to protecting the security and stability of the Baltic Sea," said US Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Andrew T. Priddy, NATO's Naval Striking and Support Forces chief of staff. Security concerns have increased in the region since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 and increased its hostile activity in the Baltic Sea area.

# China urges Biden not to sign Tibet Bill

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Tuesday urged US President Joe Biden not to sign the Tibet policy bill, warning of "resolute measures," as it expressed "strong concern" over the visit of a high-level US Congress delegation to Dharamshala to meet the Dalai Lama.

A bipartisan US congressional delegation, led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, is visiting India to strengthen bilateral ties and to meet the 88-year-old Tibetan spiritual leader.

Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is part of the delegation that reached Dharamshala, in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, on Tuesday. Dharamshala is the seat of power for Tibet's government in exile since the spiritual leader stepped into India six decades ago.

The US House of Representatives voted 391-26 last Wednesday to approve the Promoting and Resolving the Tibet-China Dispute Act, which was passed by the Senate, a media report said, adding, that the bill would direct funds to counter what it

calls "disinformation" from Beijing about Tibet's history, people and institutions.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian, while reacting to the US delegation visit, told a media briefing here: "The 14th Dalai Lama is not a pure religious figure, but a political exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion."

"We are gravely concerned over the relevant reports and urge the US side to fully recognise the anti-China separatist nature of the Dalai group, honour the commitments the US has made to China on issues related to Xizang, have no contact with the Dalai group in any form, and stop sending the wrong signal to the world," he said.

China officially refers to Tibet as Xizang. Lin also urged Biden not to sign the bipartisan Tibet policy bill adopted by both the US Senate and the House of Representatives. The bill awaits Biden's signature to make it into a law, according to media reports in Washington.

The bill seeks to counter China's narrative about its control over Tibet and promote dialogue between the Chinese government and the

Dalai Lama. Claiming that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times, Lin said it always remained China's territory and "Tibet related affairs are purely China's internal affairs that brook no external interference."

"No one and no force should ever attempt to destabilise Tibet to contain and suppress China. Such attempts will never succeed," he said.

"We urge the US side to adhere to its commitments of recognising Xizang as part of China and not supporting Xizang independence. The US must not sign the bill into law. China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests," he said without elaborating.

Lin said Tibet now enjoys a tranquil and harmonious society, positive economic growth, has robust safeguards on people's welfare and has opened up new grounds for long-term stability and high-quality development.

Detailing the Tibet Bill, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported earlier that it refutes the Chinese government's claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times, and would make

it US policy that the dispute over Tibet's status is unresolved.

It would also make it US policy that "Tibet" refers not only to the Tibet autonomous region as defined by the Chinese government but also to Tibetan areas of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, the Post reported.

China in April this year said it would talk only with the representatives of the Dalai Lama and not the officials of the Tibetan government in exile based in India. At the same time, China ruled out dialogue on the Dalai Lama's long-pending demand for autonomy for his remote Himalayan homeland.

In its talks with China between 2002 and 2010, the Tibetan side pitched genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people in line with the middle-way policy as proposed by the Dalai Lama, who has said he does not seek political independence for Tibet but seeks autonomy for all Tibetan areas which included Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces besides the current official Tibet Autonomous Region, a truncated version of Tibet before it was annexed by China.

# Swedish diplomat says his release from detention in Iran like a dream

**Copenhagen (Denmark):** The Swedish European Union diplomat who was held in Iran for two years and freed in a prisoner swap over the weekend said on Tuesday that his release was "the dream that I sometimes did not dare to believe in".

Johan Floderus and a second Swedish citizen, Saeed Azizi, returned to Sweden on Saturday in exchange for Hamid Nouri, an Iranian convicted in Stockholm of committing war crimes over his part in 1988 mass executions in the Islamic Republic.

Floderus was arrested in April 2022 at the Tehran airport while returning from a vacation with friends. He had been held for months before his family and others went public with his detention.

"After two long years, I am finally a free man, reunited with my family, my fiancée, and will be able to marry," he said in a statement to Swedish media.

"The dream that I sometimes did not dare to believe in has come true — to be back with my loved ones and to live my life in freedom."

# US renews warning it's obligated to defend the Philippines

AP ■ MANILA

The United States renewed a warning on Tuesday that it's obligated to defend its close treaty ally a day after Filipino navy personnel were injured and their supply boats damaged in one of the most serious confrontations between the Philippines and China in a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, officials said.

China and the Philippines blamed each other for instigating Monday's hostilities in the Second Thomas Shoal, which has been occupied by a small Filipino navy contingent aboard a grounded warship that's been closely watched by Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships in a years-long territorial standoff.

There is fear the disputes, long regarded as an Asian flashpoint, could escalate and pit the United States and China in a larger conflict.

US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell discussed China's actions with Philippine counterpart, Maria Theresa Lazaro, in a telephone call. Both agreed that China's "dangerous actions threatened regional peace and stability," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

Campbell reaffirmed that the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, which obligates Washington and Manila to help defend the other in major conflicts, "extends to armed attacks on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft — including those of its coast guard —

anywhere in the South China Sea," according to Miller. A Philippine government task force overseeing the territorial disputes condemned what it said were "dangerous maneuvers, including ramming and towing," which disrupted a routine effort to transport food, water and other supplies to the Filipinos manning the territorial outpost aboard the BRP Sierra Madre at the shoal.

Despite the illegal, aggressive, and reckless actions by the Chinese maritime forces, our personnel showed restraint and professionalism, refrained from escalating the tension, and carried on with their mission," the Philippine task force said without elaborating.

"Their actions put at risk the lives of our personnel and damaged our boats in blatant violation of international law," The Chinese coast guard said the Philippines "is entirely responsible for this." It said a Philippine vessel "ignored China's repeated solemn warnings ... and dangerously approached a Chinese vessel in normal navigation in an unprofessional manner, resulting in a collision." Two speedboats — attempting to deliver construction materials and other supplies to a military vessel stationed at the shoal — accompanied the supply ship, according to China's Foreign Ministry, which described its coast guard's maneuver as "professional, restrained, reasonable and lawful."

# Muslims wrap up Haj with stoning of devil

AP ■ MINA

Muslim pilgrims are wrapping up the Hajj, or pilgrimage, in the deadly summer heat on Tuesday with the third day of the symbolic stoning of the devil, and the last circumambulation around the Kaaba, Islam's holiest site, in the city of Mecca.

The three-day stoning ritual in Mina, a desert site outside Mecca, is among the final rites of the Hajj, and symbolizes the casting away of evil and sin. It started a day after pilgrims congregated Saturday at a sacred hill, known as Mount Arafat.

The final days of the annual Hajj coincide with Muslims around the world celebrating the Eid al-Adha holiday when Muslims with financial means commemorate Prophet Ibrahim's test of faith, when God ordered him to sacrifice his only son, by slaughtering livestock and animals and distributing the meat to the

poor.

The Hajj is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Its rituals largely commemorate the accounts of Prophet Ibrahim and his son Prophet Ismail, Ismail's mother Hajar and Prophet Muhammad, according to the Quran, Islam's holy book. In the Islamic version, God stayed his hand and Ismail was spared.

"I am reassured. I feel comfortable," Mejahed al-Mehrab, a Yemeni pilgrim, told The Associated Press after he was done with the third day of the stoning ritual. "Anyone who can visit the Grand Mosque (in Mecca) should do so."

