14 Indian nationals trapped in cybercrime scam in Cambodia rescued

Bangladesh's top court scales back government jobs quota

Private Members' Bills listed in Rajya Sabha

• Will offer shelter to anyone in distress who comes knocking on our door'

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More to return from trouble-torn nation in coming days

Over 100 Assam students return from Bangladesh

GUWAHATI, July 21: Nearly 120 students hailing from Assam have returned from Bangladesh, which has been rocked by violent protests, over the last few days, a senior official said on Sunday.

Additional chief secretary (Home) Ajay Tewari told PTI that the Assam students have so far entered India through Integrated Check Posts at Sutarkandi in Karimganj district and Dawki in Meghalaya.

"In the Northeast, students and other people are entering through the ICPs in Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. Till Saturday night, 76 students who hail from Assam entered from Dawki while another 41 students from Sutarkandi," he said. He also said that students from



Barak Valley are mostly coming through Sutarkandi, while those belonging to the Brahmaputra Valley have entered through Dawki.

More students are expected to

Tripura have returned through Akhaura post in that state," he

Most of the students belonging to

Asked how many Assamese students were there in Bangladesh, Tewari said that the number is not available with the state government but it is with the Ministry of External Affairs.

"They have not given us the estimated number of Assamese students stuck in Bangladesh or I don't know if they have that breakup. We are monitoring anyone coming through the Sutarkandi post and facilitating their safe return to their respective homes," he said. Karimgani district commissioner Mridul Yadav on Saturday said that (CONTD, ON PAGE-2)

Opposition raises NEET paper leak at all-party meet

NEW DELHI, July 21: Opposition parties drew the battle lines on the eve of Parliament's Budget session on Sunday as they asked the government at an all-party meeting to allow discussion on a host of contentious issues such as the Uttar Pradesh government's order to eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route and exam paper leaks, including of the prestigious NEET.

The government, which breaking from the recent practice invited a number of smaller parties for the meeting to signal its political outreach, conveyed its willingness to discuss all issues but Parliamentary Affairs minister Kiren Rijiju stressed that it should be in accordance with the rules.

He called for cooperation from all parties for running Parliament smoothly, saying it is a collective responsibility.

Representatives from the JD(U), a BJP ally, the BJD and the YSR



Congress Party demanded special category status for Bihar, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, respectively, at the meeting of 44 parties, including some having only one MP.

During the meeting, which was chaired by defence minister Rajnath Singh, opposition RJD echoed the demand for Bihar.

Congress leader K Suresh told

reporters that his party was joined by other INDIA bloc members in seeking the Lok Sabha deputy speaker's position for the opposition according to convention.

He said they also flagged the need for discussion in Parliament on a host of other issues, including the spate in terror attacks in Jammu and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BSF on high alert amid Bangladesh unrest: Official

AGARTALA, July 21: The Border Security Force (BSF) is on high alert to deal with any situation that may arise due to the prevailing neighbouring Bangladesh, a top official said on

Anti-quota agitations in the neighbouring country have left more than 100 dead, prompting the government to enforce a curfew to tackle the volatile situation.

"The prevailing law and order situation in Bangladesh is a security concern for the BSF too as we are entrusted with guarding

the international border. We are fully seized of the situation and have beefed up security so that criminal elements from across the border do not take advantage of the current situation," BSF Tripura Frontier inspector general Patel

He said a large number of troops and all senior commanders have been sent to the border to ensure a high level of operational prepared-

"The BSF is fully committed to securing the borders of our country and is fully preexigency," he said.

Das said that one of the prime con-Indian students studying Bangladesh.

"The number of Instudents Bangladesh is believed to be close to 8,000 and most of them are enrolled in medical colleges. Most of the students are studying in medical colleges in Comilla, Brahmanbaria and Dhaka and many have chosen to enter India through Tripura," he said. Alto-

pared to deal with any cerns at present is the safe return of marks.

According to the cause list of

An analysis of data released by

Supreme Court to hear pleas related to NEET-UG 2024 today

NEW DELHI, July 21: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of petitions related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam, NEET-UG 2024, which was held on May 5.

Assam government has deputed a

magistrate and senior police offi-

cial at Sutarkandi to facilitate their

"Students from Nepal, Bihar and

entry into India, Tewari said.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) had on Saturday released city- and centre-wise results of the medical entrance exam, which is riddled with accusations of paper leak and inordinate inflation of

July 22 uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra would hear more than 40 pleas, including those filed by the NTA seeking transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts on the NEET-UG row to the Supreme Court to avoid multiplicity of litigations.



who allegedly benefitted from the paper leak and other irregularities did not do well. Some centres, however, showed high concentration of well-performing students, it revealed

The voluminous data of over 32 lakh candidates from 4,750 centres was not released in a cumulative format but in a drop-down menu for each centre. The data was released on the direction of the

several petitions over the alleged irregularities as lakhs of aspirants await a final verdict on the fate of the exam

The performance of the candidates from the centres under the scanner -- such as Oasis School, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, Hardayal Public School, Jhajjar, Haryana, Jay Jalaram International School in Godhra, Gujarat -- were comparatively much below par. On July 11,

Assam flood situation improves, 1.30 lakh still affected

GUWAHATI, July 21: The flood-hit people was 2.07 lakh in flood situation in Assam improved on Sunday with the number of people reeling under the deluge decreasing to 1.30 lakh in

10 districts, officials said. Two major rivers, including the Brahmaputra, continued to flow above the danger level.

A central team, comprising top officials from various ministries, visited the state to assess the damage caused by two waves of

Over 1.30 lakh people in 23 revenue circles and 423 villages across 10 districts remain affected in the state, the officials

The affected districts are Kamrup, Morigaon, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Golaghat, Nagaon, Dhemaji, Goalpara, Kamrup

Metropolitan and Cachar. Nagaon is the worst-hit district with more than 72,000 people still reeling under the deluge.

Till Friday, the number of

10 districts.

The toll in this year's flood, landslide, lightning and storm stands at 113.

More than 9,000 people are taking shelter in 46 camps, while another 18 relief distribution centres are serving over 21,000 citizens, the officials said. The Brahmaputra river was

flowing above the danger level in Dhubri and the Disang in Nanglamuraghat. Damage to embankments,

houses, roads and other infrastructure across various districts has also been reported. The eight-member inter-minis-

terial central team to assess damage due to the flood wrapped up their three-day visit on Saturday.

The team, led by Ministry of Home Affairs joint secretary Mihir Kumar, visited several flood-affected areas and held discussions with senior state government (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Ashok Singhal visits flood-affected Barchala area

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, July 21: Assam cabinet
minister Ashok Singhal visited several flood-affected areas in the Chitalmari region of Barchala LAC, Sonitpur District on Sunday to assess the situation.

Accompanied by fellow Cabinet Minister Pijush Hazarika, Singhal engaged in discussions with local residents and flood-affected individuals, alongside a team of engineers from the Water Resources Department.

They discussed urgent measures, including the construction of embankments to mitigate the impact of recurrent floods in the area.

Singhal also visited the residence of Baloram Das, a resident of the flood-affected area who tragically lost (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Two held with

47.42 grams of heroin in KA

HT Bureau

BOKAJAN, July 21: In a signifi-

cant crackdown on narcotics traf-

ficking, Khatkhati police on

Sunday seized a total of 47.42

grams of heroin in two separate op-

The arrests were made during

routine checks along NH 39, un-

derscoring the persistent efforts to

curb drug smuggling in the region.

around 2 pm when police inter-

cepted a motorcycle bearing regis-

tration AS 12 AA 3075 at

Khatkhati. Upon thorough inspec-

tion, officers discovered four con-

tainers of chewing tobacco

concealing 26.52 grams of heroin.

Guljar Hussain (26), hailing

from Morigaon Lahorighat, was

promptly arrested in connection

In a subsequent operation at La-

horijan around 3:30 pm, Khatkhati

police (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

with the incident.

The first seizure occurred

erations in Karbi Anglong.

Sharad Pawar is 'Sargana of Corruption': Amit Shah

PUNE, July 21: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday termed NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar as the "sargana" (ringleader) who institutionalised corruption in the country and accused Rahul Gandhi of being "arrogant" despite Congress losing elections on three occasions.

Addressing the BJP's state convention in Pune, Shah dubbed Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray "the head of the Aurangzeb fan club" who was sitting with people who sought pardon for 1993 Mumbai serial blasts convict Yakub Memon.

He said Rahul Gandhi's arrogance will be crushed after BJP wins upcoming assembly elections in Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand.

"If there is the biggest 'sargana' of corruption in Indian politics, it is Sharad Pawar. There is no confusion in my mind about this. I am saying it openly that Pawar has institutionalised corruption in the country," Shah said as he accused the veteran politician of doing nothing for the

country's welfare and Maharashtra when he was in power. Taking a swipe, Shah said the BJP allotted reservation to Marathas when it helmed Maharashtra (under Devendra Fadnavis) whereas whenever Sharad Pawar's government comes to power, the Maratha quota disappears.

He said the Mahayuti government must come to power to ensure the reservation for Marathas stays. This is Shah's first visit to Maharashtra after the BJP suffered severe drubbing in the recent (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Jawans plant saplings during a plantation drive at SSB camp in Rangiya on Sunday. UB Photos

13 Indians, lured into cyber-scamming centres in Laos, rescued

NEW DELHI, July 21: Thirteen Indians, who were lured into certain cyber-scamming centres in Laos, have been rescued and sent back home, the Indian embassy in the Southeast Asian country said on Sunday.

