

6 WORLD Iran goes to a runoff election between reformist Pezeshkian and hard-liner Jalili
8 NATION NEET exam row: Pradhan slams Cong, says it wants to run away from discussion in Parl
HARYANA ASSEMBLY POLLS: First session of BJP executive meeting begins in Panchkula

MALARIA SPREADS THROUGH MOSQUITO BITE. PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MALARIA
SYMPTOMS OF MALARIA: Fever with chills and rigor, Headache, Weakness, lethargy and uneasiness
PREVENTIVE METHODS: Remove stagnant water from your surroundings to prevent mosquito breeding, Use mosquito bed nets and age appropriate repellents like electric mats, coils etc.

HT BRIEFS
Man held
JORHAT: Police arrested Rantu Bora, also known as Munia, on Saturday for allegedly assaulting and tearing the clothes of a policeman on duty in the Malowkhat area under Pulibar police station.

India are T20 World Cup champions again
Kohli (76 off 59) and Axar Patel (47 off 31) combined to set India's highest total

BRIDGETOWN, June 29: India's agonising 11-year wait for a global title was brought to an end by Virat Kohli's ingenuity and Rohit Sharma's inspirational captaincy as the star-studded team outwitted eternal bridesmaids South Africa by runs in a sea saw final to lift its second T20 World Cup trophy here on Saturday.



World Cup crown in the post-IPL era. In response to India's 176 for seven, South Africa ended at 169 for eight. The sense of relief and jubilation was evident on the stars of Indian team, Kohli and Rohit, who might not stay on for another T20 World Cup cycle.

Rohit Sharma did not turn to his lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah and went for Axar Patel in the 15th over in which Klaasen pounded couple of sixes and as many fours to single-handedly take the game away from the opposition.

NDPP sweeps civic polls in Nagaland, wins all 3 municipal councils

KOHIMA, June 29: The ruling NDPP swept the civic body polls in Nagaland on Saturday, winning all three municipal councils and most of the town councils, officials said.

NDPP won seven of the 15 seats, while the NCP won five and the BJP got three seats. The Naga Peoples' Front (NPF) secured a majority in both Bhandari and Phek town councils, they said.

The lowest winning margin was recorded in a seat of the Chantongya Town Council where NDPP candidate Temjennungsang won against Independent nominee A Lmasanen by just one vote.

UK's Labour Party commits to stamping out anti-India sentiments

LONDON, June 29: The UK's Opposition Labour Party, hoping to win a mandate to form a government after the July 4 general election, has committed itself to stamping out anti-India sentiments within its ranks and building a strong strategic partnership with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led administration.

City Hindus Network in London on Friday evening, Labour Party chair and shadow secretary of state for women and equalities Anneliese Dodds claimed that the party led by Keir Starmer is confident of having cleansed its ranks of any members with such extremist views.

Marco Longhi, who is contesting against Labour's British-Indian pick Sonia Kumar, also referenced Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Police: Nine held in GU marksheet scam

BARPETA, June 29: Nine people including the prime accused have so far been arrested in the alleged marksheet scam in Assam's Gauhati University, police sources said on Saturday.

CBI conducts searches at seven locations in Gujarat, arrests journalist in Jharkhand

NEW DELHI, June 29: The CBI conducted searches at seven locations in Gujarat on Saturday in connection with the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG exam and arrested a journalist in Jharkhand, officials said.

agency four-day custody of Jay Jalaram School's principal Purushottam Sharma, teacher Tushar Bhatt, and middlemen Vibhor Anand and Arif Vohra, all of whom are alleged to be involved in irregularities in the May 5 NEET-UG exam in Godhra.

Poll results moral defeat for Modi but he is continuing as if nothing changed: Sonia

NEW DELHI, June 29: Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday said the Lok Sabha poll verdict has signalled a "personal, political and moral defeat" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi but "he is continuing as if nothing has changed".

But this "perfectly reasonable request" was found unacceptable by the government, she said, adding the opposition alliance is committed to restoring balance and productivity in Parliament.

"On June 4, 2024, the verdict of our country's electorate was delivered clearly and resoundingly. It signalled a personal, political, and moral defeat for a prime minister who had awarded himself a divine status during the campaign," the Congress leader said.

"Yet, the prime minister continues as if nothing has changed. He preaches the value of consensus but continues to value confrontation," she said.

Govt approves 40 pc risk allowance for NDRF rescuers: Shah

NEW DELHI, June 29: The Union government has approved a 40 per cent hardship and risk allowance for NDRF rescuers, keeping in mind the tough operations undertaken by them, Union home minister Amit Shah announced on Saturday.



Officials said this allowance would be granted over and above salaries. Special forces like the National Security Guard (NSG) and the Special Protection Group (SPG) get a 25 per cent hardship allowance owing to the special charter of their duties.

This is the second mountaineering expedition undertaken by the federal contingency force. The team was flagged off on June 1 from here. Mt Manirang is located along the border of Kinnaur and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Shah said after welcoming the expedition named 'Vijay'. Officials said this allowance would be granted over and above salaries. Special forces like the National Security Guard (NSG) and the Special Protection Group (SPG) get a 25 per cent hardship allowance owing to the special charter of their duties.

FSIB recommends him as successor of Khara Setty to become new chairman of SBI

NEW DELHI, June 29: Government appointment selection panel FSIB on Saturday selected senior-most managing director Challa Sreenivasulu Setty for the position of Chairman of country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI).

Setty, who was appointed managing director in January 2020, currently looks after International Banking, Global Markets and Technology verticals.

He will succeed Dinesh Kumar Khara, who will be superannuating on August 28, when he turns 63, the upper age limit for the position of SBI Chairman.

Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, interviewed three candidates on June 29, 2024 for the position.

"Keeping in view their performance in the interface, their overall experience and the extant parameters, the Bureau recommends Challa Sreenivasulu Setty for the position of Chairman in SBI," FSIB said in a statement.



As per the convention, the chairman is appointed from a pool of serving managing directors of SBI. Usually, senior-most managing director becomes chairman of the bank.

The final decision on FSIB recommendation would be taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Setty, who also headed various task forces/committees formed by

the Government of India, had earlier looked after the retail and digital banking portfolio of the bank.

A Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and also, a Certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers, he started his career with SBI in 1988 as a Probationary Officer.

Across a career spanning over three decades, he has rich experience in corporate credit, retail, digital and international banking

and banking in developed markets.

Setty has held key assignments in State Bank of India, including Deputy Managing Director - Stressed Assets Resolution Group, Chief General Manager and General Manager in Corporate Accounts Group, Deputy General Manager in Commercial Branch, Indore and VP & Head (Syndications) in SBI, New York Branch.

FSIB is headed by Bhanu Pratap Sharma, former secretary of Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

The members of the government-appointed selection panel are Financial Services Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises Secretary and an RBI Deputy Governor.

Other members of the headhunter are Animesh Chauhan, former chairman and MD of erstwhile Oriental Bank of Commerce, RBI's ex-executive director Deepak Singhal, and Shailendra Bhandari, former MD of erstwhile ING Vysya Bank. (PTI)

Amazon reviews Perplexity AI's claims



WASHINGTON, June 29: Amazon is reviewing claims that the artificial intelligence startup Perplexity AI is scraping content — including from prominent news sites — without approval.

Amazon spokesperson Samantha Mayowa confirmed Friday that the tech giant was assessing information it received from the news outlet WIRED, which published an investigation earlier this month that said Perplexity appeared to scrape content from websites that had prohibited access from such practices. Perplexity uses servers by Amazon Web Services, otherwise known as AWS.

Amazon's "terms of service prohibit abusive and illegal activities and our customers are responsible for complying with those terms," Mayowa said in a prepared statement. "We routinely receive reports of alleged abuse from a variety of sources and engage our customers to understand those reports."

Perplexity spokesperson Sara Platnick said Friday that the company had determined that Perplexity-controlled services are not crawling websites in any way that violates AWS terms of service.

The San Francisco-based AI search startup has been a darling of prominent tech investors, in-

cluding heavy hitters such as Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. But in the past few weeks, the company has found itself in hot water amid accusations of plagiarism.

Perplexity CEO Aravind Srinivas has offered a robust defense of the startup after it published a summarized news story with information and similar wording to a Forbes investigative story. It did so without citing the media outlet or asking for its permission. Forbes later said it found similar "knock-off" stories lifted from other publications.

Separately, The Associated Press found another Perplexity product invented fake quotes from real people.

Srinivas said in an AP interview earlier this month that his company "never ripped off content from anybody. Our engine is not training on anyone else's content," in part because the company is simply aggregating what other companies' AI systems generate. But, he added, "It was accurately pointed out by Forbes that they preferred a more prominent highlighting of the source." He said sources are now highlighted more prominently. (AP)

Confident of over USD 800 bn exports in goods: Goyal

MUMBAI, June 29: India's goods and services exports are expected to cross USD 800 billion this fiscal despite global challenges, Commerce and Industry minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

In 2023-24, the shipments stood at USD 778.2 billion (goods USD 437.1 billion and services USD 341 billion). He said that the global situation is serious as war is still ongoing between Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Hamas, and the Red sea crisis.

The minister added that there are also elections in some of the major democracies like in Europe.

"In such a situation it's a positive sign that our exports are growing (9 per cent growth in May) and ...this also reflects that the world wants to do trade and investments with India. We are confident that this year we will have over USD 800 billion exports and it will be a historic record," Goyal told reporters here. He was here to participate in a programme of gems and jewellery exports.

Goyal added that for the USD 800 billion exports, the ministry is working on specifics with Indian missions abroad and export promotion councils. (PTI)

Kumar warned that the withdrawal of IES benefits will blunt the competitive edge of exporters and hinder growth momentum.

In contrast to FIEO's demand for an extension of the scheme benefits at a higher rate, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) restricted the benefits to MSMEs and capped the total outlay of the scheme at Rs 750 crore. (PTI)

Exporters' body urges Goyal to restore IES benefits for all

KOLKATA, June 29: A body of exporters has written to Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal, expressing concerns over the extension of the Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) for only two months and exclusively for MSMEs.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) president Ashwani Kumar highlighted that the scheme has so far benefited not only MSMEs but also merchant exporters and large manufacturing companies at a lower rate of two per cent for 410 tariff lines, covering labour-intensive products.

The current scheme, valid till June, provides pre and post-shipment rupee export credit, offers a two per cent interest equalisation rate for manufacturers and merchant exporters dealing with specified 410 export items, and a higher rate of three per cent for MSME manufacturers exporting under any of these items.

Kumar pointed out that the exclusion of these categories from the extended scheme will severely impact labour-intensive exports, which have already been struggling in recent years.

He urged the minister to intervene and restore the status quo, citing the export sector's challenges, including increased freight rates, longer voyage times, and rising interest rates.

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IBM, Gujarat govt ink pact to establish AI cluster

NEW DELHI, June 29: IBM and the Gujarat government on Saturday inked a pact to establish and promote an AI cluster leveraging IBM's 'watsonx' to drive innovation and collaboration among financial institutions in Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City.

Under this partnership, financial institutions will gain access to AI Sandbox, assistance in providing proof of concept, AI literacy programmes and digital assistant solutions, according to a release.

"IBM and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat today entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish and promote an AI Cluster leveraging IBM's watsonx to foster innovation and collaboration among financial institutions in Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City," the release said.

IBM's 'watsonx' is an AI and data platform built for business.

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said: "This MoU with IBM will help Gujarat to lead the country in efforts to adopt AI and drive digital transformation."

According to Sandip Patel, Managing Director of

IBM India and South Asia, the use of AI for business is a strategic priority for enterprises today to gain competitive advantage through better productivity, innovation and customer experience.

"This collaboration is a significant step in our continued association with the Government of Gujarat to accelerate the digital transformation of the state. By establishing this AI cluster, our aim is to make the latest AI solutions easily accessible to the vibrant and growing number of financial institutions in GIFT city," he added.

As part of this MoU, IBM will provide software technologies and platforms over a cloud environment enabling financial institutions to customise and fine-tune large language AI models in a sandbox environment.

IBM will also aim to build a digital assistant-based solution that facilitates the onboarding and integration of these customised large language models for financial institutions. In line with the company's commitment to skill 30 million people by 2030 and train 2 million learners in AI by the end of 2026, IBM will develop an AI curriculum for schools and universities across Gujarat. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

NDPP sweeps civic polls

Altogether 523 candidates from 11 political parties were in the fray. NDPP fielded the highest number of candidates at 178, followed by BJP at 44, Congress at 37, NPP at 22, NPF at 21 and NCP at 15. JD(U) contested nine seats, RPI (Athawale) and LJP seven each, and Rising Peoples' Party one, also, there were 182 Independent candidates. A total of 64 candidates — 45 of NDPP, seven of BJP, five of NCP, three of Congress, two of NPF and two Independents had won unopposed in this election from different municipal and town councils.

The civic body polls in the state were held after a gap of two decades. It is also historic as this was the first municipal election in the state to be held with 33 per cent reservation for women. The government had announced elections to the urban local bodies several times in the past but objections from tribal bodies and civil society organisations to reservations for women and tax on land and properties had held back the polls.

Nagaland has a total of 39 town councils, but no election was held in 14 of those as they are located in the six eastern districts where tribal bodies called for a boycott. The Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO), the apex body of seven Naga tribes, has been demanding a 'Frontier Nagaland Territory', claiming that the region has been neglected for years.

As many as 59 nominations were accepted from the region but the tribal bodies compelled the candidates to withdraw their nominations. These districts also did not vote in the Lok Sabha polls. (PTI)

UK's Labour Party commits

for a third term as a cause for concern for Britain's Kashmiris. Felicity Buchan, minister at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, sought to highlight her party's pro-India track record at the hustings including having a Prime Minister of Indian heritage in Rishi Sunak. "I think that the relationship with India is incredibly important... the diaspora that we have in the UK adds so much to our life here in the UK," said Buchan, Tory MP candidate for Kensington and Bayswater in London. "We have very strong historic and cultural ties, but there is so much to be done going forward. We are negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA) at the moment... it's a big priority for both our Prime Ministers, but it's not just the trade deal," she said, highlighting collaborations in fields such as COVID vaccines and defence and security.

Lord Christopher Fox, a Liberal Democrat peer who sits on the House of Lords International Agreements Committee which scrutinises trade deals, also referenced the FTA — which aims to enhance the GBP 38.1 billion India-UK trading partnership but is currently stalled in the fourteenth round of negotiations amid the election cycles in both countries.

"There are clear stumbling blocks that have prevented us from getting to the point where we were supposed to have got to. But let's look at this from the UK's perspective: there is a huge benefit to getting this deal done. The economy in India is racing ahead. The technology in India is racing ahead. And it's really important for the United Kingdom that we're linking ourselves with this fantastic economy," said Fox. Pallavi Devulapalli, the Green Party spokesperson for health, social care and public health and candidate from South West Norfolk, pointed to the party's new Green Friends of India group created "specifically to foster India-UK relations, promote trade, promoting cultural exchange, and just really strengthening ties".

All parties and independent candidates are now in the midst of a final dash for votes, including from a significant electorate within the UK's 1.8 million strong Indian diaspora, ahead of voting day on Thursday. (PTI)

Poll results moral defeat for

Prime Minister Modi welcomed the Speaker's reference to Emergency in the Lok Sabha and said it was important for the youths as the period was a "fitting example of what happens when the Constitution is trampled over, public opinion is stifled and institutions are destroyed". In the newspaper article on Saturday, Gandhi mentioned the passage of the three criminal laws and the suspension of 146 MPs from the two Houses of Parliament during the Winter Session and said the three legislations should be kept in abeyance till they have undergone full Parliamentary scrutiny. Enacted last year, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam are set to replace the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively. The three new legislation will come into force from July 1.

About the ongoing controversy over the medical entrance exam NEET, Gandhi said, "The prime minister, who does his 'Pariksha pe Charcha', has been conspicuously silent on the leaks that have devastated so many families across the country." Asserting that the opposition will continue to raise people's issues, she hoped that the prime minister and his government would respond positively. "The initial evidence does not augur well, but we in the Opposition are committed to restoring balance and productivity in Parliament," she said. (PTI)

CBI conducts searches at

in a free, fair and transparent manner were themselves involved in arranging candidates and facilitating them to attain good marks in the NEET exam for a hefty consideration," an official in the known of developments said. The candidates arranged by the accused allegedly showed Panchmahal and Vadodara in Gujarat as their addresses, officials said. The agency has claimed "a larger conspiracy" involving "interstate links" in the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG examination, they said.

The officials said the CBI would interrogate Purushottam Sharma, Tushar Bhatt, Vibhor Anand and Arif Vohra, who are understood to possess crucial information pertaining to "exposing the broader conspiracy orchestrating the manipulation of the NEET-UG exam". The probe agency informed the court that it was essential to further the investigation, unearth the larger conspiracy and bring the masterminds to justice.

The CBI wants to probe the "extent of the connections" of arrested persons in other states from where they have arranged the candidates and their conspiracy with the accused persons of the other FIRs lodged by CBI in other states, officials said. The CBI has registered six FIRs in the case. The FIR from Bihar pertains to leakage of paper while remaining from Gujarat and Rajasthan pertains to impersonation of candidates and cheating. The agency's own FIR on a reference from the Union Education Ministry pertains to a "comprehensive investigation" into alleged irregularities in the medical entrance examination. NEET-UG is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. This year, the exam was conducted on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. More than 23 lakh candidates had appeared for the test. (PTI)

Govt approves 40 pc risk

Narendra Modi has been working on the concept of zero casualties during disasters for the last 10 years," he said. Shah said his government has allocated higher funds for capacity building and training of the NDRF and state disaster response forces by allocating ₹ 2 lakh crore during 2014-24 as compared to ₹ 66,000 crore during 2004-14. He complimented the NDRF team for the successful expedition, saying such exercises will boost the force's capabilities and morale and it will be able to do better during disasters and accident operations. Shah cautioned the rescuers that they should not rest on their laurels but keep improving.

The NDRF was raised in 2006 as a federal contingency and disaster response force and at present, has a strength of more than 18,000 men and women rescuers deployed across the country as part of 16 battalions and 28 RRCs. It undertakes operations to mitigate and combat man-made and natural disasters like earthquakes, floods and train accidents among others. (PTI)

India are T20 World Cup

Suryakumar Yadav took a sensational relay catch at the long-off boundary off Hardik to put India on the cusp of a thrilling victory.

Earlier, India did well to post the highest total in a T20 World Cup final after being 34 for three. Axar was run out in an unfortunate manner, completely against the run of play, which brought about an end to his 72-run partnership off 54 balls with Kohli. Kohli did slow down considerably in the middle overs to bring up his first 50 off the tournament with 48 balls. Rohit Sharma (9) had no hesitation in batting first at Kensington Oval where the pitch has not been the easiest to bat on through the competition. The Indian captain, coming from two back to back match winning efforts, departed early after collecting couple of consecutive fours off Keshav Maharaj in the second over of the game. Maharaj responded well by having Rohit caught at square leg as the batter went for a sweep. Rohit and incoming batter Rishabh Pant both fell to the sweep shot. The tension in the Indian camp increased when Suryakumar, who has also been in good touch like Rohit, was caught at fine-leg after not getting enough from his pick up shot off Rabada, leaving India with three down inside the powerplay. At 45 for three in six overs, it was the slowest powerplay for India in the Caribbean leg. Watching wickets tumble at the other end, Kohli, who hit three elegant boundaries off Marco Jansen in opening over of the final, shifted gears during the middle overs and let Axar come up with an odd boundary.

Such was the nature of Kohli's knock that his first big hit after the powerplay, a straight six off Rabada, came in the 18th over Axar, on the other hand, potentially played the innings of his T20 career and negotiated the South African spinners effectively, collecting a six each from Aiden Markram, Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi. However, the highlight of his special knock was the straight six through the line off Rabada.

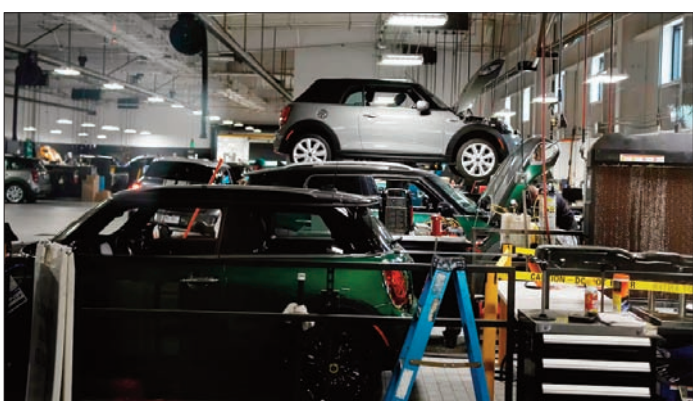
Shivam Dube (27 off 16), who came into the middle before the start of death overs, delivered a few timely blows to prop up the total. Kohli also dropped anchor to smash a couple of sixes in the last five overs from which India collected 58 runs with the loss of three wickets. (PTI)

Federal Reserve finds price pressures easing further Preferred inflation gauge shows

WASHINGTON, June 29: A measure of prices that is closely tracked by the Federal Reserve suggests that inflation pressures in the U.S. economy are continuing to ease.

Friday's Commerce Department report showed that consumer prices were flat from April to May, the mildest such performance in more than four years. Measured from a year earlier, prices rose 2.6% last month, slightly less than in April.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, so-called core inflation rose 0.1% from April to May, the



smallest increase since the spring of 2020, when the pandemic erupted and shut down the economy. And compared with a year earlier, core prices were up 2.6% in May, the lowest increase in more than three years.

Prices for physical goods actually fell 0.4% from April to May. Gasoline prices, for example, dropped 3.4%, furniture prices 1% and the prices of recreational goods and vehicles 1.6%. On the other hand, prices for services, which include items like restaurant meals and airline fares, ticked up 0.2%.

The latest figures will likely be welcomed by the Fed's policymakers, who have said they need to feel confident that inflation is slowing sustainably toward their 2% target before they'd start cutting interest rates. Rate cuts by the Fed, which most economists think could start in September, would lead eventually to lower borrowing rates for consumers and businesses.

"If the trend we saw this month continues consistently for another two months, the Fed may finally have the confidence necessary for a rate cut in September," Olu Sonola, head of U.S. economic research at Fitch Ratings, wrote in a

research note.

The Fed raised its benchmark rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023 in its drive to curb the worst streak of inflation in four decades. Inflation did cool substantially from its peak in 2022. Still, average prices remain far above where they were before the pandemic, a source of frustration for many Americans and a potential threat to President Joe Biden's re-election bid.

During Thursday night's presidential debate, Donald Trump attacked Biden's record on inflation. The presumptive Republican nominee asserted that Biden inherited low rates of inflation when he entered office in January 2021 but that prices "blew up under his leadership."

While inflation was in fact ultra-low at the start of the Biden presidency, that was largely because the nation was still recovering from the brutal Covid recession, which flattened the economy. Once the economy began surging back to life with unexpected speed, causing severe shortages of goods and labor, inflation soared.

Friday's price figures added to signs that inflation pressures are continuing to ease, though more slowly than they did last year.

NAME CORRECTION

I, Shahidul Islam do hereby affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the below mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my actual name is Shahidul Islam. That my name has wrongly been recorded in my relevant documents as Md Shahidul Islam. That both Shahidul Islam and Md Shahidul Islam are the same and one person.