The burning sun and suffocating hot weather remained Tuesday, with temperatures, expected to reach 47 degrees Celsius (116.6 degrees Fahrenheit) in Mecca and the sacred sites in and around the city, according to the Saudi National Center for Metrology.

Many pilgrims, particularly

elderly ones, were seen collapsed and in need of medical assistance because of the heat. Dozens, including 14 from Jordan, were also reported dead. After the symbolic stoning, pilgrims head to Mecca to perform "tawaf," or circumambulation, circling the Kaaba in the Grand Mosque counterclockwise seven times. That circumambulation, known as the Farewell Tawaf, marks the end of Hajj as pilgrims prepare to leave the holy city. Once the Hajj is over, men are expected to shave their heads, and women to snip a lock of hair in a sign of renewal.

Most of the pilgrims then leave Mecca for the city of Medina, about 340 kilometers (210 miles) away, to pray in Prophet Muhammad's tomb, the Sacred Chamber.

The Sacred Chamber tomb is part of the prophet's mosque, one

of the three holiest sites in Islam, along with the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

All Muslims are required to make the Hajj once in their lives if they are physically and financially able to do so. Many wealthy Muslims make the pilgrimage more than once.

More than 1.83 million Muslims performed Hajj in 2024, including more than 1.6 million pilgrims from 22 countries, and around 222,000 Saudi citizens and residents, according to Saudi Hajj authorities.

**LOST & FOUND**

I, GS Garcha S/o Late Hazara Singh R/o 1039, Sector 36-C, Chandigarh-160036 have lost original share certificate of Flat No. 713, Membership No. 473, Category B-1 in SAIL Cooperative Group Housing Society Ltd., Plot 35, Sec-4, Dwarka, Delhi-78, FINDER Contact: 9216788075.

# King Charles III felicitates India-born brain trauma expert

PTI ■ LONDON

An India-born brain trauma expert and Professor of Anaesthesia at the University of Cambridge has been conferred with one of the high honours by Britain's King Charles III for "services to neurocritical care".

Prof David Krishna Menon, Head of Division of Anaesthesia at the University of Cambridge, was conferred with a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) by the 75-year-old monarch in his annual Birthday Honours list over the weekend.

Menon, who trained in Medicine, Anaesthesia and Intensive Care at the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER) in Pondicherry, founded the Neurosciences Critical Care Unit (NCCU) at Addenbrooke's National Health Service (NHS) teaching hospital in Cambridge and is renowned for his global clinical and research leadership in



traumatic brain injury. "I am deeply honoured to be nominated for a CBE and accept it on behalf of all those who have worked with me during what has been — and continues to be — a very rewarding career," said Professor Menon.

Menon, the son of P.G.K. Menon — a senior official at All India Radio (AIR) in Delhi, was raised in the city before going on for training in the field of

medicine with his research interests focussed on neurocritical care, secondary brain injury, neuroinflammation, and metabolic imaging of acute brain injury.

According to the Cambridge University Hospitals (CUH) NHS Foundation Trust, as the first director of NCCU, he pioneered the first recognised training programme for specialist neurocritical care in the UK.

Protocols developed improved clinical outcomes in severe head injury and the management of acute intracranial haemorrhage. Menon has been an intensive care consultant on the NCCU since 1993, and remains active as a full member of the neurocritical care clinical team.

He is also a director of research, principal investigator in the Wolfson Brain Imaging Centre, and principal investigator in the van Geest Centre for Brain Repair, at the University of Cambridge.

# Southern China faces heavy floods, and landslides kill 9

Beijing (AP)

Southern China was reeling on Tuesday from heavy rains that triggered landslides killing at least nine people, knocking out power for entire villages and burying crops. Meanwhile, northern parts of the country are battling drought, as the country faces two extremes of severe weather. Four people were killed and two others were missing in Wuping county in the coastal province of Fujian due to landslides caused by torrential rain. Severe downpours started on Sunday afternoon, with authorities measuring 372.4 millimetres (14.7 inches) of rainfall over a 24-hour period. At least 378 houses collapsed in the county, and 880 hectares (2,175 acres) of crops were damaged, amounting to economic losses of at least 415 million yuan (US\$ 57.2 million) in Wuping, authorities said, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

**GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR**

Tender Notice Reference No. GNDU/DSW/1-26/2024

Office of Dean Student's Welfare invites online bids for the following:-

Sr. No.	Item	Quantity
1.	Allotment of Mess	12
2.	Allotment of Canteens	14

Closing Date & Time: 09-07-2024 at 5:00 p.m.  
For details log onto [www.eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in)

Note: Any Corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.

Director  
Guru Nanak Dev University,  
Amritsar-143005 (Punjab)

NA/12/23455/2023/34667 Dated CHD :- 6/18/2024

**Baha Farid University of Health Sciences**

Sadiq Road, Faridkot -151203  
Ph. 01639-256232, 256236

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items upto 04.07.2024

- Supply of Computer and UPS 2) Purchase of Projector and IT equipments 3) Rate contract for the purchase of HP Cartridges for various printers 4) Supply of Classroom Furniture items 5) Providing of Housekeeping services 6) purchase of items for Video Conferencing at BFUHS, Faridkot 7) Supply and installation of UTM Firewall

E-tender is invited for the procurement of following item upto 11.07.2024

- supply of the Printed Answer Books (Theory & Practical) and OMR Sheet for the University 2) Purchase of Canon Toner 3) Purchase of LAN networking 4) Digital Evaluation Project 5) Purchase of Physiotherapy equipments for SINPMs, Badal 6) Fully automated chemistry Chemluminescence on reagent rental basis 7) Fully automated chemistry Analyzer on reagent rental basis 8) Purchase of Bed sheets for Hospital.

E-tender is invited for the procurement of following item with pre bid meeting upto 24.07.2024

- Purchase of CBCT machine for Dentistry department 2) Purchase of High speed Refrigerated Centrifuge 3) Purchase of Advanced Laparoscopy Vessel Sealing system.

Note: Pre-bid meeting shall be held. Please refer tender document for Date, time and venue for pre-bid meeting.

Terms and conditions can be downloaded from <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The tenders will be accepted in E-Tender mode only. Bidder can also download tender notification and document from the University website i.e. [www.bfuhhs.ac.in](http://www.bfuhhs.ac.in)

00/12/252/2023/34645 Dated CHD :- 6/18/2024 Registrar

**verka**  
Har Gita, Har Gita

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.  
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX No. 0172-5041812,66

Notice Inviting Tender [www.verka.coop](http://www.verka.coop)

e tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Mohali Dairy a) Annual rate contract for used Corrugated boxes/cones/rolls scrap, assorted used curd/ kheer cups/ misc bottles scrap, assorted used matka scrap, Misc. used Carnies (capacity 1 to 15 litre) Scrap, Misc used Carnies (capacity above 20 to 50 litres) scrap, used empty broke plastic tray scrap and torned empty SMP craft paper bags scrap and Half yearly rate contract for disposal of other unserviceable items lying at Verka Mohali Dairy. b) High-speed wet biomass management units large capacity. c) Mower over 15 HP (reading, bailing, threshing & bundle making & prime mower (Preferably combine prevention version).	01 No. 02 No's
2.	For Verka Patiala Dairy Labour contract for providing of unskilled, semi skilled, skilled, highly skilled and suitable eligible personnel for different posts through outsourcing.	01.08.2024 to 31.07.2025
3.	For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy a) Milk Bar at Civil Hospital, Gurdaspur and Bus stand, Balala, b) Outsourcing of various activities of city supply dispatch dock.	Two years Annual
4.	For Verka CFP, Bhatiana, Khanna Disposal of Old Bardana (Jute & P.P Bags)	Annual