"In our continued work to ensure safety & wellbeing of Indians as top priority, Embassy successfully rescues 13 Indians from cyberscamming centres in Laos & ensures their safe return to India," the mission

"So far, Embassy has rescued 518 Indians. We thank Lao authorities for their cooperation," it said. On May 7, the embassy came out with an advisory cautioning Indians against fake job offers.

"Instances have come to our notice recently wherein Indian nationals are being lured for employment through Thailand," it had said.

'These fake jobs are for posts such as of 'Digital Sales and Marketing Executives' or 'Customer Support Service' by dubious companies involved in callcentre scams and crypto-currency fraud in Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone in Laos," the em-



It said agents in places such as Dubai, Bangkok, Singapore and India associated with these firms are recruiting Indians by taking simple interviews and

"Victims are illegally taken across the border into Laos from Thailand and held captive to work in Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone in Laos under harsh and restrictive conditions," it said.

"At times, they are taken hostages by criminal syn-

dicates indulging in illegal (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'We are witnessing a dynamic shift in how tobacco cessation is approached'

Doctor-led campaign to make India addiction-free garners over 1,000 signatures

doctors, public health experts, and undergraduate and postgraduate medical students have signed to support the initiative "Nasha Mukti Indradhanush Abhiyan India" for a tobacco-free fu-

Launched by the Asian Coalition for Health Empowerment (ACHE) in collaboration with Doctors Against Addiction (DaAD), this signature campaign garners support from medical professionals and the public, paving the way for a healthier, addiction-free India.

Over the past eight months, the campaign has seen a remarkable response, Dr Narender Saini, former general secretary of the Indian Medical Association, said.

These signatures are being compiled Dr Saini asserted, "The Nasha and shared with health organizations Mukti Indradhanush Abhiyan India is

and policymakers, including the Prime not just a campaign, it's a movement Minister's Office, to advocate for towards a healthier future. The campaign embodies a comprehensive stringent measures in tobacco cessastrategy to eradicate the grip of tobacco addiction while advocating for stricter policies to curb its use and

"We are witnessing a dynamic shift

in how tobacco cessation is approached. The collective efforts of our dedicated healthcare professionals and the broader community in dispelling myths and fostering awareness are crucial steps toward a healthier society," he said.

The campaign's focus extends beyond tobacco, targeting addictions like drugs, alcohol, and even smartphone overuse, he elaborated

It aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal-3 (SDG-3), which emphasises ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all ages, embodying a preventive and curative approach to tackling the crisis. Dr Pawan Gupta, senior consultant, Pulmonary Medicine, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)







Food processing deserves 'good budget': Union Min Chirag Paswan

NEW DELHI, July 21: Union Food Processing Minister Chirag Paswan feels that his ministry "deserves a good budget" allocation for setting up of processing units across the country which will help in providing job opportunities to local people and also boost farmers' income.

Without disclosing contents of his ministry's request from the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Paswan said his ministry has sent the Budget wish list to the finance ministry and was not sure of how much of that will be accepted in this budget, considering the lim-

But, he was hopeful that the wishlist would be accepted in the subsequent years.

In an interaction with PTI, he also outlined his top three priorities -- setting up of food processing units, taking Indian brands to global markets and clearing various misconceptions regarding processed foods.

Paswan highlighted that proposals for setting up of processing units are coming from all states, particularly agro-based ones.

Asked about his wishlist for the upcoming Budget, Paswan said, "My wishlist is really high. But then yes, I do understand because this is the budget for the rest of the financial year.

So, I do understand there will be a lot of concerns, a lot of limitations in it.'

"Though I have sent my proposal, but then I don't know how much of that gets accepted, but then, yes, in due course of time, I think by the next financial year.

> SBI Life Insurance

Diphu celebrates

women

empowerment

HT Bureau DIPHU, July 21: SBI Life In-

surance, Diphu, recently or-

ganised a staff get-together

featuring a food feast aimed at

promoting women empower-

homemade dishes prepared by

women staff members, high-

lighting a variety of local eth-

Speaking on the occasion,

Gunjan Sarma, deputy re-

gional manager of SBI Life

Insurance, emphasised the

event's significance, stating,

"At SBI Life Insurance,

Diphu, we encourage our

talents and capabilities. By

providing opportunities for

them to step out of their

homes and demonstrate their

skills, we empower them to

He added that the Diphu

Friends Club, comprising staff

members, not only engages in

routine activities but also con-

tributes to social causes such

as distributing raincoats and

umbrellas to traffic police and

Gunjan Sarma also advo-

cated for indigenous people to

explore business opportunities

and expand their market pres-

Basapi Phangchopi, adviser

at SBI Life Insurance, Diphu,

emerged as the winner of the

The judging panel included

Serlin Engtipi, owner of Choi

Enterprise, and Ishita

Terangpi, a social activist.

ence to generate income.

food feast.

supporting cancer patients.

learn and earn.

mainland Indian cuisines.

event showcased

Northeastern, and

ment.



Because I think that this ministry deserves, and we do demand also, a good budget because through this, we can actually do something like carpet bombing, you know, by not only setting up these food processing units, but also giving employment to the local people," he

Paswan said this ministry is "very very close" to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed confidence that under his guidance the sector will flourish in the com-

ing years Regarding his top priorities, Paswan said, "Setting up of the processing units is definitely there in my priority" as the level of processing is low in India compared to developed nations.

Further, Paswan said creating right awareness about the benefits of processed food would be his pri-

"Also, an awareness because there are a lot of misleading advertisements, misleading theories that pops up concerning the processing of the food because in India we

"We have not worked on that yet. But then, definitely, as a ministry, we are looking forward to a huge expansion plan" not only at the national level, but also at block

Food processing sector has been able to attract nearly USD 7 billion worth of FDI in the last 10 years.

Paswan highlighted the schemes run by the ministry for providing financial assistance in setting up processing units.

The minister also talked about the huge potential of food processing in the Northeast and states like

Paswan said processing units could be set up for banana chips in his constituency Hajipur, which is famous for banana production.

Similarly, he said, processing units could be established at Muzaffarpur in Bihar known for 'litchi' fruit.

Paswan informed that he recently had a meeting with Punjab's food processing minister for creating processing infrastructure in the

...a lot of proposals from the Northeast," he said, adding that more proposals are coming from agro-based states.

Paswan said the demand is coming for setting up processing units at districts and block levels as well.

Paswan also expects positive outcomes from the upcoming World Food India event to be held in September this year, in terms of participation of all stakeholders and also likely investment commitments from foreign food compa-

10th round of coal block auctions.

The union minister had urged all

stakeholders to work diligently to

achieve at least 175 million tonnes

of production from captive and

commercial coal blocks this year,

representing a 19 per cent growth.

commercial coal mines are under

production, with 32 allocated to the

power sector, 12 to the non-regu-

lated sector and 10 for the sale of

coal. The current production from

these mines stands at 39.53 million

tonnes, registering a strong 35 per

cent year-on-year growth. An addi-

As of June 30, 54 captive and

Contd. from Page 1...

Over 100 Assam students return

he and the SP had visited the ICP at Sutarkandi and interacted with the students. The state government is also in touch with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to ensure the safety of people from the state residing or visiting Bangladesh, he said.

Stating that more students are likely to cross over, Yadav said, "The district administration is geared up to help them. A magistrate and deputy SP have been stationed 24 hours at the border till the situation eases.

He also stated that no tension is anticipated at the border. (PTI) Opposition raises NEET paper

Kashmir, the Manipur situation, train accidents, unemployment and price rise. The Congress flagged the issue related to alleged irregularities in the exams conducted by the Union Public Service Commission, whose chairperson resigned recently for reportedly personal reasons.

The stand of several opposition parties, including the Congress, the DMK and the AAP, made it all but it was certain that the political heat sparked by the Uttar Pradesh government's order asking eateries and carts selling eatables to display their owners' names on the route of kanwarias will reach Parliament when the session begins from Monday. Samajwadi Party's Ram Gopal Yadav alleged that the move is clearly targeted at Muslims and accused the ruling BJP in the state of pursuing communally divisive politics.

Suresh said Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi criticised the decision at the all-party meeting, while AAP's Saniav Singh added that he also spoke on similar lines.

Singh said he raised the issue of misuse of central probe agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate, and accused the Narendra Modi government of targeting AAP leader and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is lodged in the Tihar jail in the excise policy case.

He claimed that the Centre has been allocating only ₹ 350 crore to Delhi for the past nine years and predicted that it will remain the same when the budget is tabled on July 23.

DMK's Tiruchi Siva slammed the government for its handling of medical entrance examination NEET and pressed for a discussion on the issue. The government on its part asked opposition parties to not disrupt Lok abha and Rajya Sabha proceedings, seeking their cooperation in running Parliament smoothly

Rajnath Singh, Rijiju said, recalled the opposition's relentless protest during Prime Minister Modi's reply to the discussion in the Lok Sabha on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address during the previous session, and said such disruptions should not take place.

Fifty-five leaders, including the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha and BJP president J P Nadda, Congress' Jairam Ramesh, Union minister and LJP leader Chirag Paswan, attended the meeting.

The government invited all parties, including those having only one member, except Independents to the meeting, which lasted for over three hours. The TMC was not represented in the meeting as the party was busy with its annual 'Martyrs' Day' rally in Kolkata on Sunday.