Sd/-

Shahidul Islam
SO- Jahurul Islam
RO- Madhupur
PO- Lalpool,
Dist- Darrang

Agniveer recruitment phase II to begin soon

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 29: The Indian Army has announced the commencement of Phase II of the Agniveer recruitment process.

This phase marks a significant milestone in the Indian Army's efforts to transform its recruitment procedures and ensure a seamless and efficient selection process for aspiring candidates. The recruitment rally is free, fair and transparent and so Army officials have requested all candidates not to approach any type of tout, stated a press release issued by Akshay Sati, colonel, Director Recruitment, HQ Shillong.

As part of a new recruitment system, the first phase involved an online common entrance exam that was conducted nationwide in April-May this year. The results of the shortlisted candidates have been uploaded on the official website of the Indian Army, 'www.joinindianarmy.nic.in.'

The upcoming rally for the vcentral districts of Sonitpur, Biswanath, Nagaon and Mirzapur will be held at the Missamari Military Station from July 23 to 27. Admit cards for the rally can be downloaded from the official website of the Indian Army. The shortlisted candidates who have any query or have not received their admit card to approach the recruiting office (headquarters), Shillong. They can also mail their queries on 'run.fun@ninc.in or call at '0364-2504177'.

Double line between Chhaygaon and Mirza stations gets commissioned

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 29: The Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), Sumeet Singhal has completed the statutory inspection of the newly laid double line between Chhaygaon and Mirza stations.

After the inspection on June 27, he has approved the operations of trains through the newly laid railway line. With the commissioning of this new section, the route on the South Bank of Brahmaputra i.e. from New Bongaigaon to Azara via Goalpara has been made operational as double line section. This newly laid second line will be helpful for carrying more freights and passenger traffic through this route. More trains can be operated with enhanced speed, thus enabling better connectivity with minimal time frame.

The stretch between Chhaygaon and Mirza is of 15.558 km. The Chhaygaon - Mirza section is a part of the New Bongaigaon - Kamakhya via Goalpara 176 km double line project. Works are being done section wise and commissioned part by part. Speed trial on the section along with through inspection of all bridges, RUB and signaling systems was done by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS).

On Friday, 8.782 km section between Bamunigaon and Chhaygaon was sanctioned. 25.459 km section between Dhubdhara and Bamunigaon was sanctioned on October 17 last year. 11.35 km section between Mirza and Azara was sanctioned on May 3 last year and 29.71 km section between Dudhnai and Dhubdhara was commissioned on November 22, 2022.

On completion of this entire section of New Bongaigaon - Kamakhya via Goalpara, the northeast connectivity will get a significant boost towards transportation of both men and materials with the rest of the nation. Far-flung areas of Meghalaya will also be highly benefited with the completion of this double line project between New Bongaigaon and Kamakhya via Goalpara.

Jorhat Zila Divas celebrations begin

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, June 29: The three-day Jorhat Zila (district) Divas organised by the district administration across the district to celebrate 41 years of Jorhat becoming a full fledged district began on Saturday with the hoisting of 41 flags by 41 eminent persons from diverse fields at the forecourt of the historic Jorhat District Commissioner's office complex here. It may be mentioned here that Jorhat, the headquarters of erstwhile undivided Sivasagar district since British rule became a district on July 1, 1983.

Delivering the welcome address, Jorhat district commissioner Pulak Mahanta, spoke about the significance of celebrating the district attainment day and stated about the various milestones achieved by the district known as a hub of cultural, educational, and commercial activities. Mahanta stated about a series of programmes to be organised across

the nook and corner of the district during the three days of events.

Jorhat MLA Hitendra Nath Goswami and Dergaon MLA Bhabendra Nath Bharali, district sessions judge Pranjal Das, SP Shwetank Mishra and noted educationist and a Buddhist scholar, Lalit Shyam spoke on the occasion.

A wall magazine titled 'Haku' was released on the occasion and a signature campaign to make Jorhat a TB-free district under the 'Moromor Jorhat' initiative was also launched. Meanwhile, cleanliness drives in all offices of government departments and agencies, planting of saplings and donation of books in all schools across the district were carried out on Saturday as part of the celebrations. Quiz and photography competitions organised on the occasion.

Meanwhile, to mark the occasion of the Jorhat Zila Divas, the CKB Commerce College organised a quiz

(NECB 2.0) project recently.

It was sponsored by Union ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY).

Hirak Ranjan Das, innovation manager at the Union ministry of education's Innovation Cell. Das rued that startup creation and awareness in Northeast is low compared to rest of India.

"For instance, at an awareness programme organized in Guwahati recently, only nine startups turned up, while a similar programme in Maharashtra attracted some 1800 startups," Dr Das said.

Meanwhile, at least two start-ups are working on developing a pitha manufacturing machine, and once they achieve a breakthrough, the popularity of the Assamese delicacy would increase manifold both nationally and globally. Informing this, entrepreneurial consultant Satyen Madhav Mahanta told startup skilling programme here that the traditional food industry can throw up immense opportunities for startups.

"Two other possibilities in line with the

and a photography competition through its Institutional Values and Best Practices (IVBP), Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Hariprya Dutta, assistant professor of the department of accountancy, and Bikash Gogoi, assistant professor of the department of statistics and mathematics were the quiz masters.

Abhishek Ghosh, B.Com 5th semester, Robinranjan Das from HS 2nd year and Madhujha Bora, B.Com 5th semester clinched the first, second and third prizes respectively in the quiz competition.

In the photography competition, Madhurja Bora continued his winning streak by securing the first prize. Rinku Kalita, also from B.Com 5th semester, won the second prize, and Barkha Rani Gogoi from BBA 2nd semester bagged the 3rd prize. Additionally, a consolation prize was awarded to Mirza Hiddin Hussain from B.Com 5th semester.

lenges in BTR, Boro said, "Economic and livelihood is a big challenge in our region. We are trying to skill our youths so that they can become entrepreneurs."

He has also stressed the importance of education as a primary focus in the Bodoland region.

Boro noted improvements in the law and order situation in BTR, mentioning that the recent Lok Sabha elections were conducted peacefully, without bloodshed for the first time in decades.

"This is the first election (Lok Sabha) after three to four decades, where there was no bloodshed. This time the people voted without any fear," he said.

When questioned about the Manipur issue, Boro described it as "a very sensitive issue" and urged all communities to seek reconciliation. "I request every community to rethink. Still, we have time for reconciliation," he stated.

Notably, the event has been provided a platform for Boro to share

CEM Pramod Boro addresses 'Meet the Press' in New Delhi

There was no bloodshed in the Lok Sabha election in BTR, people voted without fear: Boro

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, June 29: The chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Pramod Boro, addressed the 'Meet the Press' programme being organised at the Press Club of India, New Delhi on Saturday.

CEM Pramod Boro was warmly received by NEMF president Sanjib Baruah, secretary Pranjal Prati Das, and other members of the forum.

CEM Boro, in his address, discussed various issues, including the challenges facing the BTR, his vision for the region, and the situation in Manipur state in the north-eastern region.

Criticising the previous Congress government in the state Boro remarked, "Because of the instability (in BTR) for a long time there was no development. The previous government did not have any plan for the region. The situation has improved under the BJP-led government. We are working together under the leadership of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. He has a good vision. We need to develop the region."

Highlighting the economic chal-



lenges in BTR, Boro said, "Economic and livelihood is a big challenge in our region. We are trying to skill our youths so that they can become entrepreneurs."

He has also stressed the importance of education as a primary focus in the Bodoland region.

Boro noted improvements in the law and order situation in BTR, mentioning that the recent Lok Sabha elections were conducted peacefully, without bloodshed for the first time in decades.

Stolen ONGC machine recovered in mustard oil factory in Baniabari

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, June 29: The police recovered a stolen ONGC machinery (heavy-duty alternator) at a mustard oil factory in Baniabari in Sivasagar district on Friday night.

Acting on a tip off, the police alerted the local VDP team and arrived at the spot where worker at the Kashim Ali's Scrap Depot were cutting the machine (alternator) with a gas cylinder and welding machine. The mustard oil factory is inside the farm 'Anand Agri Bohumukhi Krishak Samity' owned by Padip Bordoloi. Police seized the iron cutting equipment, the dismantled alternator which, the sources said, would cost over a crore. Police investigation is on, though no one has been arrested so far. Stealing iron bars from bridges in various places, iron pipes from ONGC depots is something that happens regularly in the district. Though the police take action occasionally, the criminal gang involved in the act often gets a reprieve from punishment due to a lack of circumstantial evidence or negligence on the part of investigating agencies.

For undertaking these infrastructural works, various trains will originate/terminate from Dibrugarh Station instead of Dibrugarh Town station.

The following trains will be terminated at Dibrugarh instead of Dibrugarh Town and partially cancelled between Chauchhowa and Dibrugarh Town:

The (New Delhi - Dibrugarh Town) Rajdhani Express commencing on its journey from June 29 to July 29 will arrive in Dibrugarh at 06:00 hours. The (Guwahati - Dibrugarh Town) Nagaland Express commencing on its journey from June 30 to July 30 will arrive in Dibrugarh at 10:30 hours. The (Simaluguri Jn. Dibrugarh Town) Passenger Special commencing on its journey from July

NFR cancels trains for infrastructural works

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 29: The Northeast Frontier Railways (NFR) has cancelled several trains as the road over bridge (ROB) at Mancotta near Dibrugarh Town Station is being rebuilt for undertaking various developmental works.

The following trains will originate/terminate from Dibrugarh Station instead of Dibrugarh Town station.

The (Dibrugarh Town - New Delhi) Rajdhani Express commencing on its journey from July 1 to 31 will depart from Dibrugarh at 20:55 hours. The (Dibrugarh Town - Guwahati) Nagaland Express commencing on its journey from July 1 to 31 will depart from Dibrugarh at 14:20 hours. The (Dibrugarh Town - Simaluguri Jn.) Passenger Special commencing on its journey from July 1 to 31 will

depart from Dibrugarh at 17:35. The (Dibrugarh Town - Ledo) DEMU Special scheduled to leave on July 1 to 31 will be extended upto Murkongselek via Dibrugarh. The (Ledo - Murkongselek) DEMU Special will arrive in Dibrugarh at 09:40 hours and depart from Dibrugarh at 09:50 hours to reach Murkongselek at 12:20 hours. In return direction, the (Murkongselek - Ledo) DEMU Special will depart from Murkongselek at 15:30 hours and arrive in Dibrugarh at 17:35 hours and depart from Dibrugarh

Bamrajabari High School celebrates its golden jubilee

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, June 29: The Bamrajabari High School has celebrated its golden jubilee year with a day-long programme at the school premises.

During the celebrations on Friday, 50 prominent persons of the area hoisted 50 flags. The Smiti Tarpan was offered by Neelima Dutta, founder and retired headmistress of the school. A sapling was planted by Baikuntha Prasad Deori, president of the governing body of the school. A discussion session was organised on a certain topic, which was led by Pritam Sarma, principal of the Sivasagar Girls College. Naba Kumar Bori gave the welcome speech in the discussion session. Shiva Prasad Mili, assistant professor of the Sivasagar Girls College, Ramen Kalita, assistant professor of the Dikhowmukh College, Leena Dutta, assistant professor of the HCDG College, Nitaipekuri and Khirud Chandra Deori, headmaster of the school were present as critics.

The founder of Trice Systems Private Limited, shared an in-depth account of his entrepreneurial journey. He offered valuable advice for startups, highlighting key points that can significantly contribute to their success.

MD of Assam Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation, Chinmoy Prakash Phookan elaborated on the initiatives undertaken by the corporation to popularise the startup culture among the local populace and highlighted various performance metrics and successful projects, demonstrating the positive impact of the efforts in nurturing a vibrant startup community.

Nandita Dutta, secretary of the state information technology department praised the Startup Catalyst Program for its visionary approach and encouraged further evolution of such efforts.

"With the collaborative efforts of NIELIT, Assam Startup and the Government of Assam, the future looks promising for aspiring entrepreneurs in Northeast India," she mentioned.

Naveen KL, another expert speaker and

AAP Jorhat to oppose flyover due to adverse affect on trade and commerce

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, June 29: Jorhat district unit of Aam Aadmi Party has opposed the proposed flyover project in Jorhat town, which would be constructed from Baruah Chariali to Bhogdoi bridge on AT Road here.

Addressing the media at the Jorhat Press Club on Friday, Dibyajyoti Sarmah, a former district coordinator of the party, said that the proposed flyover would adversely impact on the trade and business of Jorhat as the flyover would pass through areas like Marwari Thakurbari, Marwari Patty and Chowkbazar, which have the main wholesale and retail markets and thereby.

Stating that a large section of people including businessmen, traders and others were not in favour of the project as known from interactions with many of them, he stated that even business in the adjacent Garali too would be hampered.

Pointing out that there were several other areas of the AT Road plagued by heavy traffic congestion, which were outside the proposed flyover stretch, the AAP member said the state government should have tried to complete the unfinished building of the multi-storied car parking complex near the old public bus stand here beside the AT Road and Mahatma Gandhi

Road here. Sarmah, while stating that the incomplete car parking building, a project which was launched over 10 years ago, if completed, along with shifting the truck stand to the truck terminus under construction at Ail-mukhia on the eastern outskirts here, could mitigate the problem of traffic congestion to large extent.

Urging the state government not to go ahead with the flyover project, he said that the backbone of trade and commerce would be broken if not abandoned. He further said that AAP also opposes the government plan to shift the British-era Jorhat DC office complex from the heart of the town to the Cinnamara outskirts here.

Sarmah also said that the government should not undertake the project to expand the Jorhat Stadium into a huge sports complex by including the JDSA sports ground and Court Field, which would lead to heavy traffic hazard in the heart of the town. Sarmah also appealed to the newly-erected Jorhat Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi to oppose the flyover construction and DC office complex shifting project as it would cause difficulties to the people here and spell doom for trade and business of Jorhat with the wholesale market here catering to people from the adjoining districts and also those of Nagaland.

Decomposed body found floating in crop field at Barhampur

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, June 29: The decomposed body of Navin Basumaty, a resident of Barbari Kochergaon village near Barhampur Bamuni under Puranigudam Police Outpost, was found floating at Bamuni - Dhanatula Jalah field in Nagaon in the morning on Saturday.

According to sources, a few locals who had gone to the field for working, witnessed the decomposed body of the man floating in the water and immediately informed the Puranigudam police.

Police personnel soon arrived on the spot and sent the body to the Nagaon BP Civil Hospital for autopsy. Sources claimed that the deceased man had gone missing since the evening on June 26.

Sponsorship released under Mission Vatsalaya for FY-2023-24

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 29: Dima Hasao district commissioner cum chairperson of Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee, Simanta Kr. Das released the sponsorship for FY-2023-24 for beneficiaries under Mission Vatsalaya of the Union ministry of women and child development during a meeting held at the DC Conference Hall in Haflong on Saturday.

Rajdeep Kemprai, district child protection officer and Susanta Langthasa, protection officer of (NIC) District Child Protection Unit were also present on the occasion.

In total 39 beneficiaries have benefited under the Mission Vatsalaya in different categories i.e Covid Orphan, Child Marriage Victim, POCOS Victim etc. An amount of ₹ 48,000 has been provided to each beneficiary for the financial year 2023-24.

Low awareness on startups in Assam: Experts

Growing significance of AI highlighted at startup skilling program organised by NIELIT (MeitY)

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 29: Experts are of the opinion that awareness on startups among masses in Assam is low compared to other states.

In a particular case, the situation has come to such a pass that an individual in the guise of starting a business has spent the loan amount for personal use.

"A loan amount of Rs 10 lakh was sanctioned from a certain bank. Rs 2 lakh was given to the bank official for facilitating the transaction. The remaining Rs 8 lakh was spent elsewhere by the individual. The amount was initially taken as loan for building a startup," an official privy to the situation told The Hills Times.

The Assam Startup homepage showed that as many as 105 startups have been registered with Assam Startup initiative of Assam govt.

A panel discussion at the two-day skilling programme of National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) was organised for startups under North-East Capacity Building 2.0

(NECB 2.0) project recently.

It was sponsored by Union ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY).

Hirak Ranjan Das, innovation manager at the Union ministry of education's Innovation Cell. Das rued that startup creation and awareness in Northeast is low compared to rest of India.

"For instance, at an awareness programme organized in Guwahati recently, only nine startups turned up, while a similar programme in Maharashtra attracted some 1800 startups," Dr Das said.

Meanwhile, at least two start-ups are working on developing a pitha manufacturing machine, and once they achieve a breakthrough, the popularity of the Assamese delicacy would increase manifold both nationally and globally. Informing this, entrepreneurial consultant Satyen Madhav Mahanta told startup skilling programme here that the traditional food industry can throw up immense opportunities for startups.

"Two other possibilities in line with the



pitha manufacturing machine could be its packaging and an SOP on the ingredients," Mahanta said during a panel discussion at the two-day skilling programme of National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) organised for startups under North-East Capacity Building 2.0 (NECB 2.0) project sponsored by MeitY on Thursday and Friday in the city.

Y Jayanta Singh, executive director of NIELIT emphasized on the growing significance of artificial intelligence and highlighted the futuristic potential of the new electronic semiconductor plant being established in the region. He noted that these developments could revolutionize the local economy and create numerous opportunities for startups. The Startup Catalyst Program at the Assam Startup,

the Nest premises, which aimed to bolster the startup ecosystem in Northeast India, brought together prominent industry experts and government officials to discuss the future of innovation and entrepreneurship in the region.

Anubhav Tiwari, chief innovation officer of NIELIT, provided an insightful overview of the potential prospects for startups in Northeast India, underscoring the region's untapped potential and the importance of fostering a supportive environment for new ventures.

Satyanarayana Reddy M, Lead of the innovation and business department at Keystone Center for Innovation and Teacher Education (KCITE), led a technical session focusing on the potential effectiveness of prompt engineering in startup innovations.

Ankur Mehta, associate director at Plaksha University, gave a presentation on the intricacies of pitching a business and other technical element crucial for startup success.

Naveen KL, another expert speaker and

Editor's pick

Will British Indians back Rishi Sunak?

By: Vivek Shukla

Will Rishi Sunak, Britain's first Hindu Prime Minister, remain in office after the upcoming general election on July 4th? Will Sunak's Conservative Party receive the votes of British Indians? Will the Labour Party also receive votes from the Indian diaspora? These are important questions indeed. According to the 2011 British census, there are approximately 1.5 million people of Indian origin in Britain, representing 2.5% of the country's total population. Indians are the largest immigrant group in Britain. They are relatively well-educated compared to other immigrant groups and are considered to be among the wealthiest in Britain.

Hinduja, Lakshmi Mittal, and Swaraj Paul are some prominent Indian-origin individuals who feature in the list of Britain's richest people. Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murthy, daughter of Infosys founder N.R. Narayan Murthy, were ranked 245th in the Sunday Times list of Britain's wealthiest individuals released in May.

Historically, Indian immigrants in Britain have leaned towards the Labour Party. It was during the Labour government that India gained independence from British rule. However, recent surveys suggest a growing inclination towards the Conservative Party, the main rival to the Labour Party. Vinod Chavan, a writer residing in London since the 1970s, believes that Hindu voters in Britain may vote en masse for the Conservative Party in the upcoming elections.

This news could be a relief for Sunak and his Conservative Party. It's important to understand that when we talk about Indians in Britain, we also include those who have settled in the country from East Africa, the Caribbean Islands, and other places. Sunak's family settled in Britain from Kenya in the 1960s, although his ancestors originally hailed from Punjab.

There is also a belief that a large number of Indian residents in Britain became supporters of the Conservative Party after Narendra Modi became India's Prime Minister in 2014. Hindus comprise the majority of these supporters. The total Hindu population among Indians in Britain is over a million.

Modi addressed over 60,000 people of Indian origin at a packed Wembley Stadium in London during his 2015 visit to Britain. Gujarati and Punjabi people were in the majority at that time. Boris Johnson, the then British Prime Minister, was known to proudly call himself "India's son-in-law". He was a unique son-in-law. His (second divorced) wife Marina Wheeler's mother, Deep Singh Kaur, was previously married to Sardar Daljit Singh, son of renowned contractor Sir Sobha Singh from New Delhi.

Now, let's understand another subtle point. Not all Indian immigrants in Britain think alike politically or support any specific party. It is believed that most Indian Muslims and Sikhs may vote for the Labour Party. They are not fond of the close ties between the Conservative Party and Modi. From the 1960s to the 1980s, a significant number of Indian immigrants settled in Britain from Uganda, Kenya, and the Caribbean Islands.

These communities viewed Labour as sympathetic to immigrants. They were particularly attracted to Labour's commitment to immigrants' rights, especially following the introduction of the Race Relations Act in 1965 by Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson. Thousands of Indian immigrants came to Britain from Uganda after Uganda's cannibalistic president Idi Amin ordered the expulsion of all Indians from his country within 90 days in August 1972.

A deeper analysis reveals that British Hindus have been leaning towards the Conservative Party since 2010. This trend includes wealthy and educated second and third-generation Hindus. In the past 20-25 years, a new wave of immigrants from India has arrived in Britain. These are doctors, engineers, IT professionals, etc. They all identify themselves as Conservative Party voters.

The Indian diaspora's disaffection with the Labour Party did not happen overnight. It was triggered by Labour's 2019 resolution calling for "the right of self-determination" for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This resolution led a large section of the Indian diaspora in Britain to distance themselves from the Labour Party. They saw it as direct interference in India's internal affairs. Meanwhile, Rishi Sunak became Britain's first Hindu Prime Minister in 2022. This development deepened the bond between Hindus and the Conservative Party. It is still too early to say whether Hindus will vote en masse for the Conservative Party in the upcoming British general election.

However, for the first time, British Hindus have released a manifesto outlining their aspirations and expectations from the next government. They say they will only support those who endorse their demands. Hindus are the third-largest religious group in Britain. 29 Hindu organizations have so far endorsed this manifesto. According to the manifesto, "Hindus are the backbone of the British economy. Our contribution to the country's economy is disproportionately high. We are one of the most law-abiding communities. Yet, anti-Hindu hate is on the rise in the country." One of their key demands is for their safety. Will the Hindu votes be split or go to the Conservative Party? Will the Labour and Conservative parties consider the manifesto of the Hindu organizations? (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

CPI once called K Suresh a Christian!

By: Er. Rajesh Pathak

Last days after taking the oath as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chandra Babu Naidu paid visit to Tirumala Triupati Devasthanam. Without the consideration of so-called "Secular sensitivities" he straight away sharply said that the days of anti-Hinduism activities so far being run in the premise are over. Very shrewdly former CM Jagan had handed over the administrative functions of Devasthanam trust to mostly Non-Hindus affiliated with him and his family. Naidu says nothing beyond facts when he says that premise has degenerated into the den of Marijuana, Wine and Non-vegetarian foods!

To better understand the things it is required to get to know that the father of late CM of AP, Rajshanker Reddy (YSR), had adopted Christianity. Later when YSR's daughter Sharmila wanted to wed with Brahmin youth, Anil Kumar, living in America, she could reported to have done that only when he had embraced Christianity. And thus one more "Crypto Christian" (The Christian with Hindu name) came into being as a "Brother Anil" to preach Christianity.