NOTE:  
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NT), please visit our website i.e. [www.verka.coop](http://www.verka.coop) & e Tendering portal i.e. [eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://eproc.punjab.gov.in).  
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

NA/12/23454/2023/34664 Dated CHD :- 6/18/2024

# Fitch raises India's FY24-25 growth forecast to 7.2 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fitch Ratings on Tuesday raised India's growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7.2 per cent, from 7 per cent projected in March, saying elevated consumer confidence will drive spending, besides increased investments. In June update to its global economic outlook report, Fitch said it expects inflation to decline to 4.5 per cent by end of this year and RBI to cut policy interest rates by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent. "We expect the Indian economy to expand by a strong 7.2 per cent in FY24/25 (an upward revision of 0.2 pp

from the March GEO)," Fitch said in its global economic outlook report. Investment will continue to rise but more slowly than in recent quarters, while consumer spending will recover with elevated consumer confidence, it said. For the fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27, Fitch projected growth rates of 6.5 per cent and 6.2 per cent, respectively. Fitch's estimates for FY25 are in line with that of RBI which earlier this month projected Indian economy to expand 7.2 per cent in the current fiscal on the back of improving rural demand and moderating inflation. While the Asian Development



Bank (ADB) estimates growth at 7 per cent, S&P Global Ratings and Morgan Stanley project growth rate of 6.8 per cent.

Moody's Ratings and Deloitte India estimates India's GDP to grow at 6.6 per cent in 2024-25 fiscal. The Indian economy grew 8.2

per cent in the last fiscal (2023-24), with a 7.8 per cent expansion in March quarter. Fitch said purchasing managers survey data point to continued growth at the start of the current financial year. It said signs of the coming monsoon season being more normal should support growth and make inflation less volatile, though a recent heatwave poses a risk. "We expect growth in later years to slow and approach our medium-term trend estimate," it said, adding growth will be driven by consumer spending and investment. Consumer price inflation has only edged down since the

start of the calendar year, with annual inflation at 4.7 per cent in May from 5.7 per cent in December 2023. According to official forecasts, rainfall during June-September is likely to be above average, Fitch said, adding this should limit the inflationary risks from food price spikes. "We expect headline inflation to continue declining to 4.5 per cent by calendar year-end, and average 4.3 per cent in 2025 and 2026, staying slightly above the midpoint of its target range (4 per cent +/- 2 per cent)," Fitch said. As per government data, retail inflation in May eased to 1-year low of 4.75 per cent.



## Housing rent growth moderates in top seven cities, says Anarock

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Average monthly rent for residential properties has risen 2-4 per cent so far this quarter compared with the January-March period across seven major cities, according to Anarock. Real estate consultant Anarock said that the growth in housing rent across the top seven cities — Delhi-NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad and Bengaluru — has moderated because of improvement in housing supply. The data is based on average rent for a 2-BHK flat of 1,000 square feet. "Average residential rental prices across key markets in these cities saw a 2-4 per cent quarterly rise in Q2 (April-June) 2024 to date over the preceding quarter. The Q1 2024 saw rents in these markets rise by between 4-9 per cent quarterly against Q4 2023," the report said. The average rent for a standard 1,000 square feet 2-BHK apartment in Bengaluru's Whitefield rose by 4 per cent to Rs 35,000 per month in Q2 2024 to date from Rs 32,500 per month in January-March this year. However, the rentals rose by 8 per cent during January-March this year compared with the preceding quarter. "In India, the second quarter of most years typically sees rents increase more than in other quarters due to the commencement of the new

academic year and the employment of new staff. This year, declining rental value growth coincides with substantial new housing supply entering these markets," Santhosh Kumar, Vice Chairman of Anarock, said. Anarock data shows that the top 7 cities are set to deliver 5.31 lakh new units in 2024 as against 4.35 lakh units in the last year. This denotes a 22 per cent annual supply increase this year if delivery schedules remain on track. As per the data, the average rents in Noida's Sector 150 rose by a mere 4 per cent to Rs 25,000 per month in the April-June quarter from Rs 24,000 per month in January-March 2024. The quarterly hike stood at 9 per cent in January-March 2024 as against the October-December period of 2023. Sohna Road and Dwarka saw a 3 per cent and 2 per cent increase in rent, respectively, so far this quarter. Average housing rent in MMR's key markets Chembur and Mulund rose by just 2 per cent against the preceding quarter (Q1 2024). In January-March 2024, it rose by over 4 per cent against Q4 2023. Hyderabad's HITECH City and Gachibowli saw average rents rising by 3 per cent each in April-June 2024 to date over the preceding quarter. In January-March 2024, the quarterly average rent hike in both these markets was 5 per cent.

## Sebi invites application to hire executive director

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets watchdog Sebi has started the process to recruit an executive director and invited applications to fill the vacancy. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has invited applications for the post until July 18. The appointment of executive director will be on a deputation or contractual basis, for a period of three years, the regulator said in a public notice issued last week. The candidate applying for the position is required to have at least 20 years of experience in dealing with problems related to the securities market or special knowledge or experience of law, investigation, finance, economics and accountancy, among others. At present, Sebi has 10 executive directors -- S V Muralidhar Rao, G.P. Garg, Pramod Rao, Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, B Rajendran, Ruchi Chojer, Manoj Kumar, Govindayapalli Ram Mohan Rao, G Babita Rayudu and V S Sundaresan. Earlier this month, Sebi



initiated the process to hire 49 officers in different departments this year, a move that will help in faster and more effective execution of its regulatory role. Applications have been invited for 49 posts of Officer Grade A (Assistant Manager) for categories including general, legal, information technology, engineering electrical, research and official language streams till June 30. Sebi is a statutory regulatory body established by an Act of Parliament to protect the interests of investors in securities, promote the development of and regulate the securities market.

## Rupee jumps 13 paise to settle at 83.42 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 13 paise to settle at 83.42 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, buoyed by fresh inflow of foreign capital and a firm trend in domestic equity markets, wherein benchmark indices scaled new peaks. Forex traders said reports of dollar selling by public sector banks supported the Indian currency. However, higher crude oil prices capped the gains in the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.52 and hit the intraday high of 83.39 against the greenback during the session. It finally settled at 83.42 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 13 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had settled 1 paise lower at 83.55 against the US dollar. Forex markets were closed on Monday on account of Bakri Id. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the rupee gained as domestic markets hit new all-time highs and amid fresh foreign fund inflows.



"Reports of selling of dollars by state-run banks also supported the rupee. However, a positive tone in the US dollar and surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains," he said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.10 to Rs 83.70." Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 105.06, higher by 0.12 per cent. According to analysts, the US dollar gained after hawkish comments by officials of the US Federal Reserve, while market participants were awaiting further cues from retail sales and industrial production data from the US. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.33

per cent to USD 83.97 per barrel. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 308.37 points, or 0.40 per cent, to close at a new peak of 77,301.14 points. The broader NSE Nifty settled 92.30 points, or 0.39 per cent, higher to close at an all-time high of 23,557.90 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Friday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 2,175.86 crore, according to exchange data. Analysts attributed the strong investor sentiment to the firm domestic macroeconomic outlook. Fitch Ratings on Tuesday raised India's growth forecast for current fiscal to 7.2 per cent, from 7 per cent projected in March, citing a recovery in consumer spending and increased investment. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves jumped USD 4.307 billion to a new all-time high of USD 655.817 billion for the week ended June 7, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday. The kitty had jumped USD 4.837 billion to USD 651.51 billion in the previous reporting week.