YSR Congress leader V Vijaysai Reddy alleged lawlessness in Andhra Pradesh following the formation of

the TDP government there and demanded President's rule in the state. (PTI) BSF on high alert amid Bangladesh

students, including 66 Nepalese studying in Bangladesh, returned to India through the northeastern state's border on Sunday, while 379 students entered from the neighbouring country on July 19 and 20. A total of 693 students have so far been evacuated from violence-hit Bangladesh. The IG also thanked the BGB (Border Guards Bangladesh) for lending support for the evacuation of the students.

"I am very thankful to the BGB, which despite the law and order situation and its heavy commitment, has helped us by providing transportation and safe passage (to students) till Agartala. All this was done seamlessly and in a very professional manner. This is a testimony to the cooperation and good relations that exists between BSF and BGB," Das said. The BSF is expecting more students to cross over in the coming days and is fully prepared to provide all assistance and ensure their safe return to their homes, he added. (PTI)

Supreme Court to hear pleas

had adjourned till July 18 the hearing on the pleas, including those seeking cancellation of the exam, re-test and probe into alleged malpractices in the conduct of NEET-UG 2024, as the responses of the Centre and the NTA were yet to be received by some parties. The bench had observed that it had received a status report from the Central Bureau of Investigation on the progress made in the probe.

In an additional affidavit filed in the apex court last week, the Centre said data analysis of the results of NEET-UG 2024 was conducted by IIT-Madras, which found there was no indication of "mass malpractice" or any localised set of candidates scoring abnormally high marks.

While hearing the pleas on July 8, the top court had observed that the sanctity of the NEET-UG 2024 has been "breached". Saying that a re-test may be ordered if the entire process was affected, the bench had sought details from the NTA and the CBI, including the timing and manner of the alleged paper leak, besides the number of wrongdoers to understand the extent of irregularities claimed by the petitioners. More than 23.33 lakh students had taken the test on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including in 14 cities overseas.

The Centre and the NTA, in their earlier affidavits filed in the apex court, had said that scrapping the exam would be "counterproductive" and "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates in the absence of any proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country. (PTI)

Assam flood situation improves,

officials. Additional chief secretary Ajay Tiwari apprised the central team of the flood situation. He said cyclone Remal triggered the first wave of flood and the state was hit by two waves of the deluge.

Assam State Disaster Management Authority CEO Gyandendra Dev Tripathi requested the central team to declare the two waves of flood as calamities of a severe nature and to recommend the release of ₹ 500 crore on

Ashok Singhal visits flood-affected

his 4-year-old child during the flooding. Earlier in the day, Singhal attended two workers' meetings of Gupteswar and Dhekiajuli Mandal, as well as a felicitation program organised by the Dhekiajuli and Barchala branches of ATTSA to honor outstanding students from the tea tribe community in the area.

13 Indians, lured into cyber-

activities and forced to work in strenuous conditions under constant physical and mental torture," the advisory said. The embassy had said there were instances of Indian workers being brought to Laos to work in other re-

gions of Laos in low-cost jobs such as mining, wood factory, etc. (PTI) Two held with 47.42 grams

apprehended Firdaus Ali (26) with an additional 20.9 grams of heroin. Preliminary investigations revealed that Ali had purchased the drugs from Lahorijan Choudhary Building, located adjacent to NH 39.

The seized drugs, with a combined weight of 47.42 grams, highlight ongoing efforts to dismantle illegal drug networks operating within Karbi Anglong. Authorities have initiated further investigations into the matter. Sharad Pawar is 'Sargana of Corruption'

Lok Sabha elections where the party's tally tumbled to 9 from 23 seats it had won in 2019. Attacking the Shiv Sena (UBT) chief, Shah said, "Uddhav Thackeray is sitting with those who sought

clemency for 1993 Mumbai serial blasts convict Yakub Memon." Who is the Aurangzeb fan club? Those who serve birvani to (26/11 terror attack convict) Kasab, those who seek pardon for Yakub Memon, those who give (controversial Islamic preacher) Zakir Naik a messenger of peace award and those who support the (banned Islamist outfit) PFI. Uddhav Thackeray should be ashamed of

sitting with these people," Shah said. In a scathing speech, Shah also targeted Rahul Gandhi for his "arrogance" despite the Congress party's consecutive losses in the Lok Sabha elections. "Once we win the Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jharkhand assembly polls later this year, Rahul Gandhi's arrogance will be crushed," Shah said. He also challenged the Congress to implement its Lok Sabha election

promise of providing ₹8500 monthly to women in states ruled by the party. "I want to tell women of Karnataka, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh to start demanding it," Shah said.

Despite the BJP securing 240 seats in the general elections, surpassing the INDIA alliance tally, Shah urged party workers in Maharashtra to improve their position in the upcoming state assembly elections.

"Mark my words, the BJP-led alliance will win Maharashtra massively," he asserted. Shah emphasised the importance of the 2024 Lok Sabha mandate, noting that no Prime Minister in the last

60 years has secured three consecutive terms. "This is not a small victory. In Maharashtra, we will better our performances of 2014 and 2019 this time," he said. Shah urged the party workers not to get disheartened over the Lok Sabha results and said the lost ground could be recovered in the assembly elections as he highlighted the welfare measures taken by the Mahayuti government.

Shah appealed to the BJP cadres to ensure the victory of the alliance partners (Shiv Sena led by chief minister Eknath Shinde and NCP led by deputy CM Ajit Pawar) in the elections.

'We will form a government of the BJP-led alliance," he added. He said the BJP has been holding extended working committee meetings across the country to review the outcome of Parliamentary elections. "We have to do two things in Maharashtra: To review the Lok Sabha poll results and also win the state elections," Shah said.

Reiterating the BJP's commitment to its ideology, Shah cited the abrogation of Article 370, the construction of the Ram temple, and the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code in Uttarakhand. (PTI)

Doctor-led campaign to make

BLK-MAX Super Speciality Hospital Delhi, emphasized the campaign's comprehensive approach, saying, 'We are witnessing a paradigm shift. Our strategy integrates global best practices with local insights, ensuring a robust framework for tackling addiction." By uniting healthcare professionals and concerned citizens, this campaign creates a powerful voice to advocate for better health practices and policies. Dr Gupta said this holistic approach is crucial for achieving our goals and making a lasting impact on public health.

Dr Sunaina Soni, assistant professor, Department of Physiology, Subharti Medical College, Meerut, said, "The overwhelming response from the medical community indicates the campaign's importance. The signatures we've gathered will drive significant policy changes, making a tangible difference in the fight against addic-

"Through this campaign, we're not just collecting signatures, we are inspiring hope and accountability. It is about empowering individuals and communities to believe in and strive for a tobacco-free future." (PTI)

No shortage of coal for power sector: Minister G Kishan Reddy KOLKATA, July 21: Union Minblackout due to sudden rise in electechnical eligibility for coal block ister G Kishan Reddy said there is tricity demand". auctions to attract more participants. It has recently concluded the

top priorities.

"no shortage" of coal for the power sector and the Centre will ensure adequate supply of the dry fuel to meet demand. The long-term demand will be met by increased productivity of Coal India and commercial mines, he said.

"We are supplying coal to all thermal power plants. We have requested plants based on imported coal to switch their technology to utilise domestic fuel. There is no shortage of coal in the country," Reddy, the minister for coal and mines, told PTI.

Coal production usually faces hindrances during the monsoon season. Some technical issues related to commercial mines were being addressed, he said without di-

vulging the details. Speaking on the power ministry's advisory related to four per cent imported coal blending for domestic thermal plants, the minister said, up production but the blending is

Earlier this month, the Nominated Authority of the Coal Ministry held a meeting to review the status of both operational and nonoperational captive and commercial coal mines.

still come with that mindset that

food should be fresh and direct

from the farm and all that concept

Paswan said there is a need to

He noted that demand for

processed food is also growing

now because of nuclear families

Paswan said he wants to see In-

Summing up his top priorities,

he said, "So, yes, to take Indian

brands to that level, setting up pro-

cessing units, and also getting rid

of all the misconceptions that are

being given about food process-

He said food processing is all

about value addition and not loss

of value and hence clearing mis-

conceptions would be one of his

Asked about likely foreign di-

rect investment (FDI) in the food

processing sector in the next 10

years, the minister said he has not

dian brands in international mar-

promote the food processing sec-

that we have," he said.

and working couples.

During the meeting, the authority stressed on the need for operationalising coal blocks that are in advanced stages of development. The department appreciated efforts of all allottees in increasing coal production and urged them to achieve the committed output targets for the 2024-25 financial year (FY'25).

The Ministry of Coal has allocated or auctioned 161 mines with a peak-rated capacity of 575 million tonnes. Of these, 58 have received mine opening permission, and 54 are operational. Last year, these mines produced 147 million tonnes, constituting 15 per cent of the country's total coal production. In a review meeting held in early June,

tional 11 mines are expected to commence production in FY'25. Furthermore, 65 non-operational coal blocks are in various

stages of obtaining regulatory clearances, distributed across nine states - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and West

Coal India is successfully ramping Reddy stressed on exploration of more blocks for auctions. The government had relaxed Bengal, the ministry said. (PTI) Nirmala Sitharman set to make history with 7th consecutive Budget

NEW DELHI, July 21: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to create history when she presents her seventh straight Budget on Tuesday for the fiscal 2024-25, surpassing the record of former prime min-

ister Morarji Desai. Sitharaman, who will turn 65 next month, was in 2019 appointed as India's first full-time woman finance minister when Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a decisive second term. Since then, she has presented six straight budgets, including an interim one in February this year.