Pushing the country into demographic imbalance through different conversion activities are widely under way. As Jagan Reddy took over the CM post after father's demise, through the state's administrative intervention in the 'Changali Utsav' conducted

by 'Brother Anil' people in drove began to join to get treated out of the ailments by the 'grace' of Christ. Hindu organization stood in protest against such events driving the people away from Hinduism through deception. Nothing much could happen though.

Brother Anil was not alone, however. One more was there who had his luck shine with the ascendency of Jagan as CM. And his name was Subba Rao, the brother of Jagan's staunch Christian mother. He was appointed as chief of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam. Then exactly that began to happen as mentioned by Naidu. Standing against Sanatan Dhrama with having the protection of top families of prominent political parties of the country are mostly non-Hindus. But people at large get confused with their Hindu names!

Who could forget KR Narayan? He had been proudly mentioned as first 'Dalit' President of India because of the name, whereas his grave lies in Christian cemetery! The case of contestant for the post of speaker of current Lok Sabha from Congress, K Suresh Kumar, seems to be no different. He is claimed to be Dalit, however CPI of Kerala once called him Christian! In the year 2010 election his opponent RS Anil of CPI filed the writ claiming K Suresh belongs to backward caste of Christian community, not Dalit! Notably, Kerala high court found the charge right and disqualified him.

The second ICET meeting,

Assessing gross electoral violations: Shocking case studies from Dimapur's 2024 urban local body elections

"The power of the people is much stronger than the people in power." ~ Wael Ghonim

The Urban Local Bodies elections conducted in Dimapur on June 26th, 2024, have underscored significant issues that demand careful examination and decisive action in public interest. Notably, the elections have brought to light clear violations of electoral regulations by elected public representatives, particularly MLA H. Tovihoto Ayemi and MLA Hekani Jakhlu Kense, which contravene established legal frameworks governing electoral conduct.

According to Rule 48 of the Nagaland Municipal Election Rules 2023, public servants, including ministers, MPs, state ministers, and deputy ministers, are explicitly prohibited from accessing polling stations, except in their capacity as voters or duly authorized agents. This statutory provision aims to preserve the impartiality and integrity of the electoral process, guarding against undue influence and ensuring equitable participation.

However, indisputable video evidence has emerged showing MLA H. Tovihoto Ayemi and MLA Hekani Jakhlu Kense accompanied by armed security personnel within polling station premises. Such actions flagrantly violate Model Code of Con-

duct Rule 7 under the Party in Power subsection (7), which specifies that ministers of central or state governments are barred from entering polling stations or counting venues unless acting strictly as candidates, voters, or authorized representatives. The presence of armed security further exacerbates concerns, potentially intimidating voters and disrupting the orderly conduct of elections.

In Ward 10, MLA Hekani Jakhlu Kense's actions have exacerbated communal tensions by employing tribal references, addressing constituents/part of the public as "Aos/you Aos," thereby contravening the Model Code of Conduct's provisions against fostering communal sentiments. Her purported rationale for visiting the polling station, under the guise of safeguarding constituents within a purported "minority belt" predominantly comprising Kacharis, exacerbates existing divisions.

Such conduct undermines electoral principles designed to mitigate inter-community discord and promote inclusive participation. Additionally, the invocation of tribal identity in a manner that appears to sway voters on communal lines is not only unethical but could also be seen as a violation of Section 153A of the In-

dian Penal Code, which penalizes acts promoting enmity between different groups.

Moreover, the efficacy and impartiality of law enforcement agencies during the electoral process have been called into question. Instances of reported violence, such as the alleged assault of a woman querying/challenging proxy voting (who casted my vote in my absence?) in Ward 20, underscore deficiencies in maintaining public order and safeguarding electoral integrity.

Such incidents not only disenfranchise voters but also erode public confidence in the electoral process itself.

Furthermore, these actions may constitute offenses under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including but not limited to Sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups) and 171F (undue influence or personation at an election).

The failure of law enforcement to effectively address these issues suggests a systemic problem that must be rectified to ensure fair elections in the future.

The discovery of prohibited items, including a catapult and a walkie-talkie, in possession of an unopposed elected NDPP ULB representative, Kiyasetuo Kenguruse, in Ward 2, raises fundamental concerns about candi-

date adherence to electoral statutes.

The presence of such items in proximity to polling stations not only contravenes statutory regulations but also poses potential threats to the orderly conduct of elections and the safety of voters. Possession of such items might also fall under the ambit of Section 188 of the IPC, which deals with disobedience to an order duly promulgated by a public servant.

Additionally, instances of public protests and confrontations witnessed in various wards, including displays of banners and cards protesting MLA Hekani Jakhlu Kense's presence, underscore the volatile atmosphere that pervaded the electoral landscape. Such actions, violating Model Code of Conduct Rule 4 pertaining to polling day procedures, highlight systemic failures in enforcing electoral guidelines and maintaining public order.

The Honourable State Election Commission, State of Nagaland, must take decisive action to address these gross, blatant, naked violations. The blatant disregard for the Model Code of Conduct, various election laws, and sections of the Indian Penal Code by elected public representatives (MLAs), other individuals including an unopposed elected NDPP ULB representative, Kiyasetuo Kenguruse etc is unacceptable and undermines the democratic process.

It is imperative that the Commission investigates these incidents thoroughly and holds the responsible individuals accountable.

Immediate steps should be taken to ensure such violations do not recur in future elections.

This includes stricter enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, enhanced monitoring of polling stations and stringent penalties for those found in violation of electoral laws.

Furthermore, the involvement of armed security personnel by elected public representatives (during their illegal visits in violation of MCC and other rules/laws) and their use of communal rhetoric necessitates a robust response to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and maintain public trust. The integrity of the electoral process hinges on the unwavering enforcement of rules and the prompt addressal of any breaches.

In conclusion, the Urban Local Bodies elections in Dimapur on June 26th, 2024, have underscored significant lapses in adherence to electoral norms and legal protocols. The blatant disregard for statutory provisions by elected public representatives, coupled with instances of intimidation and violence, poses substantial challenges to democratic governance.

Urgent remedial measures are imperative to restore public trust, uphold the sanctity of free and

fair elections, and safeguard democratic principles and electoral integrity.

Furthermore, these incidents underscore the compelling need for comprehensive electoral reforms aimed at reinforcing adherence to existing legal frameworks.

Transparency in candidate conduct and stringent enforcement of electoral codes are indispensable in mitigating electoral malpractices and safeguarding the electorate's Constitutional liberty and legal right to unfettered participation.

The role of law enforcement agencies in ensuring peace and order during electoral processes cannot be overstated, necessitating firm commitment to impartiality and accountability.

Upholding these fundamental principles is indispensable in nurturing public confidence in democratic processes and upholding the legitimacy of elected representatives. The State Election Commission's proactive involvement is crucial to ensuring these standards are met and that the electoral process remains untainted by misconduct and illegal activities.

The awakened Public of the state of Nagaland is watching. Public will remember everything. WE DEMAND JUSTICE FROM STATE ELECTION COMMISSION. (The author can be reached at mezhuk03@gmail.com)

ICET: A mirage of US-India technological cooperation?

By: Dipak Kurmi

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's strong confidence in Washington was evident during the recent India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (ICET) roundtable in New Delhi. The event, hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and attended by American counterpart Jake Sullivan, underscored a notable display of faith from India's National Security Advisor towards their American counterparts.

Radiating optimism and ambition at the pivotal gathering, Ajit Doval, recently reaffirmed as NSA for a third consecutive term, emphasized the imperative for India and the US to lead in advancing critical technologies, driven by strategic foresight.

Highlighting collaborative strides in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, critical minerals, advanced telecommunications, and defense, he underscored the crucial role of US-India partnership in safeguarding shared values and interests on a global scale.

As highlighted in a prominent statement by the CII across newspapers, Ajit Doval expressed his firm belief in ICET, initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden in May 2022 to catalyze technological collaboration, has surpassed all expectations.

The Joint Fact Sheet released by New Delhi and the US presents a starkly different narrative. It outlines several defense innovations, semiconductor developments, biotech advancements, space technology initiatives, and telecommunications projects purportedly in progress, yet lacks substantive details or clear timelines. This has raised significant doubts about Washington's commitment.

Among Prime Minister Modi's inner circle, Ajit Doval commands exceptional respect, which makes his recent public endorsement of ICET all the more perplexing. His influential stature both domestically and internationally adds weight to his words, making his support for what appears to be primarily an American initiative leveraging India's trust deeply disappointing. It begs the question whether ICET aims to deceive India's 1.4 billion citizens.

The second ICET meeting,

held on June 18 behind closed doors alongside the CII roundtable, saw Ajit Doval unexpectedly praising the initiative. Launched by Modi and Biden at the Quad Summit in Tokyo in May 2022, ICET convened its inaugural meeting in January 2023 in Washington.

At this milestone gathering, India and the US outlined their joint priorities spanning defense, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, high-performance computing, jet engine co-production, semiconductor supply chains, space exploration (including human flights and commercial launches), and telecommunications, including the future 6G technology. Adding a provocative touch, a White House statement suggested that ICET would establish a new ecosystem strengthening democratic values and institutions in both nations.

While ICET encompasses a broad spectrum of initiatives, deliberate efforts were made to convey its potential to facilitate the much-awaited transfer of US military technology for joint development and arms production in India. This portrayal positioned ICET as a pivotal force in the defense sector. Optimism surged when the US pledged expedited evaluation of General Electric's application to manufacture jet engines in India for the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft.

On one front, it seemed like the US aimed to reduce India's reliance on Russian military equipment by offering advanced defense technologies that have traditionally come from Moscow. Alternatively, some speculated that this defense technology collaboration aimed to bolster India against China, aligning with the broader US strategy of countering its formidable rival at all costs.

However, it's nothing more than an illusion. The idea of the US transferring its state-of-the-art military technology to India for manufacturing cutting-edge defense equipment remains a fantasy and a long-standing dream for New Delhi. While hopes may soar, the inevitable reality is a harsh descent, echoing with disappointment.

The futility of expecting anything substantial from ICET is glaring, especially given Washington's decision to grant advanced nuclear submarine technology to Australia, aimed at countering Beijing, while

India faces direct military challenges from China without similar support. Compounding this, India's alignment with Russia post-Ukraine conflict has strained relations with the US, exposing a clear loyalty test failure. In such circumstances, there is no plausible scenario where ICET could fulfill India's longstanding desires for advanced US military technology. The trust gap remains insurmountable and expectations unrealized.

Since May 2022, pragmatists have recognized that ICET is destined to follow the same path as the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), which India and Washington enthusiastically launched in 2012 to manufacture US military equipment in India. However, DTTI proved to be a colossal failure, failing to yield any tangible outcomes. The dismal track record of DTTI was so pronounced that any mention of it was notably avoided during the signing of ICET. Each initiative under DTTI was eventually abandoned, leading to its quiet demise without even a ceremonial farewell.

Former Admiral Arun Prakash speaks candidly, describing ICET as an illusion and a misconception due to the starkly different objectives between India and the US. While India seeks the transfer of military technology, the US prioritizes trade, evidenced by India's substantial \$22 billion expenditure on American military hardware through the foreign military sales program since 2002.

Prakash emphasizes the urgent need for New Delhi to strategically leverage its extensive purchases across defense, energy, civil aviation, nuclear, and other sectors to extract essential technology from the US. Similarly, another nationalist voice, Bharat Karnad, dismisses ICET as a stillborn initiative.

The perplexing question remains: why is Ajit Doval, known for his pragmatic approach, jeopardizing his formidable reputation by endorsing ICET and showering praise on what many perceive as a dubious imposition by the US on India? His uncharacteristic behavior raises eyebrows, leaving observers to wonder about the underlying motivations behind his unexpected stance. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

India's notorious heatwave isn't an agenda in the Modi 3.0 government

By: Arun Kumar Shrivastav

The summer heat has been so acute this year in India that more than 40,000 people have had heat strokes, and several hundred of them have died. In Delhi, water and electricity consumption has broken all previous records. Some reports suggest that the temperatures crossed 50 degrees centigrade in many places adjoining Delhi. In Bihar, school students fainted on their way to school. Some developed complications inside the school, forcing the government to announce an unscheduled school closure.

On the agricultural front, the summer crops - green gram, black gram, cowpea, jowar, bajra, ragi, maize, groundnut, and sesame - have been badly hit. It's going to increase the prices of these commodities in the coming months. The production of vegetables and fruits has been significantly low, spiking their prices abnormally. This has resulted in people preferring potatoes to green vegetables. In rural India, the supply of vegetables has been meagre during this period.

The increase in potato consumption has depleted its stock and increased its price to alarming levels. During the election campaign, political leaders fell ill due to the heat. Those who could avoid election duty, like top leaders, certainly took advantage and attended as few rallies as possible. But election officials and security personnel had a harrowing time managing the affair.

But, surprisingly, no one talked about it in election speeches. Leaders talked about issues that ordinary Indians could not relate to. In the summer heat, the divide between Bharat and India becomes too apparent. But sadly, no one was talking about the suffering and sweat of the Indians who live without air conditioners. Imagine how farming can be even imagined in such sweltering heat.

In such heat, tongues can lose balance and blurt out statements that one may not in normal circumstances. This happened in good measure, from educated politicians and their families to usual culprits. However, the case of political leaders showing arrogance or belligerence is worth considering.

Running out of ideas after being in the government or even in the opposition for ten years is natural. We all need to work on this state of oversaturation in our respective professions. Finding new ideas to keep the tempo going is not easy. How do you get out of this? It's

here that knowledge has a role: the deeper it is, the longer you stay afloat. In politics, it's the ideology or the strength of the ideology that a specific political party believes in or espouses that matters.

Even the most ideologically grounded and people-savvy party leaders often don't know the right thing to do or say. In these situations, they end up giving kneejerk replies and speeches, which the people take as a sign of arrogance. Believing in and practising the party's innate philosophy can show them the way out of indecisions, dilemmas, and difficult situations.

If BJP leaders or junior party workers have become arrogant, it's because they lack a grasp of their party's philosophy. Going back to the core and brushing up their understanding of the party's basic philosophy can help them find direction. It's the same for any political party. A political party that lacks a strong ideological basis cannot flourish and remain popular for long.

Returning to the notorious summer heat this year, the exact mechanism of returning to the roots and nourishing it drop by drop would work. Indian summers have always been notorious, but they are becoming unbearably acute. Over the past several decades, infrastructure building and rapid urbanization have resulted in massive deforestation and loss of water bodies. This must be reversed if India ever gets its climate issues in order.

The water scarcity in Delhi in peak summer underscores that cities of Delhi's size and population are unsustainable. We have many such cities in India. Mumbai couples don't get enough private space to live a normal conjugal life. It is a story spoken, heard, and forgotten umpteen times. From people forced to travel in overcrowded trains to live in inhuman conditions in cities, the India story is not a shining bright spot on the global economic map. It's a story of people's struggle, hardship, and survival. Going back to the roots is the only solution.

India's 58% of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood, while the agriculture sector contributes around 15% to the Indian GDP. This is some food for thought and shows why India must prioritize its villages. Any party that wants to rule the country can't ignore the growing climate crisis and how it affects the ability of poor farmers to grow their crops and be self-reliant. (IPA Service)

Best summer travel plan

By: Dimple Sarma

Taking a break from our regular routines and monotonous work is a perfect need for summer. This season is eagerly awaited not only by travellers but also by everyone who loves to escape from the everyday grind and want to experience new places, cultures, and adventures. The warm weather, longer days, and clear atmosphere make summer an ideal time for trips, whether it's a relaxing beach vacation, an exciting mountain trek, or a city exploration. Summer brings a sense of vitality and freedom.

The summer vibe is also a perfect time for showcasing one's fashionable outfits. As temperatures rise, so does the eagerness for travel, opening up a world of possibilities and experiences that can greatly en-

rich our lives. As schools are also closed due to summer break for kids, it's a perfect time for family trip.

As children are stressed free from their academic burdens, they also love to enjoy outdoor activities. This is the time where every family member meets and creates memories. Earlier, we used to go to our ancestral homes during holidays and nothing can beat the excitement of visiting those places, roaming around with friends and

If you are a beach person you can visit Goa, Mandarmani beach in Kolkata, Lakshadweep etc. Beaches are for fun and vibrant attractions. You can enjoy sunbathing, swimming, playing with sandcastle or can enjoy any water sports. If you love hills then, Darjeeling, Tawang, Kufri etc can be your relaxation point, Hills become particularly at-



tractive during the summer months. Hiking, camping, and mountain biking are just a few of the activities that draw adventurers to these high-altitude roads.

The breathtaking journeys of hills will always mesmerize you. The cooler temperatures in the mountains provide a refreshing escape from the heat of the plains, making these areas popular summer retreats. I remember sleeping with

blanket during my trip to Darjeeling whereas temperature in Assam at that time soars upto 40 degrees. If you love to explore cities and culture you must try for Udaipur, Mawlynnong, Kerala, Kodaikanal etc. Selection of place is totally upto the choice and budget of the traveller but wherever you go, travel always brings positivity, freshness and rejuvenates life.

And of course, travel teaches us

a lot. One of the best reasons to travel in summer is longer days and weathers itself. I personally love to travel during summer to a new place every year.

The longer daylight allows traveller to explore more and engage in activities. Beach person can watch a scenic sunset view, shopaholic person can go and explore street market places, can enjoy a late-night dinner plan.

Travel destinations can be classified as historical, natural, wildlife, gastronomic, spiritual, festive, adventure, relaxation etc. Urban destinations also has their own charm during summer. Your travel plan may include some vibrant and lesser travelled places.

There are some specialised seasonal attractions during summer that can be enjoyed. Water parks, camping, safari, adventure trek are

some of the examples. Many places conduct cultural fair, food festival promoting their culture and heritage. Travellers can take part and enjoy those experiences creating lifetime memories. Although there are lots of advantages for travelling during summer but it requires thoughtful planning.

Booking accommodations prior to travel is advisable for a comfortable stay. As there are lots of travellers book their hotel rooms in this season for their stay, so it is advisable to check availability of hotels in the area where you are planning to stay. After reaching your travel spot, try to go out for sightseeing or for any other activities before the peak heat of the day. Pack light coloured comfy cotton cloths, sunscreen, sunglasses, and scarf in your travel bag.

To avoid dehydration, water in-

take is must. Keep water bottles everywhere with you to stay hydrated. During daytime it is advisable to take low spicy food.

Traveling in summer is a multifaceted experience that offers something for everyone. Kids love to play, elders love to explore and everyone loves to create memories and experience something new.

In spite of the warm weather, long days and clear atmosphere create the perfect package for a memorable vacation. Summer travel provides endless possibilities for exploration and enjoyment. So, as the days grow longer and the sun shines brighter, pack your bags and set out to discover the wonders that await in this vibrant and lively season. Let this summer be a memorable one. (The author can be reached at sarmadimple@gmail.com)

SHORT STORY

THE CALL

By: Dr. Suman Bharali

(...continued from the last edition)

"Come and see me. You will find yourself, how I am." Replied the voice.

"Please don't scare us. We are sorry for what we did?" Pramod begged to her

"You did not leave me when I requested you. Now I will not leave you. I will be chasing you forever." Replied the voice and laughed aloud.

"Please forgive us. We kneel before you and beg you. We will never disturb or hurt anyone ever. Please forgive us." Rajneesh knelt down and begged to the voice.

"Now have you realized, how one feels when chased unwantedly? Can you feel, what fear is?" asked the voice.

"Yes, yes. We have realized our mistakes. We will never do any bad thing again. We all promise you." Usman replied and all of them nodded their head and repeated

"We promise we will change from today onwards. Please forgive us."

"If you wish that I don't chase you, you have to do something." Said the voice

"We will do anything to erase our sins. Please tell us, what to do? Asked Rajneesh

"Seema is trapped in the drain and her soul is wandering between life and death. I am her soul speaking. If you can save her within an hour. I will return to her body. But if you fail I will be wandering forever and chase you wherever you go. So, go and save her as soon as possible." Said the voice and the call was cut.

All the four boys looked at each other and got up.

"Let's save her. Otherwise we will be in trouble forever." Biju spoke

"Right. Let us inform the police and find her." Said Usman

"Ok, but the police will arrest us if they know that we are responsible for the accident." Said Rajneesh

"No need to tell everything to the police or anybody. We will say we saw a girl on that lane that day. And she might be Seema. Rest they will find out. We will provide only the clue." Replied Pramod.

All of them agreed to inform the police and find out Seema.

They took their bikes out and went to the police station as fast as they could ride.

At police station they spoke to the officer in-charge. They told him that they heard about a missing girl and want to give him some information. And Rajneesh described the scene to the officer.

"That day it was raining hard and there was no electricity. The streets were almost empty. We were smoking under the roof of a closed shop. Then we saw a girl walking fast with an umbrella in her hand. She walked into by lane-4. We got busy in chatting again. After a while we heard a loud sound of something dropping in water. We looked into the lane but it was empty and dark. We thought the girl must have crossed the lane by then so we did not go to see what happened. But now we have a doubt that she might have disappeared from there. It will be good if you search that area thoroughly."

The police officer noted the statement and asked his team to get ready. He asked the boys to accompany them to the site. Soon, all of them reached the place. Police saw the missing slab over the manhole in drain and suspected that Seema might have fallen into the manhole. He called JCB and SDRF team. They removed a few more slabs at regular distance and searched inside the drain. At about 800 meters distance they saw a junction of two drains.

The drain in which Seema fell met with the other drain perpendicularly. They remove the slabs over that area. They saw a human body covered with mud and garbage. It was wet and dirty. The men hurried and get down to take it out. On cleaning the face, it was Seema.

Immediately the Ambulance and medics rushed. They removed the dirt over her and put her into a stretcher. Then they checked her vitals, took her into the ambulance and started emergency medical treatment. The ambulance drove away towards the hospital with blaring siren.

The police thanked the boys and asked them to visit the police station next morn-



ing. The boys went to the hospital to see what happened to Seema. She was kept in the ICU there. After an hour of treatment, the doctor said that she was in a state of shock. She would have died if not rescued within an hour.

The boys asked if she is out of danger now. Then the doctor replied she is out of danger but still unconscious. Her vitals are becoming normal gradually but will take time to recover completely. The boys took a deep breath of relief. They thanked god that they could save Seema's life.

Otherwise they would have to spend their days in repentance for their sin. They would have thought they killed an innocent girl.

It was late in the night and the boys returned to Biju's house to spend the night together. The police informed the grieving mother on phone that they have found Seema and she is out of danger now.

Next morning Seema's mother, her younger sister Jumi, her uncle, relatives, the police team and the four boys all gathered at the hospital. Then Seema was shifted to the general ward from the ICU. Intravenous fluid was still running into her veins.

When the mother saw the doctor she rushed towards him and asked.

"How is my child now? Can I see her?"

"Yes you can. But don't talk too much with her. She is very weak at this moment. She will recover soon. We are providing her best treatment and care." The doctor replied and walked away to look after another patient.

Seema's mother and the police officer went inside the ward. Seema's mother ran towards her, leaned forward, touched Seema's head with her fingers and kissed her forehead with affection. "My child what happened to you? We were devastated

could hear me. Gradually I fainted and don't know anything after that. By the time I fainted the rain had stopped and the water was receding so I was not carried away further I think."