## Alembic gets USFDA nod for Dabigatran Etxelate capsules

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Alembic Pharmaceuticals Ltd on Tuesday said it has received final approval from the US health regulator for its generic Dabigatran Etxelate capsules 75 mg and 150 mg used to reduce risk of stroke and blood clots in adults with a certain medical condition. The US Food & Drug Administration (USFDA) has also granted tentative approval for the Abbreviated New Drug Application (ANDA) for Dabigatran Etxelate capsules 110 mg. Alembic Pharmaceuticals, said in a statement. The approved ANDA is therapeutically equivalent to the Reference Listed Drug product (RLD), Pradaxa Capsules, 75 mg, 110 mg, and 150 mg of Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Boehringer), it added. The Dabigatran Etxelate capsules are indicated for the reduction of risk of stroke and systemic embolism in adults who have a medical condition called atrial fibrillation that is not caused by a heart valve problem.

## Chennai plant of JK Tyre bags International Certification

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The Chennai plant of JK Tyre and Industries, the flagship company of JK Group has bagged the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification Plus recognition, for its commitment to integrating sustainability into the manufacturing processes, the tyre major said on Tuesday. The Chennai manufacturing facility which was certified as a 'zero-liquid' discharge unit in 2021 also secured the National Energy Leader at the 21st edition of National Award for Excellence in Energy Management in 2020. "JK Tyre becomes first Indian tyre manufacturer with ISCC Plus Certification for its Chennai plant. The certification underscores the company's commitment towards integrating sustainability into the manufacturing processes and promoting an environmentally conscious future," a company statement said here. "Green manufacturing embodies our commitment to sustainable development. By reducing our footprint and utilising resources judiciously, we have consistently set industry standards over the years," said the company's Chairman and Managing Director Dr Raghupati Singhania.

## HUDCO raises USD 200 mn from overseas lenders

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has raised USD 200 million (JPY 30 billion) in its maiden foray into the syndicated loan market, its arranger said on Tuesday. The state-run body has raised the five-year money as part of its inaugural "social loan", Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) said. The deal, led by SMBC's Singapore branch, saw an oversubscription with a total of nine lenders, and was upsized from its original launch size of JPY 15 billion to JPY 30 billion after exercising the greenshoe option, an official statement said. The inaugural social loan will enable further expansion of HUDCO's social housing platform to improve the

quality of life for the Indian community and enhance infrastructure facilities in urban areas, the statement said. SMBC acted as the sole mandated lead arranger, book runner and social loan coordinator. "We look forward to expanding our reach to the underserved communities and strengthening the local community's access to resources," Hiroyuki Mesaki, country head of SMBC India, said. SMBC India's chief business officer Rakesh Garg said the financing sets new benchmarks and paves the way for more Indian companies to tap into the Japanese Yen loan markets. HUDCO's chairman and managing director Sanjay Kulshrestha said the body anticipates a surge in demand for its services given the government's focus on infrastructure-led growth.

## BLS E-Services to acquire controlling stake in Aadifidelis Solution

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Visa services provider BLS International on Tuesday said its subsidiary BLS E-Services Limited (BLSE) has signed an agreement to acquire 55 per cent in Aadifidelis Solutions and its affiliates for an enterprise value of about Rs 190 crore. BLSE has entered into a definitive Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) to acquire the controlling interest in Aadifidelis Solutions (ASPL) and its affiliates, a major player in India in the distribution and processing of loans for corporates and individuals. BLSE will make an upfront investment (primary and secondary) of about Rs 71 crore with balance



consideration being deferred linked to the achievement of milestones in 2024-25, BLS said in a release. The acquisition will be an all-cash deal. The transaction will be completed in the second quarter of the fiscal. Shikhar Aggarwal, Joint Managing Director of BLS International Services said

that the signing of a definitive agreement with ASPL is a strategic move that will unveil a plethora of cross-selling opportunities while integrating specialised loan processing and distribution services into the company's portfolio. Operating through a hub-and-spoke model, with a presence in 17 states and union

territories, ASPL's network of 8,600 plus channel partners source loan enquiries, which will align with BLSE's portfolio of Business Correspondents-led citizen-centric last mile banking services, the release said. Lagrange Point Advisors LLP, a Mumbai-based M&A advisory firm, acted as the sole transaction advisor to BLSE for this transaction. Dua Associates acted as legal advisors for the transaction. Founded in 2005, BLS International Services operates in the domain of visa, passport, consular, citizen, e-governance, attestation, biometric, e-visa and retail services. Shares of BLS settled at Rs 357.95 a piece of BSE, up 2.73 per cent over the previous close.

## Palm oil body urges HUL to reconsider plans to cut palm oil content in soaps

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Asian Palm Oil Alliance (APOA), a non-profit organisation representing palm oil-consuming countries, has raised concerns over Hindustan Unilever Ltd's (HUL) reported plans to reduce palm oil content in its soaps by 25 per cent. In a letter to HUL's CEO and Managing Director Rohit Jawa, APOA Chairman Atul Chaturvedi warned that the proposed move could undermine global efforts to secure the livelihoods of millions of palm oil farmers, particularly smallholders. While acknowledging that palm oil prices have risen due to increased input costs, Chaturvedi argued that singling out palm oil for criticism is "unfair and uncalled for" as prices are influenced by demand and supply factors, similar to other edible oils like soya and sunflower. The palm oil body urged HUL to reconsider its decision and stated that replacing palm oil with cheaper alternatives could have serious implications for palm oil farmers worldwide. "Replacing palm oil with cheaper substitutes undermines global efforts to secure living wages for workers and incomes for farmers," the letter said.

## Google's Gemini now available as app for Android smartphone users in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Google on Tuesday said its AI Assistant Gemini is now available as an app for Android smartphone users in India with support for English, Hindi and eight other Indian languages. For iPhone users, access to Gemini will be rolled out through the Google app over the next few

weeks, according to a blog post by Amar Subramanya, Vice President, Engineering, Gemini Experiences. "Gemini, your AI assistant for Google, has had an exciting first year in India... From students to developers and many other curious minds, people in India are embracing Gemini's capabilities to enhance their productivity, learning, and creativity in everyday

life," Subramanya wrote. Additionally, users of Gemini Advanced in India will now be able to access features of Gemini 1.5 Pro, Google's latest next-gen AI (Artificial Intelligence) model. The expanded capacity of Gemini Advanced will allow users to upload multiple large documents and emails for quick summaries, feedback, and actionable insights.

(Finance), NBCC; Saleem Ahmad, Director (Projects), NBCC and other senior officials from both organizations. Earlier, Grid-India, which is responsible for "National Load Dispatch", had purchased this new office of around 61,000 sq ft from NBCC at approximately Rs 270 crore and has now entrusted NBCC for furnishing its office as well. NBCC is into project management consultancy.