The full Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal (April 2024 to March 2025) will be her seventh straight. She will better Desai's record, who presented consecutive five full budgets and one interim budget between 1959 to

This year will witness two budgets - an interim one



in February and a full one this month. This is because an incumbent government cannot present a full

Focus remains strong in delivering innovative solutions: Ramco Systems

CHENNAI, July 21: Ramco Systems was well-positioned to capitalise on the opportunity as demand for transformation continues to grow and focus remains strong to deliver innovative solutions that drive efficiency and productivity, a top official has said.

The focus of the city-based enterprise software product provider, remains strong to deliver innovative solutions that drive efficiency, productivity and competitive advantage for the clients, Chairman P R Venketrama Raja said. "Businesses worldwide are significantly in-

creasing their technology investments. Organisations are prioritising digital transformation initiatives, recognising that their competitive edge and value creation depend on effectively leveraging technology across processes, products, services and customer experiences," Raja

Ramco Systems was witnessing the beginning of a turnaround with several positive developments across operations.

"We have been working tirelessly to strengthen our core operations to seize new growth opportunities. Our strategic initiatives and investments are starting to pay off, sig-



nalling a promising future ahead," he said in the

company's latest annual report. Raja said one of the most significant milestones witnessed was the launch of payroll platform 'Ramco Payce' offering best in class AI enabled experience, with an easy to use rich user interface.

Payce helps businesses streamline operations, boost productivity and stay competitive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape, he said.

Observing that the efforts taken by the company was setting the stage for a sustainable growth, he said, "we have implemented financial strategies aimed at optimising our resources, reducing costs and enhancing revenue

"At Ramco, we are committed to fostering a culture of operational excellence, customer satisfaction and business agility. We have undertaken significant efforts to modernise our technology, ensuring our solutions remain at the forefront of innovation and meet the ever evolving needs of our clients," he said.

He said the company was continuously upgrading its infrastructure by adopting latest technologies and enhancing product offerings. "Our focus on research and development and continuous improvement is central to our strat-

egy enabling us to stay ahead of industry trends and anticipate the needs of our clients," he said. Ramco Systems CEO Sundar Subramanian said the company was actively driving the growth plans through continued modernisation

and transformation. "Our focus on the five key areas -- operational, financial, product, technical and customer is driving the transformation journey. By prioritising high quality implementation, consistent support and comprehensive managed services, we are building lasting partnerships and ensuring client satisfaction," he said. (PTI)

BSF troops arrest four smugglers HT Bureau GUWAHATI, July 21: Acting

MONDAY, JULY 22, 2024

on intelligence, vigilant BSF troops under the Guwahati Frontier apprehended four Indian smugglers on the India-Bangladesh international border.

The 49th Battalion conducted a special operation in the riverine area of the Brahmaputra in South Salmara Mankachar district, successfully intercepting the smugglers who were attempting to traffic goods into Bangladesh via

The operation led to the seizure of three cattle and other prohibited items.

In separate operations, BSF troops thwarted additional smuggling attempts on the international border, seizing

approximately 7,600 kilograms of sugar worth about ₹7 lakh, an engine-operated boat, and other contraband.

They also rescued 39 cattle from smugglers.

The apprehended individuals and the seized items have been handed over to local police for further legal action.

ABSU demands provincialisation of Bodo medium institutions under BTR Accord

ABSU president criticises calls for action on key issues including teacher posts & textbook shortages

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, July 21: The influential All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) has been eyeing stern steps and called for immediate action from the state government of Assam regarding the provincialisation of Bodo medium educational institutions across the state to pave the way for a significant improvement in the educational environment.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference held on Sunday at Bodofa House, Baganshali in Kokrajhar, ABSU president Dipen Boro said that the current state of educational support for Bodo medium institutions is inadequate.

Boro highlighted that under Clause 6.3 of the Bodo Territorial Region (BTR) Peace Accord, there is a specific demand for the provincialisation of Bodo medium educational institutions. However, he noted that only 10 colleges have been provincialised in the four years since the agreement's inception, leaving many key educational levels-including lower primary (LP), middle (ME), and higher secondary (HSS)—unad-

The ABSU president pointed out several critical issues, includ-

Bodo medium post graduate teachers (PGTs), despite the appointment of 2,271 Assamese medium PGT teachers in 2021. Additionally, Bodo medium posts have yet to be established at Sarupathar College and Janai Girls' College, and the University of Bodoland has not seen new posts

Moreover, Boro criticised the lack of new departments at Bineswar Brahma Engineering College in Kokrajhar and the absence of teachers in 26 Bodo medium primary schools and 206 institutions operating with a single teacher. He also mentioned that Balipara, Dudhnai, and Baksa Model Colleges have not received necessary Bodo medium posts.

The ABSU leader further said that primary, middle, and high schools have yet to receive adequate textbooks. He warned that if these issues are not resolved promptly, the ABSU would be forced to initiate a democratic movement to press for their de-

Boro said the ABSU was unhappy with the lack of effort from Education minister Dr Ranoj Pegu, who has not been keen to resolve the problems of Bodo medium education for a long time.

He noted that there had been four meetings with the chief minister and the Education minister on educational issues, held on December 19, 2021, April 12, 2023, August 29, 2023, and February 16, 2024, but despite this, nothing has been resolved. He added that the Education minister had invited the ABSU delegation to discuss CM minutes but cancelled three times. On June 19, the Education minister invited them for a discussion at 11:00 am but deferred to 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, and 6:00 pm respectively, and finally cancelled the

meeting. He also mentioned that the minister again invited them on July 2 and July 5 at 4:00 pm, but both meetings were also cancelled for various reasons. He said the Education minister's lackadaisical attitude appeared to be a stumbling block to the development of Bodo medium schools in Assam.

CM meets Governor

Discusses development projects & welfare schemes



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 21: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday called on state Governor Gulab Chand Kataria at Raj Bhavan and discussed various issues pertaining to the development of

The meeting featured discussions on issues to expedite the development of the state. The chief minister apprised the Governor of different government initiatives to bring about the overall development of the state.

The discussion also concentrated on the people-centric issues that are important for the welfare of all sections of the people of the

Moyur Krishna Gogoi sets record with manuscript painting



HT Correspondent
DEMOW, July 21: Moyur Krishna Gogoi, daughter of Purabi Chetia Gogoi from Gudhabil Gaon near Demow, has set a record by creating an Assamese manuscript painting on a canvas measuring approximately 14 feet in length and 4 feet in width.

Moyur Krishna Gogoi dedicated around six months to complete this miniature painting, which depicts various incidents from Lord Krishna's life. She aims to introduce this ancient Assamese art form to the present generation and promote its advancement.

In an interview with this correspondent on Sunday, Moyur Krishna Gogoi expressed her deep passion for the arts, which has led to her inclusion in the Assam Book of Records.

She began the painting project six months ago, inspired by the timeless creations of Mahapurush Sri-

Using the traditional Assamese Manuscript style, she illustrated the events surrounding the birth of Lord Krishna. The painting, titled 'Chitrabhagavata', measures 14 feet long and 4 feet wide.

To gain state-level recognition, she registered with the Assam Book of Records on July 10, submitting photos and videos of her artwork and creative

She is thrilled to announce that her work has been selected for recognition.

On Sunday, Manjit Sharma and his colleagues visited Moyur Krishna Gogoi's home to witness her

They presented her with a phulam gamosa, a certificate, a japi, and a trophy in acknowledgment of

BTR CEM Care Fund provides ₹ 25,000 to Rajaram Narzary's family



HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, July 21: A

cheque of ₹ 25,000 has been extended to the family members of late Rajaram Narzary from Sesapani village under Magurmari VCDC in Kokrajhar district.

The financial aid has been provided from the CEM Care Fund of the government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) to support the kin of late Rajaram. Notably, late Rajaram Narzary and his youngest son, Khwrwmjit Narzary, drowned in a nearby pond on May 31, 2024.

On Saturday evening, on behalf of the CEM of BTR, Pramod Boro, UPPL media secretary Hantigiri Narzary, along with Magurmari primary leaders, handed over the cheque to the family members of late Rajaram Narzary in the presence of villagers.

CEM of BTR, Pramod Boro, wished for the healthy well-being of late Rajaram Narzary's family. The family members and local residents expressed their gratitude to CEM Pramod Boro for extending financial support.

The associations demanded a proper departmental inquiry into the incident within 15 days and appropriate steps to be taken to Bangladeshi national arrested in Hojai

Allegations of anomaly in PMAY

house allotment in Demow

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, July 21: The Assam Tea Tribes Students Association

(ATTSA), Demow branch, and the All Adivasi Students Associ-

ation of Assam (AASAA), Sivasagar District Committee, alleged

an anomaly in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana house allotment

under Demow Development Block in Kharahat Gaon Panchayat.

commissioner of Sivasagar district on July 18.

mysteriously debited afterward.

They submitted two separate memorandums to the district

In the memorandums, they stated that Babul Tanti, a resident

of Kharahat Gaon Panchayat, was allotted a house under the

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) scheme. However, after

a few days, Babul Tanti passed away. Despite his death, his

mother, family, and relatives did not receive the house. They alleged that the funds supplied by the government for the PMAY scheme were credited to Babul Tanti's bank account but were

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, July 21: Sensation prevailed as a Bangladeshi national was arrested in Hojai on Saturday night.

As per information, the Bangladeshi individual was apprehended by the Railway Police while he was roaming under suspicious conditions at Hojai railway station.

The arrested individual has been identified as Aleem Uddin, reportedly a resident of Phulbari in Sylhet district, Bangladesh.