The police officer noted down the statement and said.

"It was a tragic accident. But we are fortunate that we could find and save you in time." Replied the police officer

"Now you take rest and recover soon. We will meet again when you will recover completely." The officer said

"Thank you very much for saving my life." Seema showed her gratefulness

"Everyone has done their best to find you. But without the information of the boys we could not have find you. You are blessed that you are being loved by everyone." The police officer replied and walked out.

After a couple of days, Seema recovered completely and went to her home with her mother and sister. They started their normal life again. Her uncle and relatives went back to their village. The police informed the concerned department about the open manholes within the area. The person responsible was issued notice and the manholes were covered immediately. The damaged roads and drains were also repaired soon.

The police called the boys and thanked them for information and cooperation. They had tea and snacks together. The boys changed completely after that incident. They never harmed or teased anybody thereafter.

Seema's intense desire to live was the reason that her soul did not want to leave her body so easily. She was a pure and selfless soul. She was living for others. She knew she cannot give up so easily, as she had a great responsibility on her shoulders. So she fought till last to stay alive. She had blessings of her mother and love of everyone who knows her. All these together saved her. God help those who help themselves. Pure souls are rare but very powerful. One pure soul converted four spoiled boys into gentlemen. (The author is an M.D. (Ayur) Ph.D. based in Guwahati, Assam. She can be reached at 9954154192)

The Titli Hai Khamosh collection of meaningful couplets of ancient and modern coordination

By: Lalit Garg

Satyawan Saurabh is a dynamic writer and poet from Haryana. It is a matter of happiness that their creator, realizing the increasing pressures of life, has the patience to fight them, and struggle with them. Recently his 'Titli Hai Khamosh' Doha collection has been published. This collection of 725 couplets is unique and these couplets leave their mark on the rock of the time. Not only this they also encounter this difficult time. This encounter is the strength and originality of his couplets which is a living depiction of public sentiments.

Someone has said that the more chaos, decline, struggle, and violation of moral/characteristic values in the society, the better the literature will be written in that society. Literary practice and creativity is a difficult austerity and only those who are its seekers give depth to literature. The Doha compilation 'Titli Hai Khamosh' presented by literature seeker Saurabh is a natural and natural expression of the poet's mature thinking not only in the context of individual, family but also society, nation, and the world.

The couplets of the compilation are such that a picture is drawn in front of the mind's eyes. He has a special way of describing things. Then whether it is natural scenery or giving expression to love, faith, faith, and hope. This is his latest collection. In the couplets of Satyawan Saurabh, not only his world but also our world is visible. By reading Satyawan Saurabh's mood and mood can be well guessed. The thoughts, feelings, images, and metaphors of couplets spread a new light, which also illuminates the path of the readers.

Despite being in the post of Veterinary Inspector in Haryana, Satyawan Saurabh takes out time for writing, this is his specialty. The simplicity, spontaneity, and depth of meaning in his couplets easily attract us. He can express the feelings with such ease that it seems that they are not only the feelings of Saurabh but also the hidden feelings and sensations of every reader's mind. No emotion remained untouched by his sharp pen. He has a unique way of looking at situations. His couplets seem to come straight from the heart.

Couplets have a special place in Hindi literature. Doha is half-tone only. It is of two lines and four phases are considered in it. In particular, the couplets are colored in spiritual and didactic colors, and there are 13-13 matras in their first and third (odd) steps and 11-11 matras in the second and fourth (even) steps. At the end there are guru and laghu varnas. Rhyme usually occurs in the second and fourth stanzas only. The couplet is an example of a semi-equal metrical verse.

From Tulsidas to the great poet Kabir, Rahim, from Raskhan to Bihari, a wide spiritual environment of couplets has been enriching Indian literature. The influence of these great men can be seen in the couplets composed in the modern era. A wonderful coordination of modernity and antiquity is seen in Saurabh's couplets, which proves the significance of couplet verses.

There is poetic beauty as well as flowing dynamism in the couplets of 'Titli Hai Khamosh'. These couplets are meaningful; the words blossomed in the form of inner feelings communicating

Sushma. These couplets communicate the vibrations of consciousness.

The image of the poet's eternal influence should be reflected in the couplets, this is the test of the poet's poetic work. When I test the couplets of the presented compilation on that criterion, then the image of Satyawan Saurabh emerges as a socially conscious guard as well as a sensitive creative worker. Saurabh, who writes contemporary articles and features on various subjects along with literary genres like poetry, song, ghazal, etc., has got special success in writing Doha. He gives credit to Dr. Ramnivas Manav, a distinguished litterateur of Haryana

itself. His inspiration in writing a book 'Titli Hai Khamosh' is particularly noteworthy. Satyawan Saurabh has tied every bitter and sweet experience of his daily life, even every fun of contemplation hovering in the mind. His couplets have arisen from his world, and in some places, the wider scenario of the country and the world has also been presented in them. In these couplets there is a clear depiction of the anomalies and irony prevalent in the society, and then the stinging bite and duality of family life and the problems of life around us come out in the form of couplets. Probably this is also the basis of couplets. His deep concern for his environment is his strength. His couplets are so strong and fearless that they will give him remarkable architecture in the literary world. I believe that no writer can create classical literature by being independent of the era, no matter what the genre may be. The mind of a litterateur is pure like blank paper; innocent, transparent like a mirror.

Seeing the deserted garden, the butterfly is silent. From the procession of the firefly, now the enthusiasm is missing. Satyawan Saurabh Swant has been composing for the last sixteen years with the spirit of happiness. He was so restrained that he kept away from the desire to bring his expression in front of the readers or to be published. There is no noise in creation. Sadhana has no tongue. But there is such power in Siddhi that even after breaking thousands of mountains, it gets exposed. This statement is proved true by Satyawan Saurabh. The work presented by Saurabh is unique. There is power in his writing.

He has an extraordinary command of language. Whatever he writes in Prajnal and elegant language, the reader gets motivated after reading it. As beautiful, elegant, and original as he writes, his life speaks better. Despite these rare characteristics, they never want to come forward. Wants to stay completely away from name, fame, fame, and position. Reading the presented Doha collection, it can be easily said that the views expressed in it are empirical. The person who wanders establishes an emotional relationship with the earth, closely observes its civilization, culture, and tradition, and acquires the ability to give expression to it, the same person writes about the reality of the individual, society, and nation with the help of a pen.

Can be successful in engraving efficiently. The meaningfulness of the couplets of the presented compilation is either dependent on the emotional tension or on the sharp edge. There is diversity in his creations, there is love, there is pain, there are feelings, and that is, he has decorated couplets with words of every color. In the context of the presented work published courtesy of Haryana Sahitya Akademi, the author himself thinks that the title of 'Titli Hai Khamosh' is a question in itself and the couplets always ask sharp questions. From this point of view, this book is important in understanding the overall environment of his creation and his philosophical plane.

Satyawan Saurabh, who considers the book and pen as his compulsion, is a lover of the beauty of words along with thought. The purpose of crafting his every word is not entertainment and business but to interview the truth. The words and thoughts emanating from the Yugapath Sadhana and worship of Satyam Shivam and Sundaram create a new creation and from that creation, the present Doha collection 'Titli Hai Khamosh' is created. The couplets of the presented work make the society and the nation cultured, bind them in national and social discipline, connect the scattered relationships in one thread, and spread new light in the shadowy shadows of darkness.

While working to instill faith in culture and sensitivity, this work hands over the crutch of faith to the hands of the readers. The Vatsal-touch of this whole work and its positive feelings shake the consciousness of society to the core. The poet's composition spread over 124 pages has made this book unique.

This poetic work puts before us various problems revolving around the individual, society, and the country, as well as presents precise solutions. The printing of the book is neat, and error-free. The cover is attractive. The book is worth reading and collecting.



Book Name: Titli Hai Khamosh
Writer: Satyawan 'Saurabh'
Publisher: Haryana Sahitya Academy, Panchkula (Haryana)
Price: ₹ 200
Pages: 124
Availability: Amazon and Flipkart

Civil Service Officer

By: Himadri Shekhar Bordoloi, ACS, Additional District Commissioner, WKA.

A Civil Service Officer, Whether appointed by the Central Government or the State, Is often revered as the pillar of the civic society, That acts as a bridge between the Government and the mass. The Officer's sole purpose in professional life, Is, to serve the Country with honesty, integrity and wholeheartedly.

Thereby, helping to build a strong and prosperous Nation, So, the poet, being a Civil Service Officer himself, is very proud to be one.

These Officers, who are considered as the steel frame of the Nation, To acknowledge their exemplary work, National Civil Service Day is celebrated on 21st April, every year.

To summarize everything in brief, I have always dreamt of becoming a Civil Service Officer, Throughout most part of my life, And having realized my dream, I have devoted myself to work unflinchingly, For the greater good of my Nation and her people, Let God be my witness for that, Till I breathe my last.

POETRY

My New Orbit

By: Mowsam Hazarika

Today I enter my another orbit
 round the sun,
 A journey long yet swiftly spun.
 In cosmic dance, through starry
 skies,
 A lifetime's path before my eyes.

Each orbit marked by joys and
 tears,
 A tapestry of past years,
 From dawns of youth to twilight's
 glow,
 In every turn, I've come to know.

The warmth of love, the sting of
 pain,
 The fleeting sunshine, the gentle
 rain.

With every year, new lessons
 learned,
 In every heartache, wisdom

earned.

The stars above, they guide my
 way,
 Through nights of dark and bright-
 ened day.

With gratitude, I greet this morn,
 For all that's past and what's re-
 born.

In this grand orbit, I find my
 place,
 With open heart, I embrace the
 grace.

Here's to the paths I've yet to
 tread,
 And all the dreams that lie ahead.

So as I journey 'round once more,
 I cherish what the future has in
 store.

For in the vast celestial sea,
 Each orbit's gift is meant for me.

None of the 2 leaders in Iran's snap presidential elections are in a spot to win clearly, making a runoff necessary, Interior Ministry said

Iran goes to a runoff election between reformist Pezeshkian and hard-liner Jalili

DUBAI, June 29: Iran will hold a runoff presidential election to replace the late hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi, an official said on Saturday, after an initial vote saw the top candidates not securing an outright win.

The election this coming Friday will pit reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian against the hard-line former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

Mohsen Eslami, an election spokesman, announced the result in a news conference carried by Iranian state television. He said of 24.5 million votes cast, Pezeshkian got 10.4 million while Jalili received 9.4 million.

Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf got 3.3 million. Shiite cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi had over 206,000 votes.

Iranian law requires that a winner gets more than 50% of all votes cast. If not, the race's top two candidates will advance to a runoff a week

later. There's been only one runoff presidential election in Iran's history: in 2005, when hard-liner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad bested former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Eslami acknowledged the country's Guardian Council would need to offer formal approval, but the result did not draw any immediate challenge from contenders in the race.

As has been the case since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women and those calling for radical change have been barred from running, while the vote itself will have no oversight from internationally recognized monitors.

There had been calls for a boycott, including from imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi. Mir Hossein Mousavi, one of the leaders of the 2009 Green Movement protests who remains under house arrest, has also refused to vote along with his wife, his daughter



said.

There's also been criticism that Pezeshkian represents just another government-approved candidate.

In a documentary on the reformist candidate aired by state TV, one woman said her generation was "moving toward the same level" of animosity with the government that Pezeshkian's generation had in the 1979 revolution.

Raisi, 63, died in the May 19 helicopter crash that also killed the country's foreign minister and others.

He was seen as a protégé of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and a potential successor.

Still, many knew him for his involvement in the mass executions that Iran conducted in 1988, and for his role in the bloody crackdowns on dissent that followed protests over the death of Mahsa Amini, a young woman detained by police over allegedly improperly wearing the mandatory headscarf, or hijab.

The voting came as wider tensions have gripped the Middle East over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. In April, Iran launched its

first-ever direct attack on Israel over the war in Gaza, while militia groups that Tehran arms in the region — such as the Lebanese Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthis rebels — are engaged in the fighting and have escalated their attacks.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic continues to enrich uranium at near weapons-grade levels and maintains a stockpile large enough to build — should it choose to do so — several nuclear weapons.

Despite the recent unrest, there was only one reported attack around the election. Gunmen opened fire on a van transporting ballot boxes in the restive southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, killing two police officers and wounding others, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

The province regularly sees violence between security forces and the militant group Jaish al-Adl, as well as drug traffickers. (AP)

Russian officials report 5 dead in a drone strike as a Russian attack hits an apartment block

KYIV, June 29: A Ukrainian drone strike killed at least five people in Russia's Kursk region, local officials said on Saturday, while rescuers in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro dug through rubble after a Russian attack ripped through a nine-story residential building, leaving one dead.

Two children were among the victims of the Ukrainian attack in the village of Gorodishche on the Russian-Ukrainian border, Gov. Alexey Smirnov said on social media.

In Dnipro, at least one person died and 12 were injured, including a 7-month-old girl, after a Russian strike destroyed the top four floors of the apartment block Friday evening, regional head Serhii Lysak said.

The attacks came as Russia continues to stretch out Ukrainian forces in several areas along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front. Moscow has stepped up airstrikes in a bid to drain Ukraine's resources, often targeting energy facilities and other vital infrastructure.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the country had lost about 80% of

its thermal power and one-third of its hydroelectric power in Russian strikes.

Discussing the attack in Dnipro, Zelenskyy said it was a reminder to Ukraine's allies that the country needed more air defense systems. The Ukrainian air force said Saturday that it had downed 10 Russian drones overnight.

"This is why we constantly remind all of our partners: only a sufficient amount of high-quality air defense systems, only a sufficient amount of determination from the world at large can stop Russian terror," he said.

Kyiv has also struck back at Russia with its own aerial attacks, also often targeting energy infrastructure.

In its morning statement, the Russian Defense Ministry said that six Ukrainian drones had been shot down overnight over the country's Tver, Bryansk and Belgorod regions, as well as over the annexed Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea. It did not give information on the reported strike in the Kursk region. (AP)



As North Korean and Chinese threats rise, US looks to lock in defense partnerships with Asian allies



GIMHAE AIR BASE (SOUTH KOREA), June 29: The United States wrapped up its first multidomain exercise with Japan and South Korea in the East China Sea on Saturday, a step forward in Washington's efforts to strengthen and lock in its security partnerships with key Asian allies in the face of growing threats from North Korea and China.

The three-day Freedom Edge increased the sophistication of previous exercises with simultaneous air and naval drills geared toward improving joint ballistic-missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, surveillance and other skills and capabilities. The exercise, which is expected to expand in years to come, was also intended to improve the countries' abilities to share missile warnings — increasingly important as North Korea tests ever-more sophisticated systems.

Outside of Australia, Japan and South Korea are the only U.S. partners in the region with militaries sophisticated enough to integrate operations with the U.S. so that if, for example, South Korea were to detect a target, it could quickly relay details so Japanese or American counterparts could respond, said Ridzwan Rahmat, a Singapore-based analyst with the defense intelligence company Janes.

"That's the kind of interoperability that is involved in a typical war scenario," Rahmat said. "For trilateral exercises like this the intention is to develop the interoperability between the three armed forces so that they can fight better as a cohesive fighting force." Such exercises also carry the risk of increasing tensions, with China regularly denouncing drills in what it considers its sphere of influence, and North Korea already slamming the arrival of the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier group in the port of Busan — home to South Korea's navy headquarters and its Gimhae Air Base — in preparation for Freedom Edge as "provocative" and "dangerous."

On Wednesday, the day after South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol visited the Roosevelt in Busan, becoming the first sitting South Korean president to board a U.S. aircraft carrier since 1994, North Korea tested what it said was a multiwarhead missile, the first known launch of the developmental weapon, if confirmed.

South Korea's military said a joint analysis by South Korean and U.S.

authorities assessed that the North Korean missile launch failed.

The defense cooperation involving both Japan and South Korea is also politically complex for both Yoon and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, due to the lingering resentment over Imperial Japan's brutal occupation of Korea before and during World War II.

The two countries have the largest militaries among American allies in East Asia — and together host some 80,000 American troops on their territories — but the U.S. has tended to work with them individually rather than together due to their history.

Kishida's increase of defense spending and cooperation with South Korea have generally been well received by the Japanese public but has caused friction with the right wing of his own party, while Yoon's domestic appeal has weakened, but he has stayed the course. "South Korea's shift under the Yoon administration toward improving its relations with Japan has been extremely significant," said Heigo Sato, international politics professor and security expert at Takushoku University in Tokyo.

Both leaders are seen to be trying to fortify their defense relationships with Washington ahead of the inauguration of a new president, with South Korean officials saying recently that they hope to sign a formal security framework agreement with the U.S. and Japan this year that would lock in a joint approach to responding to a possible attack from North Korea.

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration has also long been working to increase cooperation between South Korea and Japan — something that many didn't think was possible at the start of his presidency, said Euan Graham, a defense analyst with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. "Credit where it's due — the fact that it's happening is a significant achievement from the administration's regional policy," he said.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump caused friction with both allies during his time in office by demanding greater payment for their hosting of U.S. troops while holding one-on-one meetings with North Korea's Kim Jong Un.

Under Biden, Washington is seeking to solidify its system of alliances, both with increasingly sophisticated exercises and diplomatic agree-

ments, Graham said. "It's obviously a U.S. attempt to try and mesh their alliances as positively as possible, not just given the challenge of their adversaries, but also the uncertainty around a second Trump administration," he said. "They're trying to institutionalize as many of these habits of cooperation while they can."

Tensions with North Korea are at their highest point in years, with the pace of Kim Jong Un's weapons programs intensifying, despite heavy international sanctions.

China, meantime, has been undertaking a massive military buildup of both nuclear and conventional weapons, and now has the world's largest navy. It claims both the self-governing island of Taiwan and virtually the entirety of the South China Sea as its own territory, and has increasingly turned to its military to press those claims.

China and North Korea have also been among Russia's closest allies in its war against Ukraine, while Russia and China are also both key allies for North Korea, as well as the military leaders of Myanmar who seized power in 2021 and are facing ever-stiffer resistance in that country's civil war.

In Pyongyang this month, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kim concluded a mutual defense pact, agreeing to come to the other's aid in the event of an attack, rattling others in the region.

Despite a greater number of ships overall, China still only has three aircraft carriers compared to the U.S. fleet's 11 — probably the most effective tool a country has to bring vast amounts of power to bear at a great distance from home.

China's advantage, however, is that its primary concern is the nearby waters of the Indo-Pacific, while Washington's global focus means that its naval assets are spread widely. Following the exercises in the East China Sea with Japan and South Korea, the Roosevelt is due to sail to the Middle East to help protect ships against attacks by Yemen's Houthis rebels.

That has made strong security partnerships all the more important, not only with Japan and South Korea but with Australia, the Philippines, Taiwan and others in the region, and building those up has been a priority for the Biden administration.

"One of the weaknesses of the Chinese navy, despite the number of hulls that they have compared to the Americans, is the fact that they don't have a network of friendly ports from which they can operate in the event they need to launch a campaign," Rahmat said.

"One of the strengths of the U.S. Navy is not just its ships and its technology, but its ability to call on a vast network of friendly ports and, aware of this strength, they are doubling down by increasing partnerships across the region." (AP)

An attacker wounds a police officer guarding Israel's embassy in Serbia before being shot dead



BELGRADE, June 29: An attacker with a crossbow wounded a Serbian police officer guarding the Israeli Embassy in Belgrade on Saturday, Serbia's interior ministry said.

The officer responded by fatally shooting the assailant.

Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said in a statement that the attacker fired a bolt at the officer, hitting him in the neck. He said the officer then "used a weapon in self-defense to shoot the attacker, who died as a result of his injuries."

The policeman was conscious when he was transported to Belgrade's main emergency hospital, where an operation to remove the bolt from his neck will be performed, the statement added.

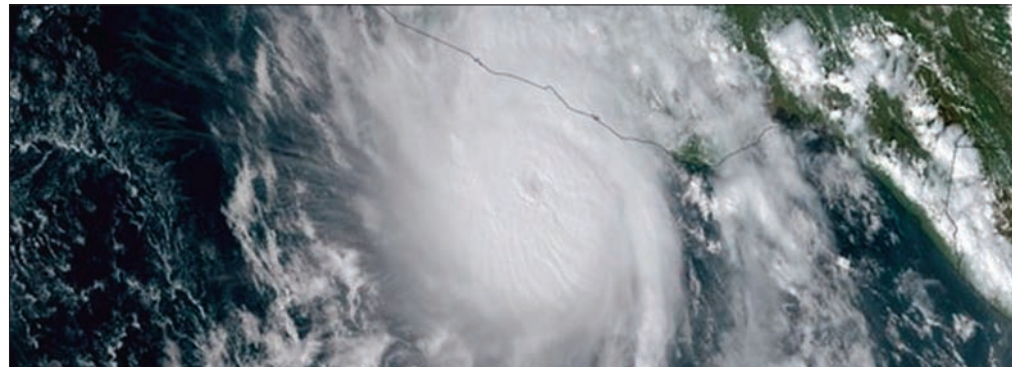
A spokesman with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that "today there was an attempted terrorist attack in the vicinity of the Israeli Embassy in Belgrade." The spokesman said the embassy is closed and no employee of the embassy was injured.

The identity of the attacker was still being determined. "All the circumstances of the attack and possible motives are being investigated," Dacic said.

Israel's Embassy is located not far from the US Embassy in an upscale Belgrade district. It has been guarded by an elite police unit with officers armed with automatic weapons.

Serbia has maintained close relations with Israel during the war in Gaza. (AP)

Beryl is expected to drop up to 6 inches (15 centimeters) of rain in Barbados and nearby islands Tropical Storm Beryl swirls toward southeast Caribbean and threatens to strengthen into hurricane



SAN JUAN, June 29: Tropical Storm Beryl chugged toward the southeast Caribbean on Saturday and could strengthen into the year's first hurricane before reaching Barbados late Sunday.

A hurricane watch was issued for Barbados as the island's meteorological service warned of flash flooding and power outages. Beryl is expected to strengthen into a Category 2 storm before reaching Barbados, with its center forecast to pass some 26 miles (45 kilometers) south of the island, said Sabu Best, the meteorological service's director.

On Saturday, Beryl was located about 975 miles (1,570 kilometers) east-southeast of Barbados, with maximum sus-

tained winds of 60 mph (95 kph). It was moving west at 21 mph (33 kph).

"We need to be ready," Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley said in a public address late Friday. "You and I know when these things happen, it is better to plan for the worst and pray for the best."

She noted that thousands of people are in Barbados for the Twenty20 World Cup cricket final, with India and South Africa playing in the capital, Bridgetown, on Saturday.

Beryl is the second named storm in what is predicted to be a busy hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30 in the Atlantic. Earlier this month, Tropical Storm Alberto came

ashore in northeast Mexico with heavy rains that resulted in four deaths.

"The development of a tropical storm this far east in the tropical Atlantic is uncommon, though not unprecedented," wrote Michael Lowry, a Florida-based hurricane expert, in a forecast. "Only five named storms on record have formed in the tropical Atlantic east of the Caribbean."

Of those, only one hurricane of record has formed east of the Caribbean in June, he added.

Mark Spence, manager of a hotel in Barbados, said in a phone interview that he was calm about the approaching storm.