## Nine in 10 professionals in India face learning barriers due to work, family pressure: LinkedIn

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Notwithstanding the fact that a significant percentage of professionals in India say that their company is doing enough to cultivate a culture of learning, 9 in 10 professionals find it hard to prioritise learning due to work and family commitments, says a report. According to new research by the leading professional

network LinkedIn, 91 per cent of professionals in India face barriers such as feeling burnt out or family responsibilities that are getting in the way of their learning. In a bid to overcome barriers to upskilling, professionals are resorting to 'Loud Learning', the act of being vocal and intentional about learning ambitions in the workplace. LinkedIn research shows that 79 per cent of professionals in

India believe that engaging in 'Loud Learning' can support their career growth. Some of the benefits include providing opportunities for mentorship and guidance from experienced professionals (28 per cent), opening doors to new career opportunities or advancement (27 per cent) and facilitating knowledge and insights sharing amongst peers (26 per cent).



"As always, privacy is a top priority. Gemini keeps your files private to you, and they're not used to train our models," Subramanya added. Google said the Gemini feature will also be added in Google Messages on select devices. The generative AI platform faced controversies earlier this year, over its "fascist Modi" responses, and anti-white bias.

In February this year, a journalist had shared a screenshot in which a question was asked to Gemini about Modi. In response, Gemini made uncharitable comments about him but was circumspect when the same query was posed about Trump and Zelenskyy. Google had then said it worked quickly to address the issue and conceded that the chatbot "may not

always be reliable" in responding to certain prompts related to current events and political topics. The erstwhile minister of state for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar had warned Google that the people of India "are not to be experimented on" with unreliable platforms and algorithms and "ensuring safety and trust are legal obligation of platforms".

# East Bengal rope in David on three years contract

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Super Cup champions East Bengal FC on Tuesday announced the signing of rising Indian forward David Lalhlansanga on a three-year contract. One of the most prolific young strikers in India, David was the top scorer in last year's Calcutta Football League and Durand Cup, and also played a pivotal role in Mohammedan Sporting Club's maiden I-League triumph. "East Bengal is a big club with millions of fans spread across India. I love playing in front of passionate fans," said David in a statement. David was named by head coach Igor Stimac in India's last two World Cup Qualifiers squads against Kuwait at home and Qatar away but did not get any minutes. "I've already spent some time with Mahesh, Nandha and Lalchungnunga in the



India camp. They are very helpful and always motivate me to get better. I want to

give my best for this club." East Bengal head coach Carles Cuadrat said, "David

is one of our Indian recruits whom we had been trying hard to sign for a long time.

He was the leading scorer in the Durand Cup and the CFL, which grabbed my attention. From that moment he became a target for our future plans. I am extremely happy to welcome a gem like him. Hailing from Mizoram, David rose through Aizawl FC's youth ranks before being promoted to Aizawl's first team in the 2019-20 season. After spending three seasons, David moved to Mohammedan Sporting Club in 2023. The 22-year-old made an immediate impact in the Durand Cup, winning the Golden Boot award with six goals and one assist in just three matches, including four goals in a group stage match against Jamshedpur FC. He continued his rich vein of form through the remainder of the season as he scored an astonishing 21 goals to propel Mohammedan to the CFL title and later played a

crucial part in the Black & White brigade's I-League triumph with five goals and two assists. The top scorer in last year's Calcutta Football League and Durand Cup, David also played a pivotal role in Mohammedan Sporting Club's maiden I-League triumph with five goals and two assists. Hailing from Mizoram, Lalhlansanga rose through Aizawl FC's youth ranks before being promoted to Aizawl's first team in the 2019-20 season. After spending three seasons with the Mizoram capital side, David moved to Mohammedan Sporting Club in 2023. The 22-year-old made an immediate impact in the Durand Cup, winning the Golden Boot award with six goals and one assist in just three matches, including four goals in a group stage match against Jamshedpur FC.

## Mbappé sustains a broken nose

AP ■ DUSSELDORF (GERMANY)

Kylian Mbappé suffered a broken nose during France's opening game at the European Championship and will have to wear a face mask if he plays on at the tournament. The French Football Federation said Mbappé would not need surgery but did not specify how long it will take before he is available to play again. "He will undergo treatment in the coming days, without undergoing surgery immediately," France's Football Federation said in a statement. "A mask will be made so as to allow the No. 10 of the French team to consider resuming competition after a period devoted to treatment." The Federation said the decision not to carry out surgery came after he was treated by Dr. Franck Le Gall at a Dusseldorf hospital following France's 1-0 win against Austria on Monday. Mbappé stayed on the ground after his face collided with the shoulder Austria's Kevin Danso as he attempted a header during the Group D match at Dusseldorf Arena. His nose was badly swollen and blood poured from his face, turning much of his white jersey red. Austria goalkeeper Patrick Pentz signaled for urgent medical assistance. "We're worried to see Kylian leave the field like that," France midfielder N'Golo Kante said afterward. France coach Didier Deschamps could not immediately say if Mbappé's tournament was over when questioned by media after the game. "I don't have the elements in my hands," he said. "I cannot at this stage give the answer." Mbappé's injury is a big deal for France, as the country's best player and the biggest star of the tournament. It's a concern



for Real Madrid, too, after he left Paris Saint-Germain as a free agent to sign for the Spanish club in the offseason. Mbappé is widely regarded as the heir to Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo as the best player in the world and led his country to the World Cup title in 2018 at the age of 19. He became only the second player in history to score a hat trick in a World Cup final four years later in Qatar as France was runner-up to Messi's Argentina. France's priority will be to get him back on the field and leading its bid to win a record-equaling third Euros. Madrid, which has already blocked him from playing at the Paris Olympics for France, will want him in peak condition for the start of the season. If he is to play on at the Euros, he will need to wear the type of protective face mask worn by Son Heung-min and Josko Gvardiol at the World Cup in 2022. But the speed of his return will depend on the level of discomfort he feels. A broken nose can take weeks to heal and the National Health Service in the U.K. says sport should be avoided for "at least six weeks if there's a chance your face might be hit." Mbappé, who has returned to the team's training camp with the rest of the squad, appeared to see the lighter side of his injury.

## Erigaisi wins Stepan Avagyan Memorial

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi delivered yet another domineering performance to clinch the Stepan Avagyan Memorial 2024 crown in Jermuk, Armenia with a round to spare. The 20-year-old, India's highest-rated chess player, defeated Russian GM Volodar Murzin in 63 moves in the eighth and penultimate round to move to six points with four wins and as many draws. He now has an unassailable lead of 1.5 points over three players tied for second spot in a strong 10-player field. The victory also helped Arjun jump to a career-high live rating of No. 4 as he has so far added 9 points from the eight rounds to reach a total of 2779.9 ELO points. He trails Norway's Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura and Fabiano Caruana of USA in live ratings. "This has been a fantastic tournament for me as I have been able to make the most of my opportunities. These tournaments are never easy as the level of competition is very high but I am happy with the way I played and clinched my second title of the year," said Arjun. Arjun, who has been challenging himself to play more open tournaments so as to play a variety of opposition, has been in fine form this year. He bagged the Menorca Open crown in April, finished second in TePe Sigeman Chess Tournament in May and also finished joint-fifth in the Sharjah Masters Open tournament.