During interrogation, he revealed that he had entered India

Aleem Uddin claimed that he was sold by a Bangladeshi resident to an Indian for ₹ 1 lakh.

A mobile phone bearing a Bangladeshi number was recovered from his possession. Police investigation is ongoing.

65th KSA foundation day celebrated with great fervour

dents Association (KSA) celebrated 65th KSA foundation day seperately by organising programmes at different

places here, on Sunday. The KSA Inglongpho faction (president Mirjeng Kro) celebrated the KSA foundation at Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Memorial Town Hall.

The KSA president Kro addressing the gathering stressed on the need for quality education in this digital age when AI (artificial intelligence) is taking centre stage

"Though the literacy percentage has increased, we need quality. If we don't have qualified persons then if we attained statehood we will not be able to govern? We are more interested in celebrations and events and not about education. With the introduction of AI (artificial intelligence) jobs are absorbed. AI is taking centre stage in every field. Only the best and highly qualified persons will be able to get jobs. It is a challenge for us. We need to develop our

tion for the armed forces at the event 'A

Day with Company Commander' held at

the Kakopathar, Pengri, and Tipong

Army camps in Tinsukia district on Sat-

(KAAC), the youths need to learn to stand on their own feet as the KAAC

cannot provide jobs to everyone. The celebration was attended by executive member (EM), KAAC Madhuram Lekthe; MLA Bidyasing Engleng; district commissioner, Nirola Phang-

chopi and several others. The KSA Thomson Rongpi faction celebrated the day at Diphu Government College playground.

The KSA president, Rongpi thanked the chief executive member (CEM) of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang for declaring the KSA foundation day celebration on July 21 as 'Karbi Student's Day.'

"During the 64th KSA foundation celebration last year at Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Memorial Town Hall and on our request the CEM has declared the KSA foundation day as 'Karbi Student's Day.' It has now been inserted in the KAAC calendar and every year on July 21 it will be celebrated as 'Karbi Student's Day.' I thanked the CEM for complying with our request," he stated.

Assam Police

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, July 21: The 2nd edition of the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Champion awards was held at the Assam Police Institute, on here on Sunday

GP Singh, IPS, DGP, Assam presented awards in 4 categories to 26 police officers, ranging a deputy inspector general of police to sub- inspectors, from across the State.

Additionally, superintendent of Guwahati Medical College Hospital, Nodal Officer for the SC/ST(PoA) Act and the special public prosecutor of the Kamrup Metro Special POCSO Court were also awarded a Special Recognition for their positive role furthering the cause Children's Rights.

The Assam Police instituted the Annual Assam Police Sishu Mitra Champion Awards to recognise and promote the exceptional work of police officers in achieving successes in child-related

Nakul Kurmi nominated for DIPHU, July 21: Factions of Karbi StuKarbi Anglong Autonomous Council honours officers Drunasarya Award' in 2024

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, July 21: Noted teacher, writer, artist, and litterateur Nakul Kurmi of Balipara in Sonitpur district has been nominated for the prestigious 'Drunasarya Award' for the session 2024, instituted by the 'Medhi Dharanidhar-Gunalata Trust' of the Assam State Primary Teachers Association. The award will be presented on July 25 during the Hailakandi session of the organisation.

Born on November 30, 1966, in an economically backward family of the Kurmi community in the tea garden area of Balipara, Kurmi, after his matriculation from Kawaimari Jugal High School with flying colours, started his journey in media. He dedicatedly contributed to several newspapers, including 'Mahajati', 'Natun Dainik', 'Ajir Asam', 'Saptahik Purbanchal', 'Ajir 'Amar Asom', 'Jonojivan', 'Sutradhar', and 'Prantik'. He also served ATTSA for an extended period, giving a new dimension to the organisation for the sociocultural and educational upliftment of the tea tribe community. He became involved in tea tribe organisations such as Assam Chah Janajati Yuba Mansa, Assam Chah Janajati Sahitya Sanskriti Parishad, Assam Sah Janajati Kola Kristi Bikash Sangha, Sonitpur Jila Kurmi Kshatriva Sabha, and the frontline Tea Tribe NGO 'Mandal'. In later years, he joined as a primary school teacher and currently serves as the headmaster of Saru Patgaon LP School in Balipara under the Balipara education block in Sonitpur district. Also recognised as a prominent litterateur across the state, Nakul Kurmi has published several books on important socio-cultural issues of the tea tribe, including his popular volumes 'Isik-Misik' and 'Asamar Prekhyapatat Sah Jangosthir JIban Gatha'.

People from all walks of life in the district take pride in his selfless service to society. It is worth mentioning that the organisation will also confer the prestigious 'Sikshaksree Award' to retired teacher Nabin Chandra Das

of Barihat in Kamrup district. **Tourist Guides Conference**



HT Correspondent

The inaugural Tourist Guides Conference took place on Sunday at the Sivasagar Yuvadal Auditorium, drawing tourist guides from all North East

of the Sivasagar chapter of the association, highlighted that the conference is expected to positively impact the future of the association.

The event included training sessions on various aspects of the profession, with a focus on historically significant tourist spots

Notable attendees included Forest Man Padma Shri Jadav Payeng, chairman of the Assam Tourism Development Board Rituparna Barua, regional director of the Tourism Department, GoI Anil Urao, and Uttaran Museum owner Durlov Bora.

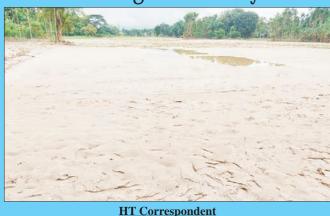
Two teenage boys drown in Jorhat after boat capsizes

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, July 21: Two teenage boys, aged 15 and 17, from Kalyani village drowned at Baligaon Napamua Duboroni Pathar on Sunday when their boat capsized in a deep pit in a paddy field.

According to sources, Shraban Kumar Das and Bishnu Das were returning by boat after collecting milk from a small unorganised dairy farm, or khuti, located at a sandbar of the Brahmaputra river when the boat capsized in the pit. Local residents recovered Shraban Kumar's body immediately, while the body of Bishnu Das was later retrieved by SDRF personnel.

Agricultural devastation strikes Rothduba village amid heavy rainfall



HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, July 21: Rothduba village, located 8 kilometers from Margherita headquarters under the Ketetong gaon panchayat of the 83rd Margherita LAC, has been devastated by continuous rainfall. Floodwaters have transformed this agricultural community into a

On Sunday, this correspondent visited Rothduba, where over 1000 bighas of agricultural land have been buried under silt and sand from the nearby Buridehing river. The villagers are grappling with the aftermath of the floods, which have destroyed their primary source of livelihood.

Babul Hussain, a permanent resident and farmer of Rothduba, shared his distress. His 10 bighas of land are now barren, rendering future cultivation impossible. Despite the dire situation, neither the Margherita MLA, Margherita sub-divisional administration (civil), nor state government Agriculture Department officials have visited

Rothduba's economy relies heavily on paddy and vegetable cultivation, poultry farming, dairy farming, and fishing. The village is a major supplier of vegetables for the entire Margherita constituency. However, the recent floods have ruined these sources of income, leaving the farmers in despair, as stated by Babul Hussain.

Students honour Kargil heroes at Tinsukia district event



HT Correspondent urday. The event was organised by the DIBRUGARH, July 21: Participants Spear Corps to commemorate the silver were left with unforgettable memories, jubilee of Kargil Vijay Diwas. remembrances of heroic deeds during the Kargil War, and a deeper apprecia-

The event paid tribute to the bravery, courage, and selfless sacrifice of the Indian armed forces who fought against all odds in the high-altitude warfare of the Kargil region. It also aimed to foster community engagement and strengthen

the bond between civilians and the armed forces, leaving a lasting impact on the participating schoolchildren.

Led by military personnel at their respective locations, the event offered children a unique experience filled with camaraderie and learning. The event witnessed the participation

of 150 students, 8 teachers, 12 ex-servicemen, and 3 veer naris. The day began with a flag-hoisting ceremony, followed by the national an-

them. Various games and team-building

exercises were designed to cultivate leadership qualities and promote teamwork among the young attendees. A patriotic movie was also screened, followed by a quiz session focusing on the events and heroes of the Kargil War,

which saw enthusiastic participation. The day concluded with a prize distribution ceremony and an informal interaction with Army personnel, providing the children with valuable insights into the ethos and traditions of the Indian

held in Sivasagar

SIVASAGAR, July 21:

states. Gautom Hira, president

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The more sand that has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it. -Jean Paul

Geopolitical turmoil in South Asia

he student protests in Bangladesh over job quotas have turned deadly, with reports of over 100 students killed by police and security forces. Despite the government's suspension of the controversial job quota decision, the unrest persists, indicating that students' grievances extend beyond this single issue. Experts suggest that the turmoil in Bangladesh is part of a broader geopolitical struggle. This region, crucial for India's strategic corridor to Southeast Asia, is experiencing significant unrest, posing severe challenges to India's ambitions. India's plans for a multimodal transportation route, connecting its Northeast to Southeast Asia, are threatened by instability in Bangladesh and recent riots in Manipur. The potential instability in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Manipur could be a deliberate effort to isolate India, hindering its access to Southeast Asia. Historically, the creation of Pakistan isolated India from direct access to Central Asia. Similarly, Afghanistan's ongoing instability, compounded by the contentious India-Pakistan relationship, prevents India from engaging in seamless commerce and trade with Central Asia. These regional conflicts are not isolated issues but significant impediments to India's progress and aspirations to be a global power alongside the US, China, and Russia.