"It's the season. You can get a



Pakistan court asks PMO to refrain intelligence agencies from interfering in any judicial matters

LAHORE, June 29: A top Pakistani court on Saturday directed the Prime Minister's Office to issue directives to the country's powerful intelligence agencies, including Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), from approaching any judge or member of their staff to obtain favourable verdicts.

The intelligence agencies especially ISI, Military Intelligence (MI) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) have been accused by several judges of pressuring them through different means to get desired verdicts, especially in the cases of the former prime minister and founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan, his party leaders and supporters.

Almost all — six of eight judges of the Islamabad High Court — and a couple of judges of the anti-terrorism courts in Punjab have written to the chief justice of Pakistan and chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC), respectively, drawing their attention towards the intelligence agencies' open interference in judicial matters forcing them to get desired verdicts. Some of them had complained that their family members were picked up (by intelligence agencies) to put pressure on them (judges).

The Lahore High Court Justice Shahid Karim on Saturday issued written directions to the Prime Minister's Office on the complaint of an ATC judge in the Sargodha

district of Punjab against harassment by the personnel of ISI.

"The prime minister is responsible and answerable for the actions of intelligence agencies as they come under his command. Instructions shall go out by the Prime Minister's Office to all civil or military agencies, including the ISI and IB, regarding strict directions not to approach or contact any judge whether of the superior judiciary or subordinate judiciary or any member of their staff for any purpose in the future," the judge said in his written order. Similar directions have also been issued for the Punjab police.

The court said the inspector general and police chief would be held personally responsible and contempt proceedings would be initiated in case of non-implementation of its order.

The LHC also directed ATC judges across Punjab to "download call-recording applications on their mobile phones to have the record of all such calls (from intelligence agencies) made to influence judicial proceedings."

The Sargodha ATC judge was scheduled to hear the cases of some PTI leaders including opposition leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub when he was told that a senior ISI officer wanted to meet him at his chamber. As the judge refused, several harassment incidents targeted at his family took place in the following days.

PTI spokesperson Raouf Hasan said as part of a malicious and well-thought-out plot the mandate-thief government and its handlers are coercing the judiciary into making decisions of their choice.

"The trend of holding judges and their family members hostage and occupying the courts are being used as new tactics to prevent the courts from delivering justice, as such brazen interference in judicial affairs has already been described by six judges of the Islamabad High Court in their letter," he said. (PTI)

At least 9 dead including an entire family when landslides hit Nepal villages

KATHMANDU, June 29: Landslides triggered by heavy rainfall on Saturday killed at least nine people including an entire family while they were sleeping in Nepal's mountainous districts, officials said.

The landslides buried houses in three separate areas in the country's mountainous region, about 250 kilometers (156 miles) west of the capital, Kathmandu, according to Nepal's National Disaster Rescue and Reduction Management Authority.

Five members of the same family were killed when their house was swallowed by a landslide while they

were asleep at Malika village in Gulmi district. The victims included a couple, their daughter-in-law and two grandchildren including an 8-month-old girl.

Two more people were killed in neighbouring Baglung district and another two in Syangja districts, officials said.

The monsoon season that brings heavy rainfall in Nepal began earlier this month. It generally triggers landslides in the mountainous areas that cover most part of this Himalayan nation, causing deaths and damage until September. (AP)

Laws are not being translated into the local Khasi, Jaintia and Garo languages

New criminal laws won't affect tribal council courts power: Conrad



SHILLONG, June 29: Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma on Saturday said the new criminal laws will not affect the jurisdiction and judicial powers of tribal council courts.

Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam — will replace the Indian Penal Code of 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure Act of 1898, and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872, respectively, on July 1.

"We are replacing three pillars of our criminal justice system—the Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Evidence Act—with new laws effective from July 1," Sangma told PTI.

He assured, "The new laws will not impact the existing laws of the district councils."

Sangma emphasised that the laws and powers of the district councils, including their jurisdiction, will remain unchanged.

Meanwhile, a senior officer told PTI that since the state's official language is English, the new laws are not being translated into the local Khasi, Jaintia and Garo languages.

Meghalaya is governed by three tribal councils—the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, and Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council—which oversee 99 per cent of the state's area. The remaining are non-scheduled areas.

Sangma reiterated, "Just as it has been in the past, the laws and judicial powers of the district councils will continue unaffected in the future. There is no question of any impact on these laws."

Home minister Prestone Tynsong recently held closed-door meetings with senior police officers, and awareness sessions are being conducted statewide for law enforcement personnel, lawyers, and relevant officers. (PTI)

NMC gives nod to Agartala Government Medical College

Bid to increase MBBS seats



AGARTALA, June 29: Tripura chief minister Manik Saha on Saturday said the National Medical Commission (NMC) has given its nod to increase MBBS seats at Agartala Government Medical College (AGMC) from 100 to 150.

"The NMC has granted approval to increase its MBBS intake capacity from 100 to 150 seats", he wrote on Facebook.

Saha emphasised the significance of this achievement, stating that it will offer more opportunities for aspiring medical students in the state to fulfill their dream of becoming doctors. He also mentioned that this development will improve access to healthcare services in the future, demonstrating the government's commitment to enhancing the sector.

"Our government is committed to improving the healthcare sector in the

state", he added.

Welcoming NMC's decision, Tripura's Director of Medical Education HP Sharma said AGMC will begin admitting 50 additional MBBS students starting from the current academic session.

During a recent meeting with Union health and family welfare minister JP Nadda in New Delhi, Saha advocated for the establishment of an AIIMS-like institute, a medical college in Kulai, Dhalai district, and a one-time special grant to sustain the national ambulance service without interruptions.

Currently, the state has one government-operated medical college and Tripura Medical College (TMC) managed by a society. The state is also planning to collaborate with a West Bengal-based trust to establish a new private medical college in West Tripura. (PTI)

Sec 144 in Nagaland district

DIMAPUR, June 29: CrPC 144 has been clamped in Peren district of Nagaland on Saturday.

"To take precautionary measures to prevent occurrence of any untoward incidents and in the interest of maintaining peace and tranquility in Peren district deputy commissioner and District Magistrate, Peren, Vineet Kumar, in exercise of the power conferred upon section 144 of the CrPC has prohibited assembly of five or more persons and vehicular movement of non-essential nature with effect from 6 am to 11 pm of June 29, 2024 across the Peren district", an official statement said.

It is also notified that no person shall carry lethal weapons and firearms in public places including lathis, machete, dao, daggers, sticks, spears, swords, catapults or carry any kinds of inflammable objects.

The district administration further notified in an order that the officials and staff of the district administration, security personnel, magistrate on duty, medical personnel and persons engaged in election duty, essential services shall be exempted. All movements of commercial vehicles, goods/passengers or vehicles carrying essential commodities, press and media, telecom services, medical emergencies shall also be exempted. It also informed that from above restriction if any person found violating this order shall be prosecuted under relevant section of the law. (NNN)

NCC ANOs from Nagaland earn laurels



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 29: Two Associate NCC Officers (ANOs) from 1 Nagaland NCC Girls Battalion, Kohima proved their mettle in Small Arms Firing, Drill and Excellence in Teaching NCC subjects at Officers Training Academy (OTA) at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. CTO Pujia Devi and CTO Salyvia Basumatary are presently undergoing Pre Commissioning Course (PRCN) JW-113.

During the course, CTO Pujia Devi, from the Bethesda High Secondary School, Dimapur, has been awarded with a Gold Medal in Firing and a silver medal in Drill. Whereas, CTO Salyvia Basumatary, from Delhi Public School (DPS), Dimapur, has been awarded Certificate of Excellence in Lecture Practice being first in merit.

The officers have showcased exceptional skills and precision by winning the laurels amongst 123 officers from across the country attending the course. Their achievement is a testament to their hard work, commitment, and the excellent training. This is a proud moment for the NCC Fraternity of Nagaland.

Army commemorates Capt N Kenguruse

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 29: A ceremony commemorating Capt N Kenguruse was held at Kenguruse War Memorial on Saturday.

"During The Kargil War - 1999 Capt N Kenguruse of the Indian Army made the supreme sacrifice in line of his duty while leading an operation in most inhospitable and inclement weather conditions. For his valour he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra (second highest gallantry award), posthumously. On the 25th anniversary of his martyrdom, a ceremony was held at Kenguruse War Memorial, at his native village Pheza in Kohima district of Nagaland," a PR stated.

Governor of Nagaland, La Ganeshan was the chief guest for the event.

During the event proud parents of the Hero of Nagaland were felicitated by Governor.

The event is attended by a large number of service personnel, Ex-Servicemen and villagers. During the event, the Governor and Lieutenant General Harjinder Singh Sahi, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM General Officer Commanding Spear Corps paid homage at the memorial by laying wreath at the memorial. Hon'ble Governor also ignited the torch of "Amar Jyoti" at the War memorial and felicitated the parents of Captain N Kenguruse, MVC (P).

Speaking at the occasion Governor said, "Today, we stand united in our respect and admiration for Captain Kenguruse. His actions during the Kargil War exemplify the courage and patriotism of

the people of Nagaland. We are proud of his legacy and will ensure that it continues to inspire future generations."

Ex-Servicemen, local residents and children attending the event, pledged themselves for rededication to the values of service and courage embodied by Captain N Kenguruse.

Captain Kenguruse Memorial Day serves as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by our armed forces in defence of the nation.

As we honour the memory of Captain N Kenguruse, MVC, (P), his actions during the Kargil War stand as a testament to the enduring spirit of the Indian soldier. The bravery and sacrifice of Captain N Kenguruse continues to inspire, lighting the path for future generations with the flame of patriotism.

Manipur crisis finds no mention in President's address: MPCC

IMPHAL, June 29: The Congress party in Manipur alleged that the recent address of the President of India in the joint seating of the Parliament with no mention about the crisis plaguing Manipur reflected Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stoic silence on the issue.

Addressing a press conference at Congress Bhavan here on Saturday, Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) working president Kh Devbrata Singh said that President Droupadi Murmu had totally omitted the prevailing crisis that has been plaguing Manipur for more than a year now.

The Congress leader said that since the President delivered her address after getting approval from the Union cabinet, it is considered as the action plans of the Union government.

The MPCC strongly condemned the ad-

dress of the President of India that "completely omitted the Manipur's issue" as it reflected the Central government's view toward the state.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been sidelining the crisis of Manipur for such a long time. Besides avoiding a visit to the crisis ridden state, the Prime Minister chose to remain silent on the issue till date," he added.

The omission of the Manipur issue in the Presidential address hinted that the BJP-led NDA government would not bring up the issue in the house of the ongoing Parliament session for discussion, he said.

"The absence of the ongoing Manipur crisis in her address showed that the Centre is still hesitant to accept its failure to bring peace in Manipur," the Congress leader further added. (NNN)

Mizoram taking steps for smooth implementation of new criminal laws: Official



AIZAWL, June 29: The Mizoram government has launched a series of initiatives to ensure the smooth implementation of three new criminal laws that will come into force on July 1, a senior police officer said on Saturday.

Talking to PTI, Mizoram Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) Labiakthanga Khiangte, however, said the three new laws are not being

translated into Mizo language.

The three new criminal laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam — will replace the Indian Penal Code of 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure Act of 1898, and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872, respectively.

Highlighting the government's efforts to imple-

ment the new laws, Khiangte said training for 1,492 police personnel, which constitute 93 per cent of police station staff and supervisory officers, has been conducted across all 11 districts. Additionally, training has been provided to 1,965 people, including church leaders, students, and functionaries of various NGOs.

Besides district-level training, various programmes were conducted at the police headquarters in Aizawl in collaboration with the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Mizoram Law College, and the Forensic Science Laboratory, he added.

Training sessions on the new laws were also held for jail superintendents, jailors, and assistant jailors on June 13 and 14, the IG said.

The state government has constituted five committees under the state police to address legal issues, technology upgrades, training, digital investigation, and financial implications.

Educational and awareness videos on the salient features of the new criminal laws were prepared in English and Mizo for both police personnel and the public, he said, adding relevant books were procured and distributed to all concerned units to ensure that the material is readily available.

An instruction manual for videography and photography while recording statements and conducting investigations on FIR, Zero FIR, and e-FIR has also been prepared, he said. (PTI)

Report on Missing



The above is the photograph of missing Lily Begom Laskar, age-24 yrs., W/o- Nazrul Islam Laskar, R/O- VIII- Alaicherra Pt-IV, P.S: Katlicherra, Dist: Hailakandi, who has been missing since 08.06.2024 along with her son Aqrhan Amin Laskar, age-4 yrs. This refers to Katlicherra PS CCTNS GDE No. 13 dated 11.06.2024.

Descriptive roll of missing Lily Begom Laskar is given below:

- a) Height - 4 ft 08 inches.
- b) Complexion - Fair.
- c) Built - Swarthy
- d) Hair - Long black
- e) Face - Oval-shaped.
- f) Langtinge spoken - Bengali.
- g) Wearing apparel - Burqa.

Descriptive roll of missing Aqrhan Amin Laskar is given below:

- a) Build - Swarthy.
- b) Wearing apparel - Half pants and half shirt.

Kindly take necessary action to trace out/ rescue the above noted missing/kidnapped victim at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to the O/C, Katlicherra P.S., at Mobile No. 6026900623 for further needful action.

Sd/-
Superintendent of Police,
Hailakandi.

Janasanyog /D/2062/24/30 June 2024

Report on Missing



The above is the photograph of missing Kamrul Islam Barbhuiya, age-27 yrs., Son of Lt. Ataur Rahman Barbhuiya, R/O- VIII- Bhojanipur, P.S: Lala, Dist: Hailakandi, who has been missing since 08.06.2024. This refers to Lala PS GDE No. 08 dated 09.06.2024.

Descriptive roll of missing Kamrul Islam Barbhuiya is given below:

- a) Height - 5 ft 06 inches.
- b) Complexion - Fair.
- c) Built - Swarthy
- d) Hair - Black
- e) Face - Oval-shaped.
- f) Langtinge spoken - Bengali.
- g) Wearing apparel - Shirt and Pants.

Kindly take necessary action to trace out/ rescue the above noted missing/kidnapped victim at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to the O/C, Lala P.S., at Mobile No. 6026900627 for further needful action.

Sd/-
Superintendent of Police,
Hailakandi.

Janasanyog /D/2054/24/30 June 2024

Nagaland CM inaugurates Shoppers Stop

First store in Dimapur



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 29: Shoppers Stop, India's premium fashion, beauty and gifting omnichannel destination, is delighted to announce the launch of its first store at Khermahal Police Point, Dimapur. The store was inaugurated by the chief minister of Nagaland Neiphiu Rio. The new Shoppers Stop store is set to bring an unparalleled shopping experience to the residents of Dimapur and surrounding areas.

The opening of this store is in line with the expansion strategy of Shoppers Stop and will play a pivotal role in the local economy by providing direct and indirect employment opportunities to residents, thereby fostering economic growth. 100% front-end staff at the store is from Nagaland.

With the new Shoppers Stop store, the customers of Dimapur will get to experience 500+ brands, the latest fashion trends, enhanced beauty experience, a diverse range of watches, bags, and gifting options all conveniently available under one roof. Elevating the shopping experience, Shoppers Stop also offers services such as beauty makeovers and Personal Shopper. Additionally, the renowned Shoppers Stop First Citizens Club program promises a rewarding shopping experience. The premium Black Card Membership program allows shoppers to

relish exclusive privileges, unique event invitations, a generous one-year return policy and many more rewards and benefits worth Rs. 50,000 upon enrolment.

Commenting on the company's new store in Dimapur, Kavindra Mishra, customer care associate, managing director, and CEO, Shoppers

Stop Limited, said, "Northeast is an important market for us and we are thrilled to open our first store in Dimapur, bringing our premium fashion, beauty, and gifting offerings to the residents of Nagaland. This store marks an important milestone in our expansion strategy and demonstrates our commitment to providing ex-

ceptional shopping experiences across India. Additionally, by hiring local workforce, we aim to support the local economy and create valuable employment opportunities. At Shoppers Stop, we are bringing exciting store services to enhance the shopping journey and make it one of a kind shopping experience for our customers. We look forward to welcoming the vibrant community of Dimapur to our new store and offering them the best of global and Indian brands."

As India's retail industry grows, Shoppers Stop has constantly evolved. Across multiple categories, Shoppers Stop boasts international, national, and exclusive brands. The new Shoppers Stop store in Dimapur will have a wide selection of popular and distinguished brands that will only be accessible in the market through Shoppers Stop. It provides a comprehensive selection of well-known national and international fashion brands including Paris Histon, Bentley, Tommy Hilfiger, Chopard, Guess, Prada, Versace, American Eagle, Rare Rabbit, LP, Allen Solly, Vero Moda, LP, MAC and many more.

Shoppers stop looks forward to welcoming you to the new Dimapur store, where exceptional service, personalized experiences and amazing brands await.

NEET exam row: Pradhan slams Cong, says it wants to run away from discussion in Parliament

'Strong law has been formed against public examination and disruption'



CHANDIGARH, June 29: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday slammed the Congress, saying it wants to run away from a discussion in Parliament over the NEET exam issue.

His remark came a day after Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold a "respectful" and good discussion in Parliament on the issue of alleged irregularities in the conduct of the NEET exam.

Replying to a question on the opposition targeting the BJP-led Centre over the NEET exam issue,

Pradhan said, "The Congress does not want a discussion. It wants to run away from the discussion. It's only intention is to create chaos, confusion and create obstacles in smooth functioning of the entire institutional mechanism."

He said the president had also talked about the NEET exam issue, being raised by the Congress, in her address in Parliament.

He further said the opposition had a chance to raise this issue during the motion of thanks to the President's address and asserted the government was ready for any type of discussion.

"But the Congress wants to play politics over the matter. It is not the time to play politics," Pradhan told reporters after the first session of the Haryana BJP's extended state executive meeting got over in Panchkula.

Without naming anyone, he further said such irregularities took place before 2014, apparently pointing towards the previous UPA regime at the Centre.

"I could not justify it," he said. On steps being taken for zero-error examinations, the minister said a high-level committee of experts under the chairmanship of

former ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan has been formed for the reform of the National Testing Agency (NTA).

"A strong law has been formed against public examination and disruption," he added.

Pradhan further said the matter pertaining to alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG has been handed over to the CBI. "We are meeting students and parents," he said.

To another question, he said the date of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, Post Graduate will be announced by the NBE (National Board of Examinations) in one or two days.

The opposition caused repeated disruptions in Parliament on Friday over the NEET paper leak issue.

NEET-UG was conducted by the NTA on May 5 with around 24 lakh candidates appearing. The results were announced on June 4, but they were followed by allegations of question paper leaks in states such as Bihar, besides other irregularities.

The Education Ministry also cancelled the University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) and NEET (post-graduate) examinations after receiving inputs that the exams' integrity may have been compromised. (PTI)

Haryana assembly polls: First session of BJP executive meeting begins in Panchkula



CHANDIGARH, June 29: The first session of the BJP's extended state executive meeting to discuss strategy for the Haryana assembly elections due later this year began in Panchkula on Saturday.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the BJP's election in-charge for Haryana, co-in-charge Biplab Kumar Deb, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, his predecessor and Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar and senior leader Saudan Singh were present during the session at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair the meeting during the afternoon session, a BJP leader said.

Besides preparing the outline for the elections, Shah will infuse fresh zeal and enthusiasm in the party workers, the leader added.

Shah will also give tips to the party workers and share his roadmap and guidance for the polls, said the leader.

Senior state-level BJP leaders, office-bearers and around 4,500 party workers from all 90 assembly constituencies are attending the meeting.

The first session of the extended state executive meeting was attended by Rajya Sabha member Subhash Barala, Lok Sabha MPs Naveen Jindal and Dharamvir Singh, Haryana

Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta, former MP Kuldeep Bishnoi, senior leaders OP Dhankar, Ram Bilas Sharma, ministers Mool Chand Sharma, JP Dalal, Kanwar Pal and Aseem Goel, MLAs, former ministers and other leaders.

The party organised an exhibition at the venue, highlighting the state government's initiatives and schemes, including the abolition of minimum monthly charges for domestic electricity consumers and providing minimum support prices on 14 crops.

On Friday, Chief Minister Saini claimed the public was happy with the government's achievements and schemes and had made up its mind to bring the BJP back.

Alleging that the Congress spread lies during the Lok Sabha election campaign, he said the grand old party's politics of falsehood and greed had been exposed.

Saini had claimed that the Congress would try to confuse the voters by coming up with "new lies and deceit" during the assembly election campaign as well.

All party workers should go to the public and tell them that the Congress' aim was not to serve them but to assume power by lying, he had said. (PTI)

Cong targets PM over report on Adani group 'taking' Chinese help in solar project

NEW DELHI, June 29: Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over a news report that the Adani Group has "selected eight Chinese companies to help" its solar manufacturing project and called for a strategy "to wean India of its dependence on China".

He said it has to be ensured that the taxpayers' money does not benefit Chinese companies.

In a post on "X", Ramesh said, "The non-biological Prime Minister infamously told the nation on June 19, 2020, after the Galwan clashes that 'Na koi hamari seema mein ghus aaya hai, na hi koi ghussa hua hai (Neither has anyone entered our borders, nor has anyone occupied territories)'."

"However, he shows no hesitation in liberally issuing visas to Chinese workers to help one of his 'tempowallah' buddies," he said in the post on "X" while tagging with it a newspaper report about Adani Solar seeking Centre's nod to bring a few engineers from China.

Ramesh's "tempowallah buddies" jibe is in reference to PM Modi's attack on Rahul Gandhi at a Lok Sabha election rally asking why the former Congress chief stopped "abusing" Adani and Ambani in his attacks and whether his party received "tempo loads of money" from them in return.

"The Adani Group, a major recipient of taxpayer largesse via the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, has reportedly selected eight Chinese companies to help its solar manufacturing project and has asked for special permission to issue visas for 30 Chinese workers," Ramesh wrote on the social media platform.

"Having facilitated multiple Modani scams such as coal and power-equipment over-invoicing and the amassing of illegal stakes in Adani Group companies -- all executed by individuals like Chang Chung-Ling and Nasser Ali Shaban Ahli -- why would the non-biological PM not waive national security considerations in this instance to benefit his partner and close friend?"

Ramesh said it is "bad enough that these concessions are being made even as the Chinese continue to occupy 2,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in eastern Ladakh".

He claimed that India's imports from China have shot up from USD 70 billion in 2018-19 to USD 101 billion in 2023-24.

"Even the PLI scheme is benefiting China in sectors like electronics, solar etc. where PLI beneficiaries are signing giant contracts with Chinese vendors even as they enjoy taxpayer subsidies. All this of course is in the name of Atmanirbharta (self-reliance)," Ramesh said.

"It is time for a proper strategy to wean India off dependence on China, and to ensure that taxpayer funds do not benefit Chinese companies. Prioritising his friends over national interest may be second nature to the PM, but it cannot be allowed to become national policy," he added. (PTI)

Shivakumar asks Cong leaders to refrain from comments on leadership issue in public

BENGALURU, June 29: Amid raging debate over the possibility of change in Chief Minister and demand for three more Deputy Chief Ministers in Karnataka, state Congress President D K Shivakumar on Saturday asked party members and leaders to refrain from issuing public statements on the issue and warned of disciplinary action.