## Olympics are more than fun and games They're a billion-dollar business with political overtones

AP ■ NEW YORK

The Paris Olympics involve about 10,500 athletes from 200 countries or regions. But the Olympics are more than just fun and games. They are a giant business that generates billions of dollars in income for the International Olympic Committee. They're also a proxy for geopolitical influence seen through the standings in the medal tables, the presence of world leaders at the opening ceremony and the national anthems serenading gold-medal winners. Here's a look at how the IOC and the Olympics operate. It's a business, not a charity. The International Olympic Committee is a not-for-profit, nongovernmental body based in Lausanne, Switzerland. It

generates 91% of its income from selling broadcast rights (61%) and sponsorships (30%). Income for the latest four-year cycle of Winter and Summer Games ending with the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 was \$7.6 billion. The IOC says it returns 90% of its income back into sports, although athletes directly get only a small slice. There may be a move afoot to change that. The IOC opened a new headquarters in 2019 at a reported cost of about 190 million Swiss francs, or about \$200 million. Host nations pick up the majority of the bills for staging the Olympics. The cost for the Tokyo Games was officially listed at \$13 billion. More than half was covered by Japanese government entities. Olympic costs are difficult to track, but a Japanese



government audit suggested the real costs may have been twice as much as listed. Membership and perks The IOC is composed of about 100 members. The membership selects its own colleagues and the longest serving is Princess Nora of Liechtenstein. At least a half-dozen other royals are IOC members. However, most of the power is vested in

President Thomas Bach - a lawyer from Germany who also is a member - and his executive board. IOC members are technically volunteers, though all of Bach's expenses are covered by the IOC. The IOC's annual report says this amounted to \$370,000 in 2022. This included an annual "indemnity" of 275,000 euros, or about \$295,000. His tax liabilities of \$163,000 in Switzerland also were paid. IOC members receive per diems of between \$450-900 to attend meetings and get first-class travel and five-star lodging.

**UNPAID VOLUNTEERS** Unpaid volunteers help the IOC and local organizers run the Games. They typically receive uniforms, food when

they work and some minor transport costs. Lodging is seldom included. Paris is looking for 45,000 volunteers. Tokyo initially went after 80,000. Typically, only the well off can volunteer. The 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro struggled to find volunteers because many of the city's poor could not work for free. Some showed up the first day, collected their uniforms and did not return. The volunteer system can be viewed as economic exploitation. If volunteers were paid a minimum wage of \$10 per hour, the extra cost could be as much as \$100 million. Some Paris volunteers have threatened not to show up to express their displeasure over Olympic spending and French pension reforms.

## Tondaiman, Rajeshwari among five-member Indian shotgun team for Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior trap shooter Sprithviraj Tondaiman will spearhead the Indian shotgun team in the upcoming Paris Olympics as the national shooting federation Tuesday named a five-member squad for the mega event, with all of them appearing in their maiden games. The Paris Games will be held from July 26 to August 11. Tondaiman has made the cut in men's trap, while Rajeshwari Kumari will take aim in the women's trap event. Anantjeet Singh Naruka will be India's sole men's skeet shooter while Raiza Dhillon and Maheshwari Chauhan in women's skeet complete the five quota places that the shotgun squad had earned in

the qualification cycle. Maheshwari and Anantjeet will also feature as the sole Indian pair in the skeet mixed team event, which is making a debut at the Paris Games. Incidentally, all five named will also be competing in their first Olympic Games. The National Rifle Association of India's (NRAI) secretary general Kr. Sultan Singh said "There was intense competition for places and things could have changed in case some shooters medalled at the recently concluded Lonato World Cup. "But we believe that we have a great shotgun team, which has won the highest ever spots for India at any Games and certainly a second Olympic medal in the discipline looks a strong possibility."

## McIlroy to skip Travelers as part of 3-week break to recover from US Open collapse

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Rory McIlroy took to social media Monday afternoon to say his stunning collapse at the U.S. Open was probably the toughest day of his career, and that he would take off the next three weeks to "build myself back up." That means he will skip the Travelers Championship, the final \$20 million signature event on the PGA Tour schedule with a limited field and no cut. "The one word that I would describe my career as is resilient," McIlroy said in his post. "I've shown my resilience over and over again in the last 17 years and I will again." McIlroy twice had a one-shot lead at Pinehurst No. 2 until he closed with three bogeys in his last four holes, missing a



30-inch par putt on the 16th hole and a par putt from just inside 4 feet on the 18th hole. Bryson DeChambeau won it with a sensational par on the 18th, hitting a 55-yard bunker shot to 4 feet for par to beat

McIlroy by one shot. McIlroy became the first player since Jim Furyk in 2006-07 to lose the U.S. Open by one shot in consecutive years. He was so distraught after watching DeChambeau's par

from the scoring room that he cleaned out his locker, headed straight to his car and spun his tires on the gravel in a rush to leave. He did not stay behind to congratulate DeChambeau, typical for players who finish in the group ahead. DeChambeau came over to congratulate Xander Schauffele a month ago when Schauffele beat him with a birdie on the final hole in the PGA Championship. "Firstly, I'd like to congratulate Bryson. He is a worthy champion and exactly what professional golf needs right now" McIlroy said in his post. "I think we can all agree on that." McIlroy said while he will look back with regret on the two short misses, he said the positives of the week will outweigh the negative. "As I said at the start of the tournament, I feel closer to

winning my next major championship than I ever have," he said. McIlroy now has gone 10 years and 29 majors since he won the 2014 British Open at Hoylake for his fourth major at age 25. He has won three times this year, once on the European tour. The 35-year-old from Northern Ireland has had a rough time outside the ropes, too. He filed for divorce from his wife, Erica, before the PGA Championship, and then filed a motion to voluntarily dismiss the divorce case right before the U.S. Open. McIlroy is the defending champion at the Scottish Open on July 10-13, which leads to the British Open the following week at Royal Troon in Scotland, and then a week off before the Olympics outside Paris.

## Connors moves into last Canadian spot for Olympic return Dutch are back in the game

AP ■ PINEHURST

Corey Connors found the fairway and the green on the final hole of the U.S. Open, a closing par at Pinehurst No. 2 that landed him in the Olympics for Canada for the second time. The Official World Golf Ranking published after the U.S. Open was used to determine the 60 players for the men's competition Aug. 1-4 at Le Golf National. Masters champion Scottie Scheffler, the No. 1 player in the world, will be making his Olympic debut alongside defending gold medalist

Xander Schauffele, former U.S. Open champion Wyndham Clark and two-time major champion Collin Morikawa. Each country is allowed two players, with a maximum of four if all are within the top 15. Connors will join Nick Taylor for Canada, but it came down to the final hole. Adam Hadwin finished third at the Memorial the week before the U.S. Open to move ahead of Connors for the second spot in the Olympic ranking, but then missed the cut at Pinehurst No. 2. Connors needed to finish

alone in 11th to pass Hadwin. Connors said he did not want to know what he needed. "I guess it all worked out not knowing," Connors said on a conference call Monday afternoon. "I felt like it would have been added pressure and another distraction. I had no idea all Sunday what position I was in. I just thought a par would get me a good finish." He said his caddie told him after he tapped for par that his three-way tie for ninth was going to be enough and Connors said he was relieved. Jon Rahm makes his debut for Spain. He was the U.S. Open champion when the Olympics



were played in Japan in 2021, but had to withdraw with a positive COVID-19 test. He

will be among 29 players, assuming they all are certified, making their first

Olympic appearance. Bryson DeChambeau also had to withdraw from the Tokyo Games because of a positive test. Now he is with LIV Golf, which doesn't get world ranking points. DeChambeau tied for sixth in the Masters, was runner-up at the PGA Championship and won his second U.S. Open title at Pinehurst on Sunday. That moved him to No. 10 in the world, good enough only to be the second alternate for the Paris Games. The 60-man field has six players from LIV Golf - Rahm and David Puig of Spain, Carlos Ortiz and Abraham Ancer of Mexico,

Adrian Meronk of Poland and Joaquin Niemann of Chile. C.T. Pan of Taiwan, who won a seven-man playoff for the bronze medal in Tokyo, is among four players to qualify for every Olympics since golf returned to the program in 2016. Joost Luiten and Darius Van Driel of the Netherlands are listed on the final list. The National Olympic Committee for the Netherlands did not send Dutch players to Tokyo last time, requiring golfers to be among the top 100 in the world or the top 36 in the Olympic ranking because it wanted athletes with a

realistic chance of winning. Rory Sabbatini of Slovakia wound up winning the silver medal at No. 204 in the world, while Pan was No. 208 when he beat the likes of Rory McIlroy and Morikawa for the bronze. Luiten, a six-time winner on the European tour at the time, was No. 177 in the world. Dutch Olympic officials had slightly relaxed some standards and met with the Netherlands Golf Federation last week. Luiten competed in Rio de Janeiro and tied for 27th. Each country's National Olympic Committee has until June 27 to confirm its players.