The unrest in Bangladesh should be viewed within the broader context of regional instability affecting India's geopolitical landscape. The unrest, civil war, and regressive governance in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are not merely internal problems but substantial obstacles to India's ambitions. Recent political shifts in Nepal and turmoil in Bangladesh suggest the influence of international geopolitical forces in the region. The current situation in Bangladesh echoes the political changes in Sri Lanka in 2022, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The fall of the Gotabaya Rajapaksa government in Sri Lanka and Imran Khan's government in Pakistan highlight the swift political changes influenced by global powers. India must consider the broader geopolitical context when observing developments in Bangladesh. Governments in this region often rise and fall swiftly, influenced by major global powers. Regional instability can obstruct India's progress and its strategic ambitions in Central and Southeast Asia. India must be prepared to respond proactively.

Crises in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan extend beyond their borders, affecting regional stability and, by extension, India. Afghanistan's healthcare system is collapsing, Myanmar is experiencing severe violence, and refugee crises are escalating, all impacting India. The unrest in Manipur and other states demonstrates the spill-over effect of these regional issues. Dismissing these problems as purely internal is short sighted. They hinder India's strategic vision and economic outreach. India needs a proactive strategy, urging neighbouring countries like Afghanistan and Myanmar to stabilise their internal situations.

Yogi Adityanath shows who is in real control of Uttar Pradesh in 2024

ny lingering doubts on who is in control in Uttar Pradesh went out the window the minute Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath disregarded all opposition to the restrictions placed on eateries along Kanwar Yatra routes, including the objections from NDA allies JD-U and the RLD, and ordered that the advisory asking eateries along 'Kanwar routes' to display name-plates with "true names" has been extended to the entire state of Uttar Pradesh. No sooner this was announced, neighbouring BJP-ruled Uttarakhand also followed

"The 'Nameplate' will have to be put on the food shops on the Kanwar routes across UP. The decision was taken to maintain the purity of the faith of Kanwar pilgrims. Action will also be taken against those selling products with Halal certification," the CMO of Uttar Pradesh issued his own advisory.

So, who is in control in Uttar Pradesh is pretty much settled. The answer is Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya is free to take up Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav's "Monsoon offer" and defect to the SP if a 100 MLAs are ready to jump ship with him.

 \bar{T} wo, there is no doubt



that the BJP's situation on the eve of the bypolls in 10 UP assembly constituencies is a matter of concern for the saffron party. Therefore, the extreme steps to appease the Hindu votebank. Yogi

Yogi dou-

bled down

Adityanath is desperate. have come down heavily
On July
19, the DEGREE OF THOUGHT
On BJP and

By: Sushil Kutty

on the state government's earlier "farman" that business establishments, particularly eateries and general merchants selling food and confectioneries, should mention prominently the "true names of owners and employees". Issued by the Muzaffarnagar Police, the advisory was a matter of necessity and one that

brooked no opposition.

But opposition was inevitable. Yogi Adityanath was called all sorts of names including "communal" and "Hitler". AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi said "Hitler's soul has entered Yogi Adityanath"

with Akhilesh Yadav, and spokespersons of the Congress and other INDI-Alliance partners questioning the BJP's motives.

Not just INDI-Alliance parties, even NDA allies, have come down heavily

Chief

Minister

Y o g i Adityanath, flaying his intentions. The JD-U has spoken against the Yogi and Union minister Jayant Chaudhary's RLD has also voiced its utter disgust. Muzaffarnagar falls in the influence-shetra of the RLD and Jayant's party is disappointed.

But who cares? Not the BJP, and definitely not Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The monk is fighting an intense battle that aims to unseat him; he has enemies within the state unit of the BJP also, notably in the form of Deputy Chief Minister Keshay Prasad Maurya.

who thinks he will make a better Chief Minister than a saffron-clad ascetic, and possibly Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Maurya has an open invitation from SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav to dump the BJP and join forces with the Samajwadi Party to form a government to replace Yogi Adityanath's outfit at the helm of Uttar Pradesh. Like said, the Yogi is hard-up for choice and he will go to any extent to disregard the writing on the wall, if at all there is a writing on the wall.

The opposition hasn't stopped haranguing the Yogi government and the for fanning the "Hindu-Muslim narrative" in the name of "true and false names". What is wrong if a Muslim runs a dhaba/restaurant christens the joint "Shiva Hotel" "Laxmi or Dhaba"? Why should the Muslim man who sells fruits from his handcart have to display his name in big bold letters, why cannot he "just sell" and go home?

Well, it is 'Kanwar' season and the 240 km stretch is their route to nirvana. Their devotion to Lord Shiva entails restrictions including in the matter of food habits. Just like the Muslim will insist on "Halal", the 'Kanwar' should be given his 'Satvik diet". Also, there are reels/videos in the

public domain of Muslim vendors/dhaba workers "spitting on roti, dal and anything in between".

The Muzaffarnagar Police says the advisory is to ensure that no situation is created for violent altercations to break out between 'Kanwar' and Muslimowned eateries run with the nameplate proclaiming they were "Hindu joints" This is not imagination but reality. Muslim eatery owners run their establishment with fake Hindu names and there have been innumerable run-ins between 'Kanwars' and dhaba owners.

The halal/satwik argument falls on deaf ears, neither side willing to give an inch. Fact is, the police have to intervene whenever differences spill out on the roads and then it is a free for all, with the Muslims alleging that their very existence was under threat. What will their children eat when they cannot earn because of a "Hindu boycott" of Muslim commercial establishments?

For the political parties and their surrogates and proxies it doesn't matter who is suffering and who is the victim and who is the perpetrator? With elections as frequent as they're in a bustling electoral democracy, political parties are forever looking for issues to divide and polarize the electorate. The Hindu-Muslim narra-

public domain of Muslim tive fits both sides in the

tussle for votes. The 'Kanwar' trudge the 240 kilometre on the highway and they will be on the road for a month at least. For the BJP. they're vote-bank. Ditto on the other side of the electoral highway, the Muslim vote-banks of the Congress and the Samaiwadi Party; the Bahujan Samaj Party and the RLD, as also of the JD-U of Nitish Kumar, all of them surviving on the largesse of the Muslims who are forced to hide their real names and use fake Hindu names to eke out a living.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is with his back to the wall. Elements within his own party are gunning for him along with powerful adversaries in the Opposition. Defeat in the 10 bypolls will end with the epitaph, "He Went With the Kanwar Yatra!" So, what does the under siege Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh do? Yogi Adityanath refused to listen to cries of secular outrage; to Owaisi calling him "Hitler" and to the JD-U and RLD's opposition; to disregarding the BJP's ex-Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Nagyi. who said the state government was practicing "untouchability" and religious ostracism in the name of 'Kanwar Yatra". Chief Minister Yogi Aditvanath has his back to the wall. (IPA Service)

India's inclusive growth budget amid global challenges and domestic reforms

By: Dipak Kurmi

The upcoming first Budget of the new government unfolds against a backdrop of persistent geopolitical tensions. Conflicts such as the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas dispute show no signs of resolution. While the domestic economy maintains a steady growth trajectory at around 8%, its outlook hinges significantly on global stability. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is banking on stable global oil prices and the recovery of Western economies to bolster India's export prospects. Ensuring uninterrupted international trade routes will be crucial to averting potential cost escalations. Clearly, external challenges threaten to overshadow India's growth narrative. Therefore, the Budget must prioritize bolstering infrastructure and services, alongside robust support for agriculture and rural sectors.

In the realm of infrastructure, policymakers should prioritize sustaining the significant growth in capital expenditure seen in recent years. While the 2024-25 Interim Budget moderated the earlier 30% increase to about 16.9%, there remains a compelling case for a more substantial hike, given India's substantial infrastructure deficit. While immediate skilled job creation may not be extensive, the long-term impact on employment is undeniable. Moreover, the Reserve Bank of India's transfer of Rs 2.11 lakh crore to the Central Government provides ample room to maintain this course through the current fiscal year.

The Budget must also focus on improving the investment climate for the private sector, which has trailed behind public sector investment. While existing policies such as production-linked incentive schemes are set to bolster manufacturing, further simplification of procedures is imperative.

Although the regulatory environment has evolved significantly since the economic reforms of 1991, comparisons with past achievements are no longer sufficient. India must now benchmark itself against other emerging economies like Vietnam and Indonesia, which offer more streamlined and attractive investment frameworks. In contrast, India's current attractiveness to multinational corporations is waning.

Domestic investors face challenges such as elevated capital and logistics expenses. However, the primary obstacle for both local and international investors continues to be the multitude of approvals required to initiate new projects. These hurdles are predominantly managed at the state or even local municipal levels. Enhancing the ease of doing business at this grassroots level must be prioritized as part of future reform initiatives. There are signs that these considerations are already underway, as indicated by the economic statement accompanying the 2024-25 Interim Budget released in February. The statement highlighted efforts to enhance governance at the block, district, and village levels. Additionally, states were provided a one-time loan of Rs 75,000 crore to support reforms aimed at promoting growth and development. Key areas of focus included health, education, skill development, and land acquisition

A potential hurdle in this strategy is that not all states may cooperate despite the availability of loans for implementing reforms. While BJP-governed states are likely to adhere to directives from the Centre, other states may not respond similarly. As a result, the effectiveness of launching next-generation reforms could be somewhat limited. Meanwhile, certain states, particularly in the southern region, have already streamlined their regulatory frameworks. This has attracted significant investor interest, with tech giants like Apple and Microsoft opting to establish new projects primarily in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. It's crucial for other states to study and adopt similar policies to replicate this success.