Shivakumar, who is also the Deputy Chief Minister urged party members to "shut their mouths" in the interest of the party, as he also requested seers not to interfere in political matters.

Minister K N Rajanna, who is at the forefront of the issue of three Deputy Chief Ministers, wondered what was wrong in asking for it, and said he won't heed the warnings.

There is growing demand within the state cabinet to have three more Deputy Chief Ministers -- from Veerashaiva-Lingayat, SC/ST and minority communities. Currently, Shivakumar from the dominant Vokkaliga community is only the Deputy Chief Minister in the Siddaramaiah cabinet.

A Vokkaliga seer Kumara Chandrashekarana Swamiji of Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Math on Thursday had publicly urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to step down and make way for his deputy Shivakumar.

Following this a Veerashaiva-Lingayat seer -- Srisaala Jagadguru Channa Siddharana Panditaradhya Swamiji on Friday said ministers from his community should be considered for the CM's post in case there is a leadership change, while also pitching for them to be given priority in the event of creation of additional Deputy CM posts.

"There is no discussion on any Deputy Chief Minister nor there is any question about the Chief Minister. Swamiji (Vokkaliga seer) out of affection towards me might have spoken about me. That's all. I request -- I don't need anyone's recommendation. For the work we have done our party high command will decide," Shivakumar said in response to a question whether he had taken up with the party high command the demand for more Deputy CMs during the Delhi visit.

Addressing reporters here, he said, "Kharge (AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge), Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and I, in the interest of the party, have decided how to function. So there is no need for any MLA or Minister or Swamiji to speak. If they (seers) bless us it's enough..."

There is no need for any Minister to comment on the CM or Deputy CM issue in public or before the media, Shivakumar said and warned that "if any MLA or anyone from the party raises it, the AICC or I will be forced to issue notice and take disciplinary action. Discipline is important in the party. There is nothing without discipline."

Responding to a query, the Deputy CM said, "in the interest



of the party I'm telling everyone - if you shut your mouth it will be good for the party."

Asked about seers interfering in politics, he said, "no swamiji had spoken other than now... I request all of them with folded hands not to interfere in political matters."

A section within the Congress is of the opinion that the statement issued by the ministers seeking three more Deputy CMs, was part of a plan by Siddaramaiah's camp to keep Shivakumar in check, amid talks that he might seek the CM post after two-and-half years of this government's tenure, and to counter his influence both in the government and party.

There is also a feeling that the Vokkaliga seer publicly urging Siddaramaiah to step down and make way for Shivakumar, is a counter to the CM from the KPCC President's camp.

Reacting to Shivakumar's warning, Co-operation Minister Rajanna said, "Let the notice be issued, I will respond to it. He (Shivakumar) may suggest that certain controversies should not be created publicly, which I agree and so do others... What's wrong if we speak? Shouldn't we ask (demand)? Is it wrong to ask? If asking is wrong, I'm ready to face any action."

"Will I heed the warning? Rajanna is Rajanna... Everyone should shut their mouths, if everyone follows we too will follow. If everyone keeps quiet, we will also keep quiet. Can we keep quiet listening to someone saying that Siddaramaiah should resign to make him (Shivakumar) Chief Minister?" Rajanna asked.

He pointed out that CM and Deputy CM were chosen by Congress high command and the legislators.

There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for the chief minister's post after the declaration of Assembly election results in May last year, and the Congress had managed to convince the latter and made him the deputy chief minister.

There were some reports at the time of a compromise having been reached based on a "rotational chief minister formula," according to which Shivakumar will become CM after two-and-half years, but they have not been officially confirmed by the party.

Shivakumar has made no secret of his ambition to become the CM, while Siddaramaiah had sought public support during the Lok Sabha polls so that the Congress wins the maximum number of seats in the state, which would strengthen his position. (PTI)

Birla's comments on Emergency not apt, doesn't suit stature of LS Speaker: Pawar

KOLHAPUR, June 29: NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar on Saturday said the reference to Emergency made by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in his speech was not apt and did not suit the stature of his post.

Addressing reporters here, Pawar also said the sops announced in the budget presented by his estranged nephew and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday, was just an effort ahead of the state assembly polls to project that they are doing something massive.

Soon after his election as Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla on Wednesday set off a firestorm by reading out a resolution condemning the imposition of Emergency as an attack on the Constitution by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

Referring to it, Pawar said, "The speaker's reference to the Emergency in his address did not suit the stature of the post. It has been 50 years since the Emergency, Indira Gandhi is no longer alive. So why is the speaker bringing up this issue now?"

"Is it the role of the speaker to make a political statement? We think his statement was not apt. The President's speech also had a brief mention of this issue. That was also not necessary," he said. On Rahul Gandhi taking the Leader of Opposition's post, Pawar said the party with the most number of MPs in the Opposition gets to decide the Leader of Opposition.

"The MPs of the Congress decided to make Rahul Gandhi their leader. In one way, this is a representation from the new generation with a background in politics, and a willingness to put in tremendous effort. I am sure he will shine," he said.

Pawar hit out at the BJP, saying that before

making statements on Congress-mukt Bharat, the BJP should take note of how many seats it had before the Lok Sabha polls and how many it has after this election.

"The BJP does not have a majority in Parliament. Without Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu, they would not have formed a government. Regardless of how much they try to hide it, the truth is clear - they do not have a clear mandate from the people of India," the veteran leader claimed.

On the state budget, he said, "What kind of a budget was this? Free education to girls, Rs 20,000 rupees for each 'dindi' (group) of the Pandharpur wari (pilgrimage) - everything was out in the public before it was presented in the Vidhan Bhavan. It has two meanings - the tradition of keeping the budget under wraps has not been maintained and none of the provisions presented in the budget will see the light of day."

This budget has been presented keeping in mind the assembly elections due in 3 months. There is no budgetary provision for the promises made in the budget. How can I spend Rs 100 when I have Rs 70 in my pocket? This budget is only meant to show that we are doing something massive, but I am sure that people will not believe this, he asked.

"The questions the government has to answer is - what revenues have you gathered; how much do you want to spend, and how are you going to cover the gap between the two? How can the government promise to implement the assurance without making provisions for covering this gap? This budget does not have much meaning. I have doubts as to what extent they will be able to implement this budget," he said.

Ask husbands to consume liquor at home to get rid of their habit: MP minister

BHOPAL, June 29: Madhya Pradesh minister Narayan Singh Kushwaha has advised women to ask their husbands to drink liquor in front of their family members at home instead of going outside so that they feel ashamed and slowly give up the habit of drinking.

He made the remarks while addressing a function on "de-addiction campaign" in Bhopal on Friday, a video of which also went viral on social media.

The opposition Congress, however, sought an apology from him saying his suggestion would lead to incidents of domestic violence.

Addressing the gathering, state Social Justice Minister said, "The biggest contribution in this (de-addiction efforts) is of mothers and sisters of the house. First of all, tell them (husbands) not to drink outside in the market. Tell them, if you want to drink, eat food and stay in front of me. If they drink in front of me (their wives), their limit will keep decreasing. They will gradually come on the verge of quitting. They will feel ashamed to be drinking alcohol in front of wife and children."

The wives should also tell their husbands that their children will also start drinking alcohol in the future, he said.

He said the women should form a local group and show "belan" (rolling pin) to the people with drinking habits.

Talking to reporters later, the minister said that drinking liquor in front of their children at home will make the men feel ashamed and discourage to quit their habit. (PTI)

'Integrating government schemes under a unified digital platform will enhance efficiency and accelerate payments for private healthcare providers'

Restructuring AB-PMJAY to elevating health budget: Experts outline priorities for Modi 3.0

NEW DELHI, June 29: Echoing the urgency of healthcare reforms ranging from restructuring of Ayushman Bharat Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to accelerating the digital health mission, experts and industry leaders have outlined key priorities for the Modi government in its third consecutive term.

Their statements highlight the importance of prioritising preventive healthcare measures, strengthening infrastructure, and increasing healthcare spending.

Healthcare experts have expressed concerns about whether the government in its new term will make any difference by increasing public expenditure on healthcare to the desired level in India.

Notably, the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017, which promises to increase public health spending to 2.5 per cent of the GDP, remains overdue even as Indians rely heavily on private services.

Dr Giridhar Gyani, Director General, AHPI (Association of Healthcare Providers, India) said, "In the upcoming term, we urge the government to prioritise a comprehensive approach to fostering a 'Healthy India'. This entails promoting preventive health measures focusing on sanitation, clean drinking water, and nutrition, alongside the rapid implementation of health and wellness Centres for preventive health education and screening."

Expressing his views, Probal



Intensifying the 'Fit India Movement', strengthening occupational health schemes, and restructuring the Ayushman Bharat Yojana to reach all SECC-2011 beneficiaries are also crucial steps, Dr Gyani said.

He also highlighted the importance of intensifying the private sector to establish tertiary care facilities in tier-III cities, promoting the indigenisation of medical equipment, and accelerating the National Digital Health Mission to address healthcare infrastructure gaps and achieve universal health coverage through increased government spending.

Ghosal, chairman and director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals said, "As we embark on the next five-year term under the newly-elected government, there's a prime opportunity to catalyse transformation in the healthcare infrastructure, enhancing the lives of millions."

"Increased healthcare spending, coupled with initiatives like AB-PMJAY, can benefit both the public and private sectors, albeit requiring adjustments in pricing structures. Addressing the shortage of healthcare staff and providing regulatory relief, particularly in GST input credit, will alleviate burdens on the industry," Ghosal said.

"Moreover, focusing on India's

potential as a medical tourism destination can boost revenue for private hospitals and establish the nation as a global healthcare leader," he pointed out.

Abhishek Kapoor, CEO, Regency Health, said the new government faces a critical opportunity to prioritise universal healthcare.

"A comprehensive roadmap is essential, focusing on long-term infrastructure financing, expanding medical education, and implementing fiscal reforms in health insurance. Elevating the healthcare budget to 2.5 per cent of GDP is pivotal for progress," Kapoor said. Streamlining the GST framework, enhancing healthcare professional skills, and strengthening infrastructure in tier II and III cities are equally crucial, he added.

Kapoor also advocated for providing infrastructure status for private sector investment, facilitating low-cost funding, and incentivising specialists to serve in these areas.

Budget allocations for primary care, tax exemptions, and expanding primary health centres (PHCs) through public-private partnerships (PPPs) are essential steps, according to the CEO of Regency Health.

Furthermore, integrating government schemes under a unified digital platform will enhance efficiency and accelerate payments for private healthcare providers, he said. (PTI)

Constitutional morality a restraining factor on state; allows for diversity, tolerance: CJI

Delhi airport canopy collapse: Victim's family to decide on legal action after cremation

KOLKATA, June 29: Maintaining that "constitutional morality" is a restraining factor on the state, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said it allows for conditions that respect diversity, promote inclusion and pursue tolerance.

He said that India does not exist only in large cities, but it goes down to the smallest village and the smallest taluka across the nation, connected or not, accessible or otherwise.

CJI Chandrachud said "constitutional morality" is a restraining factor on the state.

Constitutional morality addresses itself to every component of society and allows for conditions which "respect diversity, promote inclusion and pursue tolerance", he said, delivering the keynote address at the two-day East Zone II regional conference of the National Judicial Academy.

The CJI said it also imposes a duty on the state to facilitate the achievement of the kind of society that the Constitution envisages.

"The Constitution uses the expression morality, but it does not use the expression constitutional morality," he said.



CJI Chandrachud said the Constitution allows for restrictions to be imposed by law on the right to freedom and expression on various grounds, including morality.

He said the Constitution also contemplates that restrictions can be imposed on the right to freedom of association on grounds of morality.

At one level, constitutional morality is founded in the values which the Constitution's Preamble sets out, he said.

"Constitutional morality is an overarching principle which is derived from, but is not confined to, specific rights or values which are enshrined in the Constitution," CJI Chandrachud said.

According to him, it gives a unifying constitutional ethic so that every Indian citizen can think and speak as he wishes to, worship as they intend to, follow whoever they want to, eat what they want to and marry whoever he or she wants to or not marry at all.

When judges are addressed as 'Honour', 'Lordships' or 'Ladyships', there is a grave danger that "we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples" since the people say the court is a temple of justice, he said.

The CJI said he would rather re-

Maintaining that language is a major barrier for common people for whom the laws and the legal system is meant, he said technology has enabled the Supreme Court to take the initiative to translate 37,000 judgments passed by it in the last 75 years in all the languages recognised in the Constitution, including Bengali.

He emphasised on writing of judgments in a simple form, keeping in mind that these are meant for litigants, who are common people.

The CJI also said the Supreme Court is experimenting with artificial intelligence.

The apex court is on the anvil of starting to replace human intervention in the verification of cases for defects, like payment of court fees or whether every page has been signed.

Delivering a special address at the programme, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee appealed to members of the judiciary to ensure that political bias should not interfere with the justice delivery system.

Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court T S Sivagnanam was also present at the programme, which was organised in collaboration with the Calcutta High Court and West Bengal Judicial Academy. (PTI)



NEW DELHI, June 29: The son of the 45-year-old cab driver who died after a portion of a canopy at the Delhi airport collapsed amid heavy rains said the family will take a decision on filing a case in the matter after his father's cremation.

The police handed over the body of the cab driver, Ramesh Kumar, to his family after post-mortem at the Safdarjung Hospital on Saturday, a day after the incident, officials said.

"At around 12.30 pm, we received the body of my father after postmortem and we will return to our house. We will go for cremation at around 3.30 pm near our house," Ramesh's 25-year-old son Ravinder said.

He said after his father's cremation, all the family members will discuss and decide whether they would file a case against those responsible for his father's death.

Ramesh was waiting for some passengers at the IGI T-1 Friday early morning when a portion of a

canopy covering the departure area collapsed on parked cars amid three hours of heavy rain in the national capital. Six people were also injured in the incident, prompting authorities to suspend flight departures.

On Friday, Ravinder had told PTI that he was sleeping when he got a call from the police station asking him to come to the Delhi airport's Terminal 1 immediately.

Ravinder, who is also a cab driver by profession, was sleeping after finishing his night shift when he got to know about his father's death on Friday.

Ramesh is survived by his wife Asha, two sons, Ravinder and Ashish (22), and two daughters, Rashi (21) and Bhawana (18) -- all of whom stay at a rented house in Vijay Vihar area of Rohini close to Sector 7. Asha works as a domestic help in Rohini.

Upset over the compensation amount offered by the government, Ravinder had said that he had recently purchased the vehicle for ₹ 5 lakh and had to make a down payment of ₹ 1 lakh.

Civil Aviation Minister K Ram-mohan Naidu, who visited the airport and took stock of the situation at TI, announced a compensation of ₹ 20 lakh for the family. (PTI)

Kerala Gov says wilful omission on part of varsity authorities

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, June 29: A day after constituting search committees for the selection of vice chancellors for six universities in the state, Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Saturday said he was doing his duty, but there was a wilful omission on part of the university authorities despite reminders from his office.

Khan, in his capacity as chancellor of the universities in the state, on Friday issued notifications for selecting Vice Chancellors for Kerala University, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University, Kerala Agricultural University and Malayalam University.

Speaking to reporters here, Khan cited media reports and claimed that the state government had instructed the universities not to send their representatives for the search committees.

"My duty is to ensure universities have regular vice chancellors. I have been sending reminders to the universities. I have sent six reminders to Kerala University and in the last meeting which was convened for the purpose, the Education Minister reached there and she disturbed the meeting," Khan said.

State Higher Education Minister R Bindhu in February this year chaired a senate meeting held at Kerala University, which had irked Khan. The governor said the media had reported that the university authorities were instructed by the government not to send their representatives for the search committee.

"The last order of the court was clear that within a month the university authorities have been directed to send their representatives and then the latter part of the judgement said if the university fails to send their representatives, the chancellor shall go ahead in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the UGC regulations," Khan claimed. (PTI)

Amarnath pilgrims leave twin base camps for shrine

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, June 29: The annual Amarnath Yatra began on Saturday as the first batch of pilgrims left the twin base camps in Baltal and Nunwan to start their journey to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said.

The yatra started early morning from the twin tracks -- the traditional 48-kilometre Nunwan-Pahalgal route in Anantnag and the 14-kilometre shorter but steeper Baltal route in Ganderbal.

The officials said the pilgrims on the twin routes were flagged off by the respective deputy commissioners along with senior police and civil administration officials.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha had flagged off the first batch of 4,603 pilgrims from the Yatri Niwas base camp in Bhagwati Nagar in Jammu on Friday.

The pilgrims reached the Kashmir Valley in the afternoon and received a rousing welcome from the administration and locals.

They will pay obeisance at the cave shrine, which houses the naturally icel-gangam formation.

Stringent security arrangements have been put in place for the smooth conduct of the yatra.

Thousands of security personnel from the police, Central Reserve Police Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police and other paramilitary forces have been de-

Fresh date for NEET-PG to be announced within two days: Pradhan

NEW DELHI, June 29: The new schedule for NEET-PG will be announced by the National Board of Examinations (NBE) within the next two days, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Saturday.

NEET-PG is among the exams cancelled last week as a pre-emptive measure amid a raging row over alleged irregularities in competitive tests.

"The date of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, Post Graduate will be announced by the NBE in one or two days," Pradhan told reporters in Panchkula on the sidelines of Haryana BJP's extended state executive meeting.

The comments by Pradhan come a day after the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced revised dates for three exams which were cancelled.

The University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) which was cancelled a day after being conducted on June 18 after the education

ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam was compromised, will now be conducted from August 21 to September 4. Pradhan had said the question paper was leaked on darknet and circulated on Telegram app. The matter is being probed by the CBI.

The UGC-NET is a test to determine the eligibility for the award of Junior Research Fellowship, for appointment of assistant professors and admission to PhD courses.

In a shift from the earlier pattern, the exam was conducted in offline mode this year and on a single day. However, the rescheduled exam will be conducted according to the earlier pattern of Computer Based Test (CBT) spread across a fortnight.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) UGC-NET, which was postponed as a preemptive measure amid the row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of exams, will now be held

from July 25-July 27.

The CSIR UGC-NET is accepted for PhD admissions in Chemical Sciences, Earth, Atmospheric, Ocean and Planetary Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, and Physical Sciences.

The National Common Entrance Test (NCET) for admission to the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which was postponed hours before its scheduled commencement on June 12, will now be conducted on July 10.

The test is held for select central and state universities or institutions, including IITs, NITs, RIEs, and government colleges.

In the line of fire over the alleged irregularities in medical entrance examination NEET-UG and PhD entrance NET, the Centre had last week notified a panel to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through the NTA. (PTI)

Translating new criminal laws into Tamil underway

CHENNAI, June 29: The translation of new criminal laws into Tamil has already been taken up and it is likely to be completed soon, official sources here said. Requisite training has been provided to police personnel for implementation of the new criminal laws from July 1, 2024. All efforts have been taken to ensure that the police personnel do not have any difficulty in invoking appropriate sections for specific offences, sources said.

Official sources told PTI that the work of translating all the three new criminal laws is going on and it is likely to be completed soon. Following completion, the Tamil version will be sent to the Union government for its approval and certification as an authentic translation of the laws in English.

After certification, the government translated Tamil version will be available for sale in the state. Tamil versions of the three new laws, authored by individuals and some publishers, have started reaching the shelves of book sellers, sources added.

The three new criminal laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha

Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, seek to replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, 1898, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, respectively.

Chief Minister M K Stalin had on Friday said that in order to ensure proper enforcement of the new criminal laws in the state from July 1, 2024, expeditious training was being provided to judicial and police personnel.

During its enactment itself, the DMK had staunchly opposed these new laws in Parliament. Stalin had earlier written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking deferment of the implementation of new laws and also urged proper consultation with states.

However, the new laws are set for nationwide enforcement from Monday and the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems) software will be accordingly modified.

Considering such aspects, appropriate and expeditious training on the new laws was being provided to judicial and police personnel in order to ensure proper enforcement from July 1, 2024, he had said. (PTI)

Five Army soldiers killed in accident in eastern Ladakh

NEW DELHI/LEH, June 29: Five Indian Army soldiers were killed as they were swept away while trying to get a tank across the Shyok river in eastern Ladakh, officials said on Saturday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he was deeply saddened by the unfortunate accident, which occurred on Friday.

"Deeply saddened at the loss of lives of five of our brave Indian Army soldiers in an unfortunate accident while getting the tank across a river in Ladakh," Singh said in a post on X.

"We will never forget exemplary service of our gallant soldiers to the nation. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The nation stands firm with them during this hour of grief," he said. Officials said the soldiers were trying to get the tank across the river when the accident happened.

"On 28 Jun 2024 night, while deinducting from a military training activity, an army tank got stuck in the Shyok River, near Saser Brangsa, Eastern Ladakh due to sudden increase in the water level," the

Army's Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps said. "Rescue teams were rushed to the location. However, due to high current and water levels, the rescue mission didn't succeed and the tank crew lost their lives," it said.

"The Indian Army regrets loss of five brave personnel while being operationally deployed in Eastern Ladakh. Rescue operations are underway," it said on X. The soldiers who died in the accident were from an armoured regiment of the Indian Army, the officials said. (PTI)

UP govt to promote Centre's rooftop solar subsidy scheme in Ayodhya, Varanasi and Gorakhpur



LUCKNOW, June 29: The Uttar Pradesh government will launch an awareness campaign to promote the Centre's 'PM Surya Ghar Yojana' -- a rooftop solar subsidy scheme -- in Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Gorakhpur. The new initiative will add to the state's ongoing programmes and schemes to boost generation and use of solar energy.

The campaign will be based on the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) module. In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Agency (UP-NEDA) has begun implementing the action plan, according to an official statement.

The state government has allocated Rs 2 crore for the two months long campaign and started the process of roping in an agency to manage and execute the initiative.

Initially, UPNEDA will run the campaign in three major cities, including Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Gorakhpur, to increase public awareness and acceptance of the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana and boost the number of beneficiaries under this scheme, the statement said. The promotional activities will include displaying banners, installing billboards at strategic locations, setting up booth camps, and distributing pamphlets during various events at universities, colleges, and schools.

Besides, UPNEDA will also use radio and newspaper advertisements in Ayodhya, Gorakhpur, and Varanasi.

Ayodhya and Varanasi are already being developed as solar cities, and this comprehensive campaign will now pave the way for increased awareness and promotion of solar energy in Gorakhpur as well, the statement said.

According to officials, a solar city could fulfil at least 10 per cent of its energy demand through solar power. (PTI)

IMD warns of heavy rainfall in northwest and northeast India for next 5 days



NEW DELHI, June 29: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in northwest and northeast India over the next four to five days.

A low-pressure area is currently situated over the northwest Bay of Bengal, adjoining the north Odisha-Gangetic West Bengal coasts, the weather office said.

Cyclonic circulations have formed over northeast Rajasthan, east Uttar Pradesh bordering Bihar, and northwest Uttar Pradesh at lower tropospheric levels, it added.

An east-west trough extends from north-

west Uttar Pradesh to the low-pressure area.

Due to these weather systems, isolated heavy rainfall is expected in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan from June 29 to July 3, the IMD said.

Chhattisgarh, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha will likely receive heavy rainfall on June 29-30, and Bihar from June 30 to July 2.