# Super 8 stage going to be little hectic, but we are ready: Rohit

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

India captain Rohit Sharma conceded that the T20 World Cup's Super 8 stage is going to be a "little hectic" but his players are prepared for the grind as there is "real keenness" among them to do "something special".

India will open their Super 8 campaign against Afghanistan on June 20, followed by games against Bangladesh (June 22, Antigua) and Australia (June 24, St Lucia).

"Once we play our first game, we are going to play the next two in a span of 3 or 4 days," Rohit said in a video uploaded by the BCCI.

"It is going to be a little hectic but we are used to all of this. We travel and play a lot so that is never going to be an excuse," the 37-year-old added.

The Indian team had an extended practice session on Monday with senior players like Virat Kohli and Rohit spending more-than-usual time in the nets. "There is real keenness in the group to go and do something special. That's a good way to



start the second stage. It clearly shows that everyone wants to make a difference and we take our skill sessions quite seriously," he said. "There is something to achieve in every skill session that you do," Rohit said on the mood inside the dressing room after

an undefeated run in the group league stage.

The Indian team endured hostile batting conditions during the US leg due to the drop-in pitches used by the organisers. Rohit said the ongoing Caribbean leg brings with it a sense of familiarity and

his team would look to make the most of it.

"We have seen a lot of games here, we have played a lot of games here. So everyone understands what one needs to do to get the result in our favour. Everyone is looking forward and are quite excited as

well at the same time," Rohit said.

The Indian team defeated Ireland, Pakistan and the USA in the league stage before their final group clash against Canada was called off due to the wet outfield in flood-hit Florida.

## Focus on South African batters in Super 8 clash against USA

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

South Africa will have no room for error as their world-class batters will be keen to flex their muscles against a spirited USA in their opening Super Eight match of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday. The Proteas have remained unbeaten in the tournament so far with their bowlers doing the heavy lifting in all four games.

Playing three games on the challenging New York tracks, and one in Kingstown, South Africa have not crossed the 120-run mark even once.

Although their batting performance is not a reflection of the team which possesses some big hitters like Quinton de Kock, Heinrich Klassen, Tristan Stubbs and David Miller.

But still the top order of De Kock, Reeze Hendricks and captain Aiden Markram might feel the pressure to perform.

South Africa survived by a run against Nepal in their previous game and with the likes of defending champions England and hosts West Indies also in Group 2, the Proteas can ill afford to let up against USA. They would like to start the Super Eight on a winning note.

Ahead of the World Cup, South Africa's biggest concern was the woeful form of Anrich Nortje, but the star pacer has turned it around with some scintillating display in the



group stage and is currently the joint second leading wicket-taker with nine scalps.

Nortje and fellow pacer Ottneil Baartman, have formed a formidable pair, while Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada will also be eager to trouble the inexperienced USA batters. Co-host USA, who are an eclectic mix of eight Indians, two Pakistanis, a West Indian, one New Zealander, a South African and a Dutch, are in the midst of a dream run having qualified for the Super Eights in their debut appearance.

They have played an aggressive brand of cricket.

They will be keeping an eye on the fitness of skipper Monank Patel, who missed the match against India and was also not going to play against Ireland due to a niggle.

They will be keen to cause another upset after defeating former champions Pakistan in the league stage. While it may be a daunting task, the spirited bunch are ready for the challenge.



## Afghan coach Trott hopes his bowlers will be thrifty against India

PTI ■ GROS ISLET (ST LUCIA)

Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott said his team will have to ensure that it doesn't end up conceding 60 runs in two overs against India in their Super 8 clash like it did in the final group match against the West Indies in the T20 World Cup here.

Afghanistan were trounced by 104 runs in the game. The team was hammered for 36 runs in the fourth over and conceded 24 in the 18th over as the West Indies, riding on, Nicolas Pooran's 53-ball 98 posted 218/5 in their 20 overs.

Asked about the learning from the game and the overall campaign ahead of the game against India in Bridgetown on June 20, Trott said, "just being able to pull overs back." "If we don't start an over well, being able to get out of an over and try and stop that. Today we had two overs in total, went for 60 runs, and that swings the game massively.

"...That's the black and white of the game and yeah with batting I'm disappointed that we couldn't have got a bit closer."

Another aspect they would need to understand better

would be hitting with the wind to ensure that big shots land outside the boundary. "I think we saw the West Indies players use the wind factor really well. I mean, the wind was to the bigger, much bigger boundary and we're still able to clear it well. I think maybe we could have bowled a little bit better and get them hitting into, hitting the other way.

"And that's going to be key also going into Barbados with the wind there and that's something we're certainly going to look at and hopefully get right," he said.

Up until Monday's game, the Afghans enjoyed a brilliant run in the tournament with big wins over New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Uganda. Trott credited Pooran for single-handedly shaping the match in the home team's favour.

"I thought there was a good wicket obviously Pooran played a very good innings. Maybe I think we could have bowled a little bit better at times, obviously the power play wasn't ideal," he said.

"I think when somebody gets 97 of 50 balls, I think it's always going to be quite a factor."

## Warner relieved that he will be retiring after T20 World Cup

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Australian Opener David Warner is relieved that he will be retiring after the T20 World Cup here and is hopeful that the "real cricket tragics" would see him as the one who tried to change the game with his aggressive batting while being the "only one" to have copped flak.

Warner, who retired from the Test and ODI format earlier this year, will walk into international sunset at the end of the ongoing showpiece in the USA and West Indies.

The 37-year-old Warner served a one-year ban by Cricket Australia for his

involvement in the 2018 sandpaper gate scandal but enjoyed plenty of success since his return to the national side.

"Coming back since 2018 I've probably... Been the only one that's ever copped a lot of flak," Warner told News Corp. "My back was always up against the wall when I came back, and I knew that. I copped my fair share over my career. I've probably been the only one that's ever copped a lot of flak, whether it's people who don't like the Australian cricket team or don't like me."

Warner, who has 49 centuries across formats and close to 19000 runs in international



cricket, was speaking ahead of Australia's Super 8 clash against Bangladesh here. "I've always been that person who has copped it. I always

feel like I've taken a lot of pressure off a lot of guys as well and I think understandably, I've been that person to be able to absorb

that," the combative opener added.

"But one can only absorb (so much). For me it's great to go out knowing I'm not going to cop it anymore."

He acknowledged the fact that his name will forever be linked to the scandal that took place at Newlands, Cape Town during a Test match against South Africa.

At the same time, the batter is also hopeful that he will be remembered for the manner in which he played the game at the top of the order.