Given the circumstances, it's imperative to allocate budgetary provisions specifically for education and skill development. While job creation remains a top priority for the government, many sectors are grappling with a shortage of qualified professionals. Moreover, there exists a significant disparity between the education imparted and the precise skills demanded by industries. While long-term policy solutions are necessary to address this challenge, the forthcoming Budget can play a crucial role by ensuring sufficient funding for skill development institutes.

Furthermore, there must be a heightened focus on education. While India boasts excellent higher education institutions such as the IITs and IIMs, primary and secondary education faces significant challenges. It's crucial for both the Central and state governments to collaborate effectively to ensure that our vast, young population is adequately prepared to join the workforce.

Additionally, the Finance Ministry should increase its support for sectors like travel and tourism, acknowledging their substantial contributions to GDP and employment. The hospitality industry, in particular, advocates for infrastructure status for hotels to enhance access to favorable financing and attract increased investments. Despite recovering strongly from the impact of Covid-19, targeted assistance could further amplify job creation within this sector.

Regarding agricultural policy, there's a pressing need to foster agro-industries in rural regions. Incentives should be provided to facilitate their establishment, alongside developing systems that enable farmers to access retail markets directly. Urgent measures are required to create additional income opportunities and essential infrastructure in rural areas. Failing to address these issues promptly risks further widening the urbanrural divide in the years ahead.

The new government faces a significant challenge as it formulates the Budget, despite achieving moderate GDP growth in recent years. Ensuring inclusive growth is paramount to ensure that all sections of society can share in the benefits. The recent elections highlight increasing aspirations nationwide. While short-term social welfare policies are crucial, they must pave the way for sustainable long-term development. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

'BJP will work only for Hindus' slogan gaining momentum against Modi's 'sabka sath'

By: Arun Srivastava

enior BJP leaders engaging in solecism in Uttar Pradesh and Bengal certainly cannot be described as factional feud. Instead it unravels the contagious malaise that afflicts the party, endangering its current level of functioning. It may sound to be baloney, but the party imbibing the Hindutva cause has never been faced with this nature of crisis; emergence of rebellion against the top leadership of the party. There is no doubt it has deeper and wider implication and dynamics than it appears to be. It ought to be not forgotten that these two states had played crucial role in defeating Narendra Modi and shattering the myth of his "Modi's Guarantees".

Though simmering discontent against Narendra Modi and his brand of politics was discernible for quite some time in the two states, no one ever imagined that it would surface so soon. While in UP, the BJP chief minister Yogi Adityanath did not hesitate in putting the blame on Modi for the defeat of the party in Lok Sabha election, the Leader of opposition in Bengal assembly, outright rejected the political line of Modi. In UP the leaders engaged in worst nature of attrition and accusations in the presence of their national president J P Nadda.

Significantly in both the states, the leaders chose the state executive meet to blurt out against Modi. Yogi blamed that overconfidence of the national leaders has impacted BJP's electoral performance, pointing out how the opposition, previously dispirited, now appears rejuvenated after their electoral gains. He underlined the ambiguous stand of the party leadership in the matter of reservation which helped the opposition to push "fake narratives". He also said "When we assume with such confidence that we are winning, naturally we have to pay the price. The opposition, which had lost heart before the election, is now working with a renewed spring in their sten"

The deputy chief minister, Keshav Prasad Maurya nevertheless put hard efforts to defend Modi and his politics; he could not convince the house and carry the members with his argument. His logic sounded simply rhetoric: "In BJP's scheme, the organization always takes precedence over government and it is, therefore, incumbent upon all ministers, MLAs, and public representatives to respect workers and take care of their dignity. I am a party worker first and Deputy CM second."

Maurya a protégé of Amit Shah attempted countering Yogi's accusation against central leadership, obliquely Modi, for its defeat in the Lok Sabha. The deliberations at the BJP's state executive made it abundantly clear that party is vertically split on the line of pro-Modi and anti-Modi. Leaders confide that Maurya was fighting a proxy war against Yogi with the backing from Delhi.

Coinciding with the Lucknow meet, in Calcutta, senior BJP leader and leader of the opposition in assembly, Suvendu Adhikari, brazenly asked BJP workers, at the extended state executive committee meeting at the Science City auditorium in front of central BJP leaders, party's Bengal minder Sunil Bansal and Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who chaired the meeting, to discard Narendra Modi's Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas slogan and replace it with his slogan "Jo Hamare Sath, Hum Unkey Sath".

Though he rejected Modi's line, he advised the party leadership to aggressively pursue Hindutva politics, making it clear that he was not opposed to Modi's politics of Hindutva. He said the party should stand by none but Hindus, as only they

vote for the BJP, Adhikari also suggested the dissolution of the party's minority wing. "We will save Hindus and save the Constitution. I also spoke for the nationalist Muslims earlier. But in future I will speak only of Hindus. I will not say that anymore. Rather, Stop (saying) Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas. There is no need for a Minority Morcha."

In 2014, Prime Minister Modi had coined the Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas slogan, and in 2019 he added Sabka Vishwas (everybody's trust) to it. Just before 2024 Lok Sabha elections, he added Sabka Prayas (everybody's effort) to it. Adhikari, a turncoat, setting his own parallel political line and outright rejecting Modi brand of politics has to be seen and evaluated in proper perspective. He is certainly not Yogi of Uttar Pradesh. Yogi has his own support base and even then he cannot think of openly challenging his authority. Obviously question arises where from Adhikari got the motivation to question Modi.

Insiders maintain that with Bengal attaining high order of political significance, a keen rivalry has emerged in the RSS and the BJP leadership to control the politics of the state. RSS through its sakhas has been active in the state for quite long and has set up nearly 2000 units. The state has witnessed phenomenal rise of RSS. It has also launched special programmes for youths to connect them with the RSS' ideology. Most of the growth of the RSS has been noticed in the bordering districts. RSS has also been able to make its presence felt in districts like Malda and Uttar Dinajpur, comprising about 51% and 50% Muslim populations respectively.

RSS is worried at the existing political situation in the state. The leaders confess that state has not witnessed such an anti-Hindu government like the present TMC rule. Hindus here have realised that the RSS is the only option to protect their rights and their religious identities in West Bengal. Exploiting the alleged "appeasement" politics of the Trinamool Congress government RSS has been able to increase its membership in the state by almost 50% in the last ten years. One thing is clear before the RSS leadership that in order to expand in the state and have a deep anchor it must rope in the Hindus. Suvendu by rejecting the line of Modi has literally endorsed the policy of RSS.

In BIP circles, while Adhikari is known to be

In BJP circles, while Adhikari is known to be a protégé of Amit Shah, Yogi Adityanath is supposed to be close to RSS. For last couple of years Modi and Amit Shah have been trying to replace him but could not succeed in their mission as RSS favoured his continuance. In RSS he is rated as the much precious Hindu face, even more relevant than Modi. A section of the top RSS leadership nurse the feeling that whatever seat BJP could win in UP owes to Yogi. But this is not endorsed by some of the Modi-Amit loyalists. They accuse Yogi of alienating the Dalits and OBCs and they also attribute the shift of this section of the voters to Yogi's policies of relying on upper caste Hindus, especially Rajputs.

Bansal and Khattar not questioning Adhikari or stopping him from asking him to refrain from criticising the political line of Modi has caused consternation in the party circles. Though state president Sukanta Majumdar did not endorse Adhikari's comment, claiming that he was only a delegate to the meeting and had no role in fixing the party's policy, he did not question his act. He tried to play safe by saying "BJP considers Muslims like poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam as assets of our country

The BJP will continue with this policy. What Suvendu Adhikari said is his personal opinion

and not the party's stand. Modi said in a meeting in Hyderabad last year that we would reach out to the Muslims, especially those who are backward, without expecting their votes."

It is really inconceivable that a person like Suvendu could muster courage to challenge the political line of the supreme leader of the party. It is completely against the political ethos as well as political line of the central BJP leadership. It is indeed shocking for Narendra Modi that he is forced to hear from his party leaders in Bengal that his slogan will not continue any more.

Though at the meet some leaders dismissed Suvendu's alternate line, the sources maintain that by and large all the leaders nurse the belief that Modi and Shah have failed the state. Both these Gujarati leaders could not comprehend the Bengali ethics and culture and tried to bulldoze the people of the state using their own perception. They were more concerned of promoting the business interest of their Gujarati businessmen. Similar feeling also reverberates the political corridor. The local entrepreneurs and even the sugar producers were feeling dejected.

The immediate reason for challenging the authority and leadership of Modi owes to two factors; first holding of assembly elections in Jharkhand, Haryana and Maharashtra. The RSS and the anti-Modi BJP leaders do not want Modi to choose the candidates as he has been doing in the past. Second, they also desire that the name of the new president to replace Nadda must be announced before August, while Modi and Shah intend to drag till December. This would help them to have their say in choosing the candidates.

Significantly Adityanath even within this crisis convened a meeting of his ministers to strategize for the upcoming by-elections. Both deputy chief ministers, Maurya and Brijesh Pathak, remained absent. This meeting acquired more importance for the reason that byelections for 10 assembly seats in the will take place in August. The main question that has cropped up is who will select the candidates; Modi or Yogi. During the meeting, responsibilities for each seat were assigned to three ministers, to ensure focused efforts in each constituency.