The IMD has also predicted very heavy rainfall in isolated areas in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandi-

garh, Uttar Pradesh, east Rajasthan, and west Madhya Pradesh during this period.

In the northeast, a cyclonic circulation over northeast Assam will bring light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms, lightning, and isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall to Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura over the next five days.

Isolated extremely heavy rainfall is expected in Arunachal Pradesh on June 29-30 and in Assam and Meghalaya on June 29.

The Met office also predicted isolated heavy rainfall for Saurashtra, Kutch, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and coastal and south interior Karnataka from June 29 to July 1.

Gujarat, Goa, and central Maharashtra are expected to receive heavy rainfall from June 29 to July 3, with isolated very heavy rainfall in Konkani, Goa, and central Maharashtra from June 30 to July 3.

The IMD also said that the southwest monsoon has further advanced into the remaining parts of east Uttar Pradesh and some areas of west Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.

Conditions are favourable for the monsoon to advance into more parts of west Rajasthan, Haryana, Chandigarh, Punjab, and the remaining areas of west Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu over the next two to three days, it added. (PTI)

E-AUCTION FOR DISPLAY COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING CONTRACT

E-auction for display commercial Advertising contract over Tinsukia Division. Details are as under: **Auction Catalogue No.:** TSK-ADVT-OOH; **Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots):** 10:00 hrs. on 17-07-2024; **Auction Close Date & Time :** 12:20 hrs. on 17-07-2024; **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee, Trips/Days: 1095.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	ADVT-TSK-DBRT-OH-8-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial advertisement 05 Railway colonies at Dibrugarh Town.
AA/2	ADVT-TSK-DBRG-OH-216-23-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial Advertising Contract at Dibrugarh, New Tinsukia, Digboi, Dulaijan, Simaluguri, Jorhat for a period of 03 years.
AA/3	ADVT-TSK-DBRT-OH-4-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial advertisement of 59 LC gates from Dibrugarh to Tinsukia station section.
AA/4	ADVT-TSK-GLGT-OH-7-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial advertisement of 14 LC Gates from Furkating Jn. to Mariani Jn. section.
AA/5	ADVT-TSK-SLGR-OH-103-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Advertisement Commercial contract for display of 11 Nos of hoarding boards (Total area 2500sqft) located at Simaluguri Railway Colony.
AA/6	ADVT-TSK-NTSK-OH-10-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial advertisement at New Tinsukia Colonies.
AA/7	ADVT-TSK-DJG-OH-101-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Advertisement Commercial contract for display of 3 Nos of hoarding boards (Total area 2357sqft) located at Dulaijan Railway Colony
AA/8	ADVT-TSK-NHK-OH-102-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Advertisement Commercial contract for display of 3 Nos of hoarding boards (Total area 1840.63sqft) located at Naharkatia Railway Colony.
AA/9	ADVT-TSK-MJN-OH-5-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial advertisement of 18 LC gates from Makum to Dangri section.
AA/10	ADVT-TSK-FKG-OH-6-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial advertisement of 40 LC gates from Tinsukia to Furkating section.
AA/11	ADVT-TSK-DMGN-OH-145-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Advertisement Commercial contract at Bogibeel approach road (Total area 1722.23sqft) located at Dhamalgaon - Tangani section.
AA/12	ADVT-TSK-MXN-OH-9-22-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Commercial advertisement at Mariani Railway Station.

The press notification has already been uploaded in the IREPS website on 26-06-2024 through e-auction portal www.treps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager / Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

'Maharaj' story felt inherently dramatic: Junaid Khan on 'unconventional' acting debut

NEW DELHI, June 29: It was a lovely script and a story that was "inherently dramatic", says Junaid Khan about "Maharaj", a social drama that marks his debut in the Hindi film industry.

While it was always meant for a direct-to-digital release on Netflix, the Yash Raj Films project landed quietly on the streamer on Friday night, without much fanfare and pre-release promotion.

Directed by Siddharth P Malhotra and produced by Aditya Chopra, "Maharaj" features Junaid, son of superstar Aamir Khan and producer Reena Dutta, in the role of the real-life 19th century social reformer Karsandas Mulji. His debut comes almost four decades after his father burst on the scene as a romantic hero in 1988's "Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak". "I don't know about it being an unconventional (debut) because YRF is a big banner and Sid sir wanted me (in the film). The story is inherently very dramatic. I have been doing theatre in Mumbai since 2017. Sid sir asked me to come and test for this film. I didn't think of it as conventional or unconventional," Junaid told PTI in an interview when asked if the film was an unconventional choice as a newcomer.

Asked whether he thought a romantic story would have been a safer bet, the actor said, "I guess producers and directors didn't see me in romantic dramas. You do the work you get but it was a lovely script. It is such a

wide medium, I don't think there is any protection in films."

"Maharaj", based on an 1862 libel case involving Mulji and a Vaishnavite religious leader, briefly ran into legal trouble with the members of the sect filing a petition in the Gujarat High Court against the film. While the premiere was delayed by a week, the high court cleared its release after a brief stay, observing that it did not target any religion.

Junaid, who has two more films in the making, one of them with Aamir Khan Productions, is happy the matter was resolved sooner than later. Also starring Jaideep Ahlawat, Sharvati, and Shalini Pandey, the movie was previously scheduled to be released on Netflix on June 14. It is based on Saurabh Shah's Gujarati novel of the same name.

"It is a sensitive topic for sure but I think Sid sir and Adi sir made it very sensitively. Certain things happened before the release of the film without context. But all's well that ends well. I don't think the film was intended to hurt anybody. And I don't think it has hurt anybody who has seen the film," he said.

The actor studied at the Los Angeles-based American Academy of Dramatics and Arts for three years. Upon his return in 2017, he honed his skills on stage.

Aamir, Junaid said, has known about his aspiration to become an actor for almost a decade.

Asked whether he discussed his debut project with his father, he said, "Film ke baare mein itna discussion nahi hua Papa se. It is not his film and he is busy with his work. Sid sir and Adi sir showed him the film. He liked it and had some



suggestions. They took some of it and didn't take the others. "He would normally give advice if you have specific questions for him. But beyond that, he does not get too much into our lives. He lets us be. If you have a specific question, then he is very helpful actually."

Junaid is currently in Delhi shooting for a project. "I don't know how much I should talk about those films because producers haven't announced them yet but one is being made by AKP and another by Phantom Films."

"For now, there are these two projects and then we will see. I am supposed to be on stage in September. I keep myself busy. I have the year pretty packed," the actor added. Malhotra said he fell in love with the sub-

ject when he read the novel and then watched its theatrical production. The story was not widely known but is a popular one in Gujarat, he added.

The director, known for YRF's "Hichki", said he essentially saw it as a "David vs Goliath" story of a powerful man and a young reformer who challenges his ideology.

"We are fools when we start falling in love with a subject without thinking that it is going to fall into trouble. When you realise it is going to fall into trouble, then you double check your intent and you realise your intent was correct because I am not going against any religion or community," Malhotra said, referring to the delay in the release "Maharaj". (PTI)

Vashu Bhagnani owes over ₹ 65 lakh to crew members, says FWICE

MUMBAI, June 29: Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) president BN Tiwari has said veteran film producer Vashu Bhagnani owes over ₹ 65 lakh to crew members who worked on three of his films "Mission Raniganj", "Ganapath" and "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan".

Bhagnani's company Pooja Entertainment owes ₹ 33.13 lakh to director Tinu Desai, who helmed their 2023 film, "Mission Raniganj", Tiwari said on Friday. The movie was headlined by Akshay Kumar.

The production house owes ₹ 31.78 lakh to over 250 set workers who worked on movies like "Mission Raniganj", Tiger Shroff's "Ganpath" (2023), and Akshay Kumar and Shroff's "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" (2024), Tiwari added.

Bhagnani remained unavailable for comment.

In a complaint filed on March 19 to Indian Film & Television Director's Association (IFTDA), Desai said he worked on "Mission Raniganj" from February 2022 to October 6, 2023 (the release date of the film) and the amount to be received as per the contract was ₹ 4,03,50,000 and he has only received ₹ 3,70,36,092 so far.

"A written complaint was filed by the director of 'Mission Raniganj' regarding non-payment of his dues of Rs 33.13 lakh from Vashu Bhagnani last year in March. We've been following up with Pooja Entertainment but still they haven't made the payment. They have said by July end they will clear the dues," Tiwari told PTI.

Desai declined to comment when contacted by PTI.

According to FWICE President, IFTDA has written multiple letters to Pooja Entertainment but they kept delaying the payment.

"In February they sought time to pay citing Jacky Bhagnani's wedding via an email dated February 20, 2024 to IFTDA and later they didn't reply. After FWICE wrote them a letter in March 2024, they again sought time to make the payment saying they would do so after the release of their film, 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', again that has not happened," Tiwari said.

"This is unfair what they are doing, they are leading a luxurious life, and when it comes to paying the dues they are making excuses. In their latest email, they have said they will clear the dues by July end but if they don't do so then our workers will not work on any of their films," he added. (PTI)



'Kalki 2898 AD' earns ₹ 298.5 crore globally in two days

NEW DELHI, June 29: Nag Ashwin's 3D spectacle "Kalki 2898 AD" has minted ₹ 298.5 crore in two days at the global box office, the makers said on Friday. Touted as a marriage of Hindu epic Mahabharata and science fiction, the big-budget film is produced by Vyjayanthi Movies and was released on Thursday in six languages: Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi and English.

It features a star cast led by Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Haasan, along with Disha Patani, Saswata Chatterjee and Shobhana. On the opening day, the movie earned ₹ 191.5 in gross box office collection (GBOC) and collected ₹ 107 crore on Friday. "The love is pouring in from all corners of the world! #Kalki2898AD #EpicBlockbusterKalki." Vyjayanthi Movies posted on its official X page along with a poster stating that "Kalki 2898 AD" earned ₹ 298.5 crore in two days. Previously titled "Project K", it is arguably the most expensive feature film in Indian cinema history at a reported ₹ 600 crore. (PTI)

We won't shy away from announcing news when time comes: Vicky on rumours about Katrina's pregnancy

MUMBAI, June 29: Reacting to rumours that he is expecting his first child with wife Katrina Kaif, actor Vicky Kaushal has said that he will share the good news with the world at an appropriate time.

There has been speculation in the film industry that Kaushal and Kaif, who tied the knot in December 2021, will be welcoming their first child soon.

Kaushal, 36, was asked about the rumours at the trailer launch of his upcoming movie, "Bad Newz", on Friday evening.

"Main jab good news hogi tabhi jarur apko bataunga. Jabhi time aayega we won't shy about announcing the news," the

actor told reporters.

Also starring Triptii Dimri and Ammy Virk, "Bad Newz" is described as a "rare comedy film inspired by true events" about heteropaternal superfecundation, a reproductive process in which twin children have the same mother, but different biological fathers.

The film is directed by Anand Tiwari, who earlier worked with Kaushal on his 2018 directorial debut movie "Love Per Square Foot".

"Bad Newz" is produced by Amazon Prime in association with Dharma Productions and Leo Media Collective. (PTI)

There's a sense of madness to it: 'Mirzapur' director Gurmeet Singh on season three

MUMBAI, June 29: Like the popular characters of "Mirzapur", the team behind the hit crime series is also gaining a "level of maturity" as they move forward with the third season, says show's director Gurmeet Singh.

The rawness and aggression of the youth have given way to a "certain madness" that comes when characters have to deal with power, the director said, acknowledging that they look forward to feedback and fan theories for the Prime Video show, whose third season will premiere on July 5.

"When we started off, we knew we were going into an action-crime-drama-thriller, our characters were much younger. The colour of the first season was raw because they were young people with angst and testosterone. They were trying to find a space for themselves in a place like UP. The depiction of whether it was language or violence was also like that, it was in your face, it was aggressive, brutal," Singh told PTI in an interview.

In the third part, Guddu Pandit, played by Ali Fazal, is getting ready to defend the throne of Mirzapur that he took from Pankaj Tripathi's Kaleen Bhaiya who is also preparing a comeback.

"Our characters are back and they are in a position where they are dealing with power, so there's a sense of madness to it. But it is for the audience to tell us, and we are open to feedback, whether it is shown validly or not. We are open to criticism. It is done keeping in mind the story and what will drive it forward with a level of maturity that we are gaining through the show as we go along," Singh added.

The gangster drama series, whose first part premiered on Prime Video in 2018, followed by an equally successful second part in 2020, has fascinated fans all over the world.

"When we came into season two, we matured. We saw and understood things, and made sure that only when the story requires, we get into something like that (violence). The impact of the violence is

still there but it was treated as an aspect of the character's journey," the director said.

In the mix of "Mirzapur" season three are characters old and new fighting for their relevance in the crime riddled world, which borrows its title and setting from the eponymous city in Uttar Pradesh.

Other talented actors completing the world of "Mirzapur" include Rasika Dugal, Shweta Tripathi Sharma, Vijay Varma, Harshita Shekhar Gaur, Amit Sial, Anjum Shharma, Priyanshu Painyuli, Sheeba Chaddha, Manu Rishi Chadha and Rajesh Tailang.

Asked why it took four years to come up with the third season when there was only a gap of two years between the first two, Singh said the pandemic delayed the series for a year-and-a-half. They also wanted the writing to be watertight for the show, produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani's Excel Entertainment.

"Mirzapur" is not taken from any existing written material so the writing has to

always be from scratch. The characters that we have, the journey that we want to give them is always something that we find from within the character itself. We are not looking for it from outside, so that takes time to develop.

"The process is to give each character their journey, their graph and their trapping and then start making them intersect. When they intersect, the drama happens and you finalise the process. All this takes a lot of time."

Like any popular show, "Mirzapur" enjoys its own set of fan theories and Singh said sometimes it helps in fleshing out details of a character, like Golu's character in the third season chews 'gutka', which evolved from a discussion he had with a bureaucrat's wife in Varanasi.

"She was a fan and said, 'Give me a role to play, but don't give me a teacher kind of a role, give me a 'tabadtood' (strong) role, where a woman is having gutka and spits that'. I asked if this fascinates her as a person, and she said, 'Of course, it does'.

"I told Shweta that, 'Why don't we give this characteristic to Golu, that she is a woman in a man's world, trying to fit in with the boys'. If she is a girl who has a gang of boys with her, will she eat pan masala?" It came from our interaction with people in real-life."

Similarly, the character of Imran Alam, popularly known as dancing uncle, was extended further in season two purely because of the love it received from fans. The role was played by veteran actor Hemant Karpadia.

In the final episode of the first season, Alam is shown dancing at a wedding, totally unaware that Munna (Divyendu) and his gang members have barged their way in and murdered a lot of people. The climactic scene had ended with the killings of Bablu (Vikrant Massey) and Sweetie (Shriya Pilgaonkar). "In season two, we needed a character, a witness who has witnessed the wedding massacre and can testify against Munna. And suddenly the dancing chacha who was very popular came to our mind. (PTI)

As track keeps deteriorating there is more turn and variable bounce: Rana

CHENNAI, June 29: Senior India spinner Sneha Rana depended on channel bowling to get three wickets on the second day of the one-off Test against South Africa but also benefitted from the variable bounce due to considerable deterioration of the Chepauk track.

The 30-year-old off-spinner finished second day with figures of 3/61, which included the prized wickets of the Proteas' opening pair, skipper Laura Wolvaardt (20) and Anneke Bosch (39), along with Delmi Tucker (0).

South Africa ended the day at 236 for 4 in reply to India's gigantic first innings score of 603 for 6.

"My plan is simple -- do channel bowling and use more of your stock balls. We saw videos of their top four-five batters and planned against them," Rana told reporters after second day's play.

"There was not enough turn initially on this track, and we had to use our fingers and hard grip quite a lot. But, as the wicket kept deteriorating, we saw more (variable) bounce and turn. There is always a challenge with the wickets, and we are always prepared for it."

She was also the star in the previous Test against Australia last December in Mumbai, where she took seven wickets in the entire encounter.

"It's been an amazing feeling so far. I tried to pick up from where I had left off (against Australia), aiming to play with the same focus," she said.

For her, there is no magic mantra but sheer hard work.

"It's not magic but sheer hard work that has paid off in this contest. Having performed against Australia, it was a challenge for me to keep up with that performance. Thus, I was looking to deliver that."

Although there was not enough turn on the Chepauk pitch, discussing her bowling plans, Sneha stated that using her stock balls more often helped her.

Sneha gave credit to the South

African batters for making the most out of the good Chepauk batting surface but expressed her confidence in getting the job done on Sunday.

"The opponent batters are also out there to bat, and the pitch was helping them. They have played really beautifully, especially how they have taken control of the innings," she concluded.

Meanwhile, South African all-rounder Sune Luus was all praise for the Indian off-spinners for having bowled beautifully, which included Rana and Deepti Sharma (1-41).

"The two (Indian) off-spinners bowled exceptionally well today. They were hitting the

spots, and we didn't know whether to go back or forward or stay put," she realised.

When asked about her 93-run partnership with Kapp and the discussions, Sune conceded that she had complete faith in the latter's ability and current form.

"But, Kapp and I discussed that we just need to build a partnership. Our best chance was to stay out there as long as we could."

"Kapp has quite some experience in Tests and has a lot of runs under her belt. I had full confidence in her. But also, we needed to be patient as no bowler would keep hitting the spot every single time," she added. (PTI)



Ronaldo, soccer's ultimate showstopper, still Portugal's main man despite slow start to Euro 2024

DORTMUND, Germany, June 29: Cristiano Ronaldo has been a showstopper, as expected, at the European Championship.

Just not necessarily in the way he'd like to be.

The Portugal superstar with 632 million followers on Instagram and a never-ending stream of endorsement deals has had to deal with a raft of on-field self-seekers, during matches and in training. One presumed super-fan even leapt from the stands over the players' tunnel toward a startled-looking Ronaldo as he headed to the locker room after Portugal's match against Georgia.

He's raged at a referee (earning a yellow card), booted away a water bottle, and angrily remonstrated in the dug-out. He's also had 12 shots, more than anyone else at Euro 2024.

What Ronaldo hasn't done is score a goal — and that's the currency he deals in, at least in soccer.

OK, there was that moment he passed up a golden chance to score by passing unselfishly to Bruno Fernandes for Portugal's third goal in the 3-0 win over Turkey. A double-stepover that befuddled Abdulkadir Bardakci and left the Turkey center back on his back has proved a hit on social media and gave the world a reminder of the Ronaldo of 10, 15, even 20 years ago.

Ronaldo, though, is 39 now. Those big moments have become fleeting, especially when it comes to the big tournaments and when he's playing against top-level defenses.

Make that seven straight matches in which he has failed to score at a major tournament, covering the 2022 World Cup and Euro 2024. For the first time in his 21-year international career taking in five World Cups and six European Championships, he has ended a group stage without a goal.

So, with the powers of this undoubted soccer great on the wane, the question will again be asked heading into the knockout stage: will the constant drama

surrounding Ronaldo wind up being a distraction for the Portugal team in its bid for another big soccer title, eight years after winning its only one at Euro 2016?

Roberto Martinez clearly doesn't think so.

The Portugal coach is in thrall with Ronaldo, as shown by his reaction to the striker's assist — his record-tying eighth at the European Championship — against Turkey.

"It should be shown in every academy in Portugal and world football," Martinez said, purring at this "spectacular" piece of play.

A day earlier, he'd got into an exchange with a journalist who questioned whether Ronaldo could handle the intensity of a major tournament at age 39.

"All you need to do is look at what he has done in the last 12 months," Martinez proffered, pointing to his record in the Saudi league with Al-Nassr, for whom he started 31 of 34 games and scored a league-high 35 goals, and his 10 goals in Euro 2024 qualifying — second only to Belgium's Romelu Lukaku.

Before the tournament, Martinez had lauded Ronaldo by saying he "approaches every day as a new way to be the best" and that his stats "are better than anything, subjectively, that you can say."

Maybe to justify his arguments — or who knows, to keep in Ronaldo's good books — Martinez started the striker against Georgia despite resting all of his other key outfield players for a game that meant little for Portugal, which had already qualified as group winner.

It was at this stage at the last World Cup where Ronaldo lost his place in Portugal's team, to the shock and anger of his millions of fans who might not see him play as much these days because of his move to the Middle East. He had started all three of the group games, scoring only a penalty, and reacted poorly to being substituted by then-coach Fernando Santos against South Korea in the third. (AP)

Vinicius Júnior scores twice to lead Brazil to 4-1 win over Paraguay in Copa America group stage

LAS VEGAS, June 29: Vinicius Júnior scored two first-half goals to lead Brazil to a 4-1 victory over Paraguay on Friday night and put itself in position to advance out of Group D in the Copa America.

"Today, he played almost a perfect match," Brazil coach Dorival Júnior said through an interpreter. "He was dynamic."

Sávio also scored a first-half goal for Brazil and Lucas Paquetá scored on a penalty kick in the second half. Omar Alderete scored Paraguay's goal.

There were plenty of tense moments with five yellow cards and a red handed out. Andres Cubas was sent off for a red card in the 81st minute, forcing Paraguay to play the last part of the match down a man. Yellow cards were handed to Brazil's Wendell, Vinicius Júnior and Lucas Paquetá and Paraguay's Fabián Balbuena and Hernesto Caballero.

The victory was quite a response for the Seleção, who opened the tournament Tuesday with a scoreless draw against Costa Rica despite outshooting their opponent 18-2.

"There was a certain level of disappointment for the lack of results in the first match," Dorival Júnior said. "But I think our performance was of a great level. We've made great progress in



very little time. We almost never have 20 days to work together.

"I told you be patient because this team is trending on the right path." With four points, Brazil is two behind group leader Colombia, which defeated Costa Rica 3-0 earlier Friday. A victory or tie by Brazil against Colombia on Tues-

day ensures one of the group's two spots in the knockout stage. Brazil also has a six-goal differential advantage over Costa Rica, so a loss likely won't keep out the nine-time Copa America champions. Paraguay will not advance to the next round, leading to some tense back-and-forth between

coach Daniel Garnero and reporters who questioned the team's continued struggles in this tournament. The group has won Copa America twice, but not since 1979. "There have been many head coaches and nobody's finding the solution," Garnero said through an interpreter. "You're

talking about a match that just finished. I cannot talk about something that happened ages ago."

Brazil has had its difficulties against Paraguay in Copa America play, having drawn in their previous five meetings. That tied for the second-longest unbeaten streak against Brazil in this tournament, which Paraguay also was part of from 1963-83.

But Brazil won the most recent meeting, defeating Paraguay 4-0 two years ago in World Cup qualifying, and there was little doubt about the outcome of this match after two late goals broke it open in what was a contentious end to the first half.

Moments after teammate Bruno Guimarães hit the crossbar, Sávio put Brazil up 2-0 in the 43rd minute. Both teams got into a scrum in first-half stoppage time, with Chilean referee Piero Maza handing yellow cards to Wendell and Balbuena at three-plus minutes. Then Vinicius Júnior delivered the crushing blow five minutes into first-half stoppage time. Paraguay had its chances and even outshot Brazil 8-5, including 4-3 on goal. Brazil goalkeeper Alison Becker made a tremendous save diving to his right to prevent a goal from Damián Bobodilla 15 minutes into the match. (AP)

Colombia dominates Costa Rica 3-0 to reach Copa America quarterfinals

GLENDALE, ARIZ., June 29: Davinson Sánchez and Jhon Córdoba scored three minutes apart in the second half, and Colombia advanced to the Copa America quarterfinals with a 3-0 win over Costa Rica on Friday.