"I think it's going to be inevitable that when people talk about me in 20 or 30 years' time, there will always be that sandpaper scandal," he

said. "But for me, if they're real cricket tragics and they love cricket, (as well as) my closest supporters, they will always see me as that cricketer - someone who tried to change the game."

"Someone who tried to follow in the footsteps of the openers before me and try and score runs at a great tempo and change Test cricket in a way."

Both Warner and then captain Steve Smith were suspended for one year with Cameron Bancroft getting a nine-month suspension.

Warner was also banned for life from taking any leadership role in the Australian cricket setup.

## India eye runs from top-order batters, 2-0 series winning lead against SA in 2nd ODI

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India will expect their top-order batters to produce a tidier effort against South Africa in the second women's ODI here on Wednesday in their quest for an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

India have a 1-0 lead in their hand, courtesy a 143-run win in the first game but the win, as comprehensive as it was, also left some questions unanswered. The home side rode on Smriti Mandhana's hundred and a fine spell by spinners to outclass South Africa, but it was not enough to paper over some wide cracks in the batting department.

The most glaring of them is the continued underwhelming ODI outings of opener Shafali Verma. Her last one-day fifty came in 2022, an unbeaten 71, against Sri Lanka at Pallekele. In the last six matches, the



opener's individual scoresheet reads: 1, 8, 0, 4, 1, 7. The 20-year-old will require a substantial score sooner than later to cling on to her spot. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur will also like to have a big score under her belt after notching up 14, 9, 5, 3 and 10 in her last five outings. Top-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues, who returned from a back injury that forced her to sit out of the T20I series against Bangladesh, too failed to impress.

Rodrigues would like to recapture her 2023 form where she made a couple of 80s and came close to scoring her maiden ODI hundred. All of them, in fact, can take a cue from vice-captain Mandhana, whose sixth ODI hundred stood out for its studiousness.

Of course, the graceful left-hander has been in good touch in ODIs, as her last 20 innings dating back to February 2022 have fetched seven fifties and two centuries and was dismissed below 10 only thrice.

But returning to the one-day format after playing a string of T20s in the last four months might have been tough for her, and it became all the more difficult because she also had to bail out the team from a precarious 99 for five against the Proteas. However, Mandhana braved those tests, showing wonderful adaptation of skills and mindset.

## Williamson uncertain about his future in T20s following NZ's World Cup exit

PTI ■ TAROUBA (TRINIDAD)

New Zealand will require some time to regroup after their shock early exit from the T20 World Cup, said skipper Kane Williamson, who was non-committal regarding his return for the 2026 edition of the marquee event.

An all-format player who is considered one of the greats of modern day cricket, Williamson has been the BlackCaps batting mainstay for over a decade.

New Zealand reached three finals with Williamson in the side -- the 2015 and 2019 ODI World Cups, the 2021 T20 World Cup and the inaugural World Test Championship final, which they won. Williamson led the BlackCaps in three of those four tournaments.

"When asked if he'd return for the 2026 edition, Williamson said: "Oh, I don't know." New Zealand's campaign ended with a facile seven-



wicket win over minnows Papua New Guinea. They finished outside of the semifinals for the first time in 10 years. Pace spearhead Trent Boult has already confirmed that the ongoing T20 World Cup was his last. "There's a bit of time between now and then, so it's regrouping as a side. And yeah, we've sort of got red ball cricket over the next year basically."

"So yeah, it's back into some international other formats and yeah, see where things land," he added.

On New Zealand's short campaign at the T20 World Cup, the 34-year-old said "I think no matter what happens, you're always want to do more."

"But it's been really unique, a unique experience for all the guys. The conditions have been challenging I think for batters all around, but it's just about trying to find a way." New Zealand were the last team to kickstart their campaign. They were out of contention for the Super Eights within the space of four days, courtesy back-to-back losses to Afghanistan and West Indies.

"It took a long time to start, and then in a matter of days, we were sort of not in contention, which was frustrating. We wanted to start the campaign strong, and we weren't able to do that," Williamson said.

## Pooran's explosive 98 take WI to 104-run win over Afghanistan

PTI ■ GROS ISLET (ST LUCIA)

Nicholas Pooran displayed his incredible six-hitting prowess as West Indies geared up for the Super 8 with a dominating 104-run win over Afghanistan in their final Group C match of the T20 World Cup here.

With both teams assured of a Super 8 berth, it was the two-time champions who displayed their batting might, amassing a formidable 218 for five, with Pooran going on a six-hitting spree during his 53-ball 98. It was the highest total for the West Indies in T20 World Cups.

In reply, Afghanistan succumbed to scoreboard pressure, managing just 114 in 16.2 overs.

"We knew here will be one of the better wickets of the competition. After Guyana and Trinidad, the batters wanted to come here and get runs. (Pooran) I think it is on the back of hard work. He has had a very good 12 months. Good to see him score runs not only in franchise cricket but also for WI." West Indies skipper Rowman Powell said at the post match presentation ceremony.

Afghanistan had bundled out their opponents for sub-100

totals in their first three games but skipper Rashid Khan's decision to bowl first here backfired as Pooran put on a ruthless display, hitting as many as 8 maximums and 6 fours during his stay.

Opener Johnson Charles (43), Shai Hope (25) and Powell (26) also contributed with the bat as WI posted the highest total of this edition of T20 World Cup. Gulbadin Naib (2/14) was the top bowler for Afghanistan, claiming two wickets in his 2 overs. With the bat, opener Ibrahim Zadran (38), Azmatullah Omarzai (23) and Karim Janat (14) tried their bit but it



proved too huge a total in the end.

"Don't think so (this big loss will affect us). We've achieved what we wanted - to get Super Eight. The different pitches coming up... We'll adjust to them. Good learning this loss happened at this stage, not in a do-or-die game. We take the positives with us, like fielding and middle-overs bowling," Rashid said.

Earlier, West Indies lost opener Brandon King in the second over but hosts scored heavily in the first five overs and the last five overs. Pooran turned on the heat in the fourth over, collecting 36-

runs off Azmatullah Omarzai's bowling - 6, 5NB, 5WD, 0, 4LB, 4, 6, 6. It was the joint most expensive over in T20Is.

The wicketkeeper batter and Charles took the hosts to 92/1 at the six-over mark, the biggest Powerplay total in men's T20 World Cup history. "You don't want to be on 97 and get run-out but it was all about reaching a respectable total. I assessed the conditions early on, we had a good start in the powerplay, I had to take the responsibility in the middle overs with the Afghanistan spinners bowling." "Player of the Match"

Pooran said. Afghanistan really didn't recover from the onslaught as after pacer Naveen-Ul-Haq dismissed the Charles, Pooran continued his hitting spree with Hopes and Powell playing second fiddle.

In the 18th over, Pooran launched into Rashid, smacking him for three maximums and a four for a 24-run over.

During his innings Pooran surpassed Chris Gayle (124 sixes) as West Indies' most decorated T20I six-hitter. The left-hander was eventually run-out in the last over. Chasing the huge total,

Afghanistan never looked comfortable as they lost in-form Rahmanullah Gurbaz (0) in the first over.

Zadran kept the scoreboard ticking but he couldn't really take on the Windies attack as Gudakesh Motie (2/28) and Obed McCoy struck thrice in two overs to put Afghanistan under pressure. Wickets kept tumbling due to scoreboard pressure as most batters perished while trying for big hits.

The hosts will face England in their Super 8 Group 2 match, while Afghanistan will be up against India at Barbados on Thursday.