Colombia controlled possession (62%) for the second straight game and led 1-0 at halftime on Luis Díaz's penalty kick in the 31st minute.

Los Cafeteros kept up the pressure in the second half and wrapped up Group D with a dominating performance in front of 27,386 pro-Colombian fans at State Farm Stadium. Colombia outshot Costa Rica 14-5 and faces Brazil on Tuesday in Santa Clara, California to close out the group stage.

Colombia has won 10 straight and is unbeaten in 25 games (20-0-5) since losing at Argentina in a World Cup qualifier in 2022. Costa Rica did not have a shot on goal.

"Today was a game we dominated from start to finish," Colombia coach Néstor Lorenzo said through an interpreter.

Costa Rica had the first big surprise of the tournament, playing nine-time Copa America champion Brazil to a scoreless tie despite being outshot 18-2.

Los Ticos found themselves on their heels again against another powerhouse team in the desert — and it didn't go quite as well for the youngest roster in the tourna-

ment.

"The other team was clearly on another level," Costa Rica coach Gustavo Alfaro said.

Colombia controlled possession (66%) in its opening 2-1 win over Paraguay and dominated the ball early against Costa Rica.

Díaz had the first good chance in the fifth minute, just missing the crossbar on a header. James Rodríguez followed with the first shot on goal in the 20th minute, but Patrick Sequeira sprawled out for a diving save.

Díaz scored on the penalty kick after Sequeira took down a charging Córdoba at the edge of the penalty box. Los Cafeteros kept up the pressure, just missing another goal when Sánchez couldn't get a head on Díaz's bouncing cross.

Colombia had 71% possession in the first half and kept control in the second.

Sánchez made it 2-0 with a header off a corner kick in the 59th minute. Córdoba scored when he slipped behind Costa Rica's defense and beat Sequeira from a tough angle.

"We're a good team, but we also have good character," Lorenzo said.

"It's no miracle. They're good players," Lorenzo said after the game, in Spanish. "The quality of the players is what makes the difference. On the field they pressure, they stick to the game plan." (AP)

12-time National champion Muddappa begins season on winning note

CHENNAI, June 29: The fastest rider in India, Hemant Muddappa, began his 2024 campaign on a winning note with a double at the opening round of the MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship which began at the Madras International Circuit in Irungattukottai, near here, on Saturday.

Muddappa, who has won national titles in drag racing a record 12 times, continued his successful association with team Mantra Racing, and the combination dished out another stellar performance in the first round, missing a triple by a whisker.

He started with a hard-fought victory in the 4-stroke 551 to 850cc Super Sport class clocking a blistering 8.630 seconds to

edge out Hyderabad's Mohammed Riyaz, who timed 8.675 seconds. Altaf Khan, also from Hyderabad, came third.

The Bengaluru-based rider then took the start for the 851 to 1050cc Super Sport final run but lost to Mumbai's Anvay Patil by eight-hundredths of a second.

Mantra Racing's Muddappa clocked 8.294 seconds to Patil's 8.286. Muddappa's teammate Sagan Prasad SP came third in 8.448sec.

Later, he was in his element again in the 4-stroke 1051 to 1650cc Super Sport class, where he logged a silver quick 08.063sec to take his second victory of the day. He beat Bengaluru's Mujahid Pasha (8.103) to second, and another Bengalurean Aymaan Baig came

third in 8.117.

Astride the Suzuki Hayabusa, the reigning champion in the Unrestricted class clocked 8.251 seconds for a tie with city-mate Mujahid Pasha, who also clocked the same time but had a lesser reaction time, which was used to break the deadlock. Al-imon Saidalvi came third.

"I am glad to begin the season on a positive note. After all the hard work during the off-season with testing and trials, it feels good to be on the track. I thank my hard-working team at Mantra Racing and my friends, fans and family, who always stood by me. It is a joyful journey and despite the disappointment, I am glad to begin with a double," said Muddappa, who is nicknamed 'LightningR1' for his brute speed. (AGENCIES)

Olympics and unfinished business await for hurdler Holloway while Sha'Carri and Lyles keep blazing

EUGENE, June 29: Grant Holloway won U.S. track trials in the 110-meter hurdles, finishing in 12.86 seconds, the fourth-fastest time in history, to earn a chance to capture the Olympic title that eluded him in an upset loss three years ago. The 26-year-old three-time world champion will head to the Olympics as the favorite even after clipping the eighth hurdle and having to lean into the finish to beat Freddie Crittenden by .07.

This marked Holloway's third sub-13 run of the season — the second-fastest of his career. Daniel Roberts finished third in 12.96, making this the first race in history with three sub-13 times.

Others with unfinished business looming at the Olympics include Sha'Carri Richardson and Noah Lyles, each of whom blazed through their 200-meter semifinals

to set up races Saturday to qualify for their second event.

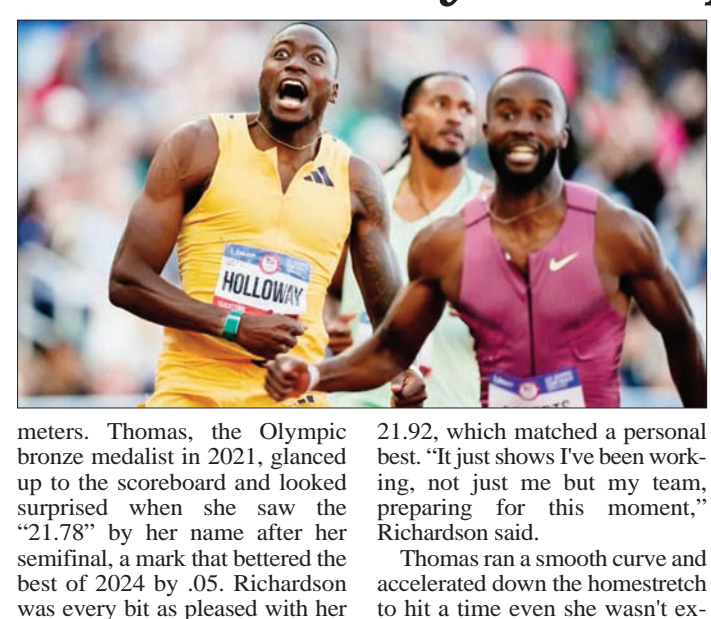
Richardson faces a matchup against Gabby Thomas in what could be one of the best races of the trials. Holloway's 110 hurdles was impressive, though he's well aware that making the games and bringing home Olympic gold are two different things.

In Tokyo three years ago, he cleared all 10 hurdles but faded late and lost by .05 to Jamaica's Hansle Parchment, who runs in his country's national championship this weekend. Holloway called it one of the worst races he'd ever run and one of Parchment's best.

Sha'Carri vs. Gabby Thomas/Sha'Carri Richardson ran her personal-best time. Gabby Thomas ran the season's best time.

Up next, a showdown in the final between the two best at 200

meters. Thomas, the Olympic bronze medalist in 2021, glanced up to the scoreboard and looked surprised when she saw the "21.78" by her name after her semifinal, a mark that bettered the best of 2024 by .05. Richardson was every bit as pleased with her



21.92, which matched a personal best. "It just shows I've been working, not just me but my team, preparing for this moment," Richardson said.

Thomas ran a smooth curve and accelerated down the homestretch to hit a time even she wasn't expecting. She said she'd love to put another low number up in the final Saturday. "I absolutely would," she said. "If I make the team, I want to come out with another world lead, another pb' and just show everyone I'm ready to compete."

Lyles vs. clock Lyles ran a wind-aided 19.60 to win his semifinal, and was thinking about more than the Olympic spot he'll be racing for Saturday.

"After the 100s, I was thinking I could come out here and attack the American record again, maybe the world record. We'll see," said Lyles, who won the 100 last weekend. Two summers ago on this track, Lyles ran 19.31 to knock down Michael Johnson's hallowed American record of 19.32. The world record belongs to Usain Bolt at 19.19. (AP)

India posts record-breaking total, South Africa fight back on Day 2

CHENNAI, June 29: India posted the biggest ever total in the history of women's Test cricket by scoring a mammoth 603 for six declared before South Africa Women fought valiantly through Sune Luus and Marizanne Kapp on day two of the one-off Test, here Saturday.

The hosts resumed the day at the overnight score of 525 for four with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh beginning the proceedings.

Playing her fifth Test, the India skipper raised her maiden half-century in the long format, scoring 69 of 115 balls while Richa (86) also got her career-best knock of 86 to extend India's domination.

They added 143 runs for the fifth wicket.

At 576, the Indians broke the record of the highest team total in the Women's Test cricket, bettering the previous record held by Australia, who had posted 575 for nine declared against South Africa in Perth this February.

However, at 593, the stand was broken after Harmanpreet was trapped leg-before by Tumi Sekhukhune.

Just 10 runs later, Richa departed too after being trapped leg-



before by Nonkululeko Mlaba, and the Indian captain declared the innings.

South Africa put up a spirited fight with top-order batter Sune Luus (65) and Marizanne (69 not out) as they finished the day at 236 for four, trailing by 367 runs.

Delmi Tucker remained the

most successful South African bowler with figures of two for 141, while Masabata Klaas was the most economical of all.

The Proteas began on a convincing note with the bat and remained safe at 29 for no loss at the lunch break.

However, the hosts struck after

the break, with Sneha Rana trapping the visiting captain leg-before for 20 with a delivery that surprisingly kept low, with the partnership lasting 33 runs.

In came Luss to join Bosch, and the pair made the most of the batting friendly wicket. The duo added 63 for the second wicket,

but Rana broke the stand by removing Bosch for 39. As Kapp joined Luus, South Africa was 106 for two at the tea break.

In the day's final session, the two batters brought up their respective half-centuries and took the partnership to 93 runs before Luus was trapped leg-before by Deepti Sharma, with the score reading 189 for three.

The stand was Proteas' best third-wicket partnership in the format.

Nine runs later, Delmi Tucker was caught behind off Rana for a duck. But, the pair of Kapp and Nadine de Klerk played out the remainder of the day with an unbeaten 38-run stand for the fifth wicket.

The hosts did not exactly struggle with the ball. While the lack of enough turns did make it challenging out there, the ball occasionally kept low, troubling the visitors.

The Indians were decent with their fielding efforts, but a couple of close chances did not go their way.

For India, Rana was the star with the ball, with her figures reading three for 61, whereas Deepti Sharma was also impressive (1/40). (PTI)

Praggnanandhaa let's Gukesh off the hook on a day of draws



BUCHAREST (ROMANIA), June 29: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa missed out on becoming a joint leader at the the Superbet Classic chess tournament after settling for a draw against compatriot D Gukesh in the third round here.

After losing to Gukesh in the last Candidates tournament in April earlier this year, Praggnanandhaa had a great opportunity to equalise the score this year but could not find a winning continuation after Gukesh spoiled a drawn endgame.

The Catalan opening saw Gukesh sacrificing a pawn early and Praggnanandhaa had his share of counterplay on the Queen side. As things unfolded, Gukesh recovered the pawn with an optical advantage with his Knight against a slightly bad Bishop of Praggnanandhaa.

With the intricacies of the middle game over, Gukesh decided to part with a pawn and reached a Queen and rook endgame that should have been an easy draw but a blunder on his 53rd move saw a forced liquidation leading to a King and pawns endgame.

On another day, Praggnanandhaa may have found the winning continuation to become a joint leader but luck smiled on Gukesh and the game was drawn a few moves later.

For the first time in three days, all the five games in the ten-player double round-robin tournament ended in draws. The other player coming close to a win was Maxime Vachier-Lagrave who almost pulled it off against his French teammate Alireza Firouzja.

It was a Berlin defense game wherein Firouzja won the opening battle for the third day running

getting a balanced position easily as black.

However, a late error in the queen-less middle game, saw Vachier-Lagrave seize the initiative and it should have been a win that slipped out of hands for the older Frenchman.

With all games ending in draws, the lead positions remained unchanged and Gukesh continued to be at the top of the tables along with Fabiano Caruana of United States who drew a keenly contested game against Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

With both leaders on two points, Vachier-Lagrave, Praggnanandhaa, Alireza, Wesley So, Giri and Nepomniachtchi share the third spot on 1.5 points apiece.

Another half point behind is Abdusattorov and Bogdan Daniel with six rounds still remaining in the USD 350000 prize money tournament.

Dutchman Anish Giri played out an easy draw on his 30th birthday against Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi with both players giving nothing away and this was also the first game to end in the day.

Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania played out his second draw in the tournament holding off a slightly worse endgame for more than a couple hours against Wesley So of United States.

Results round 3:

D Gukesh (Ind, 2) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 1.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 1.5) drew with Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 1.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 1.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (FID, 1.5); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 1) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 2); Wesley So (Usa, 1.5) drew with Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rom, 1). (PTI)

As track keeps deteriorating there is more turn and variable bounce: Rana



CHENNAI, June 29: Senior India spinner Sneha Rana depended on channel bowling to get three wickets on the second day of the one-off Test against South Africa but also benefitted from the variable bounce due to considerable deterioration of the Chepauk track.

The 30-year-old off-spinner finished second day with figures of 3/61, which included the prized wickets of the Proteas' opening pair, skipper Laura Wolvaardt (20) and Anneke Bosch (39), along with Delmi Tucker (0).

South Africa ended the day at 236 for four in reply to India's gigantic first innings score of 603 for six.

"My plan is simple - do channel bowling and use more of your stock balls. We saw videos of their top four-five batters and planned against them," Rana told reporters after second day's play.

"There was not enough turn initially on this track, and we had to use our fingers and hard grip quite a lot. But, as the wicket kept deteriorating, we saw more (variable) bounce and turn. There is always a challenge with the wickets, and we are always prepared for it."

She was also the star in the previous Test against Australia last December in Mumbai, where she took seven wickets in the entire encounter. "It's been an amazing feeling so far. I tried to pick up from where I had left off (against Australia), aiming to play with the same focus," she said. For her, there is no magic mantra but sheer hardwork. "It's not magic but sheer

hard work that has paid off in this contest. Having performed against Australia, it was a challenge for me to keep up with that performance. Thus, I was looking to deliver that." Although there was not enough turn on the Chepauk pitch, discussing her bowling plans, Sneha stated that using her stock balls more often helped her.

Sneha gave credit to the South African batters for making the most out of the good Chepauk batting surface but expressed her confidence in getting the job done on Sunday. "The opponent batters are also out there to bat, and the pitch was helping them. They have played really beautifully, especially how they have taken control of the innings," she concluded.

Meanwhile, South African all-rounder Sune Luus was all praise for the Indian off-spinners for having bowled beautifully, which included Rana and Deepti Sharma (1-41). "The two (Indian) off-spinners bowled exceptionally well today. They were hitting the spots, and we didn't know whether to go back or forward or stay put," she realised. When asked about her 93-run partnership with Kapp and the discussions, Sune conceded that she had complete faith in the latter's ability and current form.

"But, Kapp and I discussed that we just need to build a partnership. Our best chance was to stay out there as long as we could.

"Kapp has quite some experience in Tests and has a lot of runs under her belt". (PTI)

T20 World Cup on course to become the most important ICC event, reveals player survey

BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS), June 29: A player survey has revealed that the T20 World Cup is closing the gap in the race to become the "most important" ICC event to players around the world, marking a shift from the dominance of the ODI World Cup.

According to a survey conducted by the World Cricketers Association (WCA), formerly FICA, an overwhelming 85 percent of players viewed the 50-over World Cup as the most important in 2019, compared to 15 percent for the T20 World Cup.

In 2024 however, those figures have changed with 50 percent of the players considering the ODI showpiece as the most important and 35 percent favouring its T20 equivalent.

The ongoing edition of the T20 World Cup, jointly hosted by the USA and West Indies, will conclude with the title clash between India and South Africa in Barbados on Saturday.

As per the survey done by the re-branded body, for players under 26, the inclination towards the T20 World Cup rose significantly, with 41 percent preferring it over the 50-over World Cup at 49 percent in 2024.

Overall, there has been a sharp increase in the popularity of the T20 format. Compared to 2019 when 82 percent of players picked Test cricket as the most important format, it's only 48 percent right now.

As many as 30 percent of the players picked T20 as the most important format.



Players from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are among those who are not represented by the WCA since they are not unionised.

Responses were sought from players of other major cricket nations, including Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa, Bangladesh and West Indies.

According to the WCA, the sample size for this year's survey was around 330 professional players from 13 different countries, with the majority of them being current internationals. There is a higher proportion of female respondents in 2024.

In the current edition of the T20 World Cup, the much-awaited clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan garnered a staggering 256 million viewing hours in India alone. (PTI)

Sports Minister visits NIS Patiala and encourages Paris Olympic bound athletes

PATIALA, June 29: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Saturday met with the Olympic-bound Indian athletes and also inspected the progress of the new infrastructure which is coming up inside the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NSNIS).

During his visit, Mandaviya met with weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, javelin thrower Annu Rani and shot putter Abha Khatua. "My conversation with Mirabai, Annu Rani and Abha convinces me that our athletes have received the best possible support in their preparation for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games," he said. Mirabai highlighted the immense support from the Sports Ministry, particularly in being able to secure the services of world renowned sports scientist Dr Aaron Horschig from St Louis in the United States of America while Annu Rani spoke glowingly about being able to train for an extended period of time at the European bases.

Mandaviya also interacted with other athletes enrolled in the National Centre of Excellence here and some prominent coaches. He asked them for suggestions

on reducing the drop-out rates from competitive sport. "You are getting the needed support. However, many of those who started with you, but didn't win medals got left behind. What can we do for them?" he asked. He also shared that in keeping up with PM Narendra Modi's wish for overall development of sports, the government would encourage identification and nurturing of talent at the grassroots level.

The Sports Minister also took a review of NSNIS and visited the various fields of play, sports science facilities and the new infrastructure project sites.

He was also pleased with the progress of High Performance Centre for sports science and the kitchen and dining. "I am delighted to be at hallowed NIS, the traditional home of Indian sport. It continues to be a critical hub to not only produce coaches of quality who can make a change at the grassroots level but has also a great training facility. Some of our athletes who have trained at other centres around the world believe NIS is comparable with the best," Mandaviya said (PTI)

Iga Swiatek calls herself a perfectionist and now she wants to improve on grass

WIMBLEDON, (England), June 29: Shortly after Iga Swiatek completed the most lopsided French Open final in 17 years, ceding a grand total of three games against an overmatched opponent to claim a third consecutive title in Paris, she was asked whether that represented a perfect performance. Swiatek's mind immediately went to what little went wrong in Court Philippe Chatrier that afternoon.

"Obviously, I mean, I got broken at the beginning," she said, "so it wasn't maybe perfect."

A few minutes later, Swiatek used the word "perfectionist" to describe herself, perhaps offering some insight as to how she is approaching Wimbledon, the grass-court major that begins Monday — and the only Grand Slam tournament where she hasn't been past the quarterfinals.

"Overall, tennis is different on grass," said Swiatek, who was a junior champion at the All England Club in 2018. "I'll just see and I'll work hard to play better there."

The 23-year-old from Poland has won four of the past five trophies on the red clay at Roland Garros, capped by a 6-2, 6-1 victory against Jasmine Paolini for the championship on June 8.

How does a player beat Swiatek on clay?
"It's hard. You have to err very little. Match her

intensity. Play deep shots. Try to be aggressive whenever there's an easier ball," said Paolini, who is now ranked in the top 10 but hardly looked that caliber in the final. "But it's not easy. It wasn't for me, and it's a challenge that is the most difficult thing in women's tennis at the moment. How to do it? I don't know." Swiatek also was the 2022 champion at the hard-court U.S. Open and made it to the Australian Open semifinals on that surface earlier that season. But she is just 9-4 on the grass of the All England Club, by far her worst winning percentage at a Slam. For someone who talks a lot about wanting to get "better and better," not to mention someone who wants to do things perfectly on and off the court, it would make sense if she wanted to improve at Wimbledon. Specifically, that might entail using her serve and her volleys to accumulate more easy points on the slick surface.

As it is, there isn't much time spent on grass during the grind of the season, and Swiatek pulled out of a tuneup event on that surface after the French Open. She thinks — hopes? — that "competing every year at Wimbledon and practicing these couple of weeks makes you progress" on grass, and noted that while she at one point considered a training block on it during the offseason, her coach put a stop to that. (AP)

Gayle attributes low-scoring matches in US to 'jet-lagged' and 'tired' wickets

BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS), June 29: Chris Gayle, the West Indies batting great and T20 World Cup ambassador, attributed the numerous low-scoring games in the USA leg of the tournament to "jet-lagged and tired" pitches.

According to the ICC, drop-in pitches were prepared in Florida since late December, employing proprietary techniques honed over a decade at Adelaide Oval in Australia.

The drop-in pitches prepared for the tournament were transported from Florida to New York in semi-trailer trucks for installation at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, which proved to be one of the most difficult wickets for batting during the tournament.

"It's been a low-scoring World Cup without a doubt, and the wicket is on the slower side some time. It's a batting format... going to give bowlers edge from time to time, bowlers pretty much in control of T20 World Cup," Gayle said during a press conference on Friday.

The tournament will conclude with the final between India and South Africa at Kensington Oval in Barbados.

"Barbados has been one of the best for batting,



hope batters are going to get some runs tomorrow.

"We want to see better surface but the wicket in

States was a bit jet-lagged as well, as we know. It was tired, all that travel from Australia, didn't get

time to recover properly. That's why we had some low-scoring games," Gayle added.

The development of the pitches was undertaken by Adelaide Oval Turf Solutions, led by renowned Adelaide Oval head curator Damian Hough.

The drop-in square - the type used around the world including at Adelaide Oval and Eden Park - was curated in Florida and transported by road to New York via a convoy of more than 20 semi-trailer trucks in April.

The matches in New York took place at a state-of-the-art 34,000-seat modular stadium located at Eisenhower Park in Nassau County, east of Manhattan. The former West Indies captain lauded the ICC for efforts to promote the game in mainland America.

"The ICC did a fantastic job, the trophy tour, did well to promote the game within the US. They have taken the trophy to the football games, baseball games, they have done a very good job from the marketing point of view," Gayle said.

Coming back to the big-ticket title clash, Gayle said lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah could decide India's fate against South Africa.

Inaugural edition winners India and first-time

finalists South Africa will battle it out at the Kensington Oval in their bid to be crowned the world champions in the game's shortest format.

"India are going to be so hard to beat. They bat so deep and in Jasprit Bumrah, have a world-class death bowler who can break the hearts of the opponents," Gayle wrote in a column for the ICC.

"In contrast, I picked South Africa as a dark horse before the tournament began, and it is very special to see them finally reach their first final after so many semi-final upsets.

"Getting over the hump and winning a World Cup is so special and if they can do it, it will create memories that will last a lifetime for the players and the nation."

The final pits two undefeated teams with India seeking to reclaim the trophy they last won in the 2007 edition, and South Africa seeking to etch their name on a senior World Cup trophy for the first time.

Gayle found it tough to predict a winner. "It is going to be so hard to call - with two teams who have played clean and aggressive cricket throughout the tournament," he said. "We have a final fit for the occasion." (PTI)