While both Yogi and Adhikari are against Modi's sabka sath slogan,, they are desperate to emerge as the new face of anti-Muslim politics. In UP vendors have been asked to display their names in front of shops while the procession of the Kanwarias passes through the streets. It reminisces the infamous action of Hitler when Jews in Nazi Germany and German-occupied Europe were made to wear the yellow Star of David during World War II to prominently display their Jewish identity before the public in the years leading up to the Holocaust. AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi compared the move to Apartheid and Judenboykott, the boycott of Jewish businesses in Hitler's Germany.

Adhikari's line echos the same spirit and political line. He has been candid "We know that Muslims do not vote for us. Obviously there is no need to run after them". In future he would adopt a hard anti-Muslim line implying that Bengal may witness communal clashes and social unrest. It is for the first time Suvendu said something like this. It makes explicit that BJP is striving for alternative space. Hard Hindutva failed the BJP in 2021as the leadership did adopt a mellowed stand towards Muslims. The mood of the deliberations at the two state committees and observations of the leaders leave no doubt that RSS is no more willing to allow space to Modi to project himself as the Hindu Hridaya Samrat. (IPA Service)



Smokers at a greater risk of PAD – Stents can treat the condition

By: Dr. Pradeep Muley

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eripheral artery disease is a common circulatory problem in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to the limbs. The legs don't receive enough blood flow to keep up with demand of day to day walking. This causes symptoms, most notably leg pain when walking called claudication which disappears after a few minutes of rest but again pain starts when person starts walking.

What causes PAD?

Atherosclerosis - a condition where fatty deposits (plaques) build up in the artery walls, thereby narrowing the lumen and reducing blood flow. Less commonly, the cause of peripheral artery disease may be blood vessel inflammation, injury to the limb, unusual anatomy of ligaments or muscles pressing on the artery, or radiation exposure. Other factor that raises the risk of PAD

- Smoking • Diabetes
- Obesity (a body mass index over 30)
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol · A family history of peripheral artery disease, heart dis-
- ease or stroke • High levels of homocysteine, a protein component that helps build and maintain tis-

People who smoke or have diabetes have the greatest risk of developing peripheral artery

What are the associated

complications? • Critical limb ischemia -This condition begin as open sores that don't heal, an injury, or an infection of the foot or leg that progress and cause tissue death (gangrene), sometimes requiring amputation of the affected limb. Stroke and heart attack -

The atherosclerosis that causes

the signs and symptoms of peripheral artery disease can also build up in arteries supplying blood to the heart and brain.

What are the symptoms? • Claudication - Painful cramping in hip, thigh or calf muscles after certain activities. such as walking or climbing

- · Leg numbness or weakness, Sores on toes, feet or legs that won't heal
- foot, especially when compared with the other side

• Coldness in lower leg or

• Hair loss or slower hair growth on feet and legs

• Slower growth of toenails and Shiny skin on legs • No pulse or a weak pulse in

legs or feet

• Erectile dysfunction in men If peripheral artery disease progresses, pain may occur even at rest or when lying down (ischemic rest pain). It may be intense enough to disrupt the sleep.

Early diagnosis is the key to treatment

Physical exam – the doctor

pulse below a narrowed area of your artery, whooshing sounds (bruits) over your arteries that can be heard with a stethoscope, evidence of poor wound healing in the area where your blood flow is restricted, and decreased blood pressure in vour affected limb. The following tests may be done to intervene the condition -

Ankle-brachial index (ABI) - It compares the blood pressure in your ankle with the blood pressure in your arm.

- Ultrasound Doppler ultrasound evaluates the blood flow through the blood vessels and identifies blocked or narrowed arteries
- Angiography By injecting a dye (contrast material) into the blood vessels, the doctor can view blood flow through the arteries as it happens, using imaging techniques, such as X-ray imaging or magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) or computerized

tomography (CTA).

Catheter angiography is a more invasive procedure that involves guiding a catheter through an artery in groin to the affected area and injecting the dye. Although minimally invasive, this type of angiography gives best visualization and allows for simultaneous diagnosis and treatment - finding the narrowed area of a blood vessel and then widening it with a dilating procedure or administering medication to improve blood flow

How is it treated?

• **Medication** – medicines are provided to prevent blood clot and improve the blood flow. With the use of vasodilators, the aim is to reduce the blood pressure (under 130/80 mm Hg), lower cholesterol levels (<100 mg/dL) and control pain and other symptoms.

• Thrombolytic Therapy – In case the blood clot is blocking an artery the doctor may into the affected artery to break

• **Angioplasty** – this method is most commonly performed in cases of short segment block. In this procedure, a small (catheter) is threaded through a blood vessel to the affected artery where, a small balloon on the tip of the catheter is inflated to reopen the artery and flatten the blockage into the artery wall, while at the same time stretching the artery open to increase blood flow. Then a stent is inserted in the artery to help keep it open.

• Bypass surgery – This is done in case of long segment of blocked or narrowed artery. A graft bypass is created using a vessel from another part of the body or a blood vessel made of synthetic fabric. (The author is the Head Interventional Radiologist, Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj, New

Lifestyle Tips to Prevent Heart Diseases and Promote Heart Health

By: Dr. Bimal Chhajer

n a world increasingly grappling with the repercussions of a global pandemic, it's easy to forget about another silent killer that continues to claim countless lives every year-heart diseases. The recent data suggests that around 1.2 crore people have been infected globally, with a mortality rate of 5.4 lakh. India accounts for 7.4 lakh cases with a mortality of 20,000 till now. The statistics, when compared to the impact of Coronary Artery Diseases (CAD) and other heart ailments, seem evidently low.

On an average, around 20 crore people succumb to some form of heart ailment with a mortality rate of 10%, accounting for 2 crore lives lost. India, as the present-

day leader in terms of the number of heart disease patients across the world, attributes to a massive 6 people being diagnosed every year. As the num-

bers continue to rise exponentially, an estimate of 9000 per day seems

problems, which, in this current scenario, seems to be avoidable.

Tip 1: Natural Bypass Technique - A the improved cardiac status. better alternative

Hospitals in India perform more than 2 lakh open heart surgeries annually, and the number is increasing annually by 25%. However, the cases of heart attacks are not decreasing. This raises a significant question about the use of unnecessary Angioplasties and Bypass surgeries in India and the 10,000 Heart Hospital Industry driven by greedy Heart Surgeons and Interventional Cardiologists.

In India. more than 5 lac stents are being put every year, and some 60,000 Bypass surgeries are being done in the heart Hospitals, with 85% of them done on stable heart patients – which can be easily avoided. Present-day Cardiologists are in the wrong track by emphasizing more use of Bypass surgery or Angioplasty, medicines, emergency treatments – but they are overlooking the real cause of heart attack and heart disease.

Tip 2: External Counter Pulsation

(ECP) - A Natural Bypass Technique External Counter Pulsation (ECP), also known as Natural Bypass technique, is an approved mechanical process that dilates blood vessels and enables the body to grow new blood vessels, much like bypass and stem cell therapy. Most patients can

walk longer dishave fewer episodes of chest pain, and require less medication after the therapy.

The therapy results in better quality of life, decreased chest pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, tiredness, and a significant

to lose their lives suffering from heart improvement in exercise tolerance and energy. Medication is reduced in almost all patients, and advanced tests can confirm

> Tip 3: Lifestyle Management is Key Yoga and Diet-based Lifestyle manage-

ment, along with Optimum Medical Management, hold the key to preventing heart diseases. These approaches are not only highly effective for maintaining a healthy heart but also for preventing the need for Bypass surgery or Angioplasty. SAAOL (Science and Art of Living) has been treat-

ing heart patients successfully for the last

proven correct by the most modern medical research. To avoid heart attacks, all patients need is thorough training on lifestyle and the appropriate use of Allo-

pathic medicines. Tip 4: Zero Oil Cooking - A Heart-**Healthy Diet**

Zero Oil Cooking is a crucial aspect of heart health. Triglycerides, a form of oil, can form blockages in the coronary arteries, leading to various cardiac ailments. By eliminating oil from our daily diet, we can indirectly protect ourselves from these

Fortunately, there are more than 1000 recipes that don't require oil and are equally tasty. Nature has packed some fats/triglycerides in every food like rice, wheat, pulses, fruits, and vegetables to meet our basic fat requirements.

Tip 5: Safety Circle - A Comprehensive Approach The concept of 'Reversal of heart dis-

eases' through regular monitoring of heart health via a 'SAAOL Safety Circle' can guide every adult in the country to take steps to reverse and prevent heart disease. This technique has benefited over 2 lakh heart patients in the past 24 years with non-invasive treatment modules like lifestyle change, US FDA approved EECP, and a combination of Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, and Detoxification. The SAAOL Safety Circle has three circles and 12 factors to control, with six parameters related to medical and four each related to a healthy diet and lifestyle habits.

The burden of heart diseases on society and individuals is immense, but it is not insurmountable. By adopting these lifestyle tips, we can take proactive steps to prevent heart diseases and promote heart health. It's time to prioritize our well-being and make the necessary changes to protect our hearts from this silent epidemic that claims millions of lives every year. Remember, a healthy heart leads to a happier and longer life (The author is the Director of SAAOL

How is digital technology affecting our kids' sleep



By: Simon Smith

arents have been worried about their kids' sleep since time immemorial. And for valid reasons — good sleep is an essential part of a healthy childhood.

Sleep is critical for physical growth, but also for many other aspects of brain development, learning and the development of important social

Children observe, experience or are taught things during the day, but they really only 'learn' overnight while they're asleep.

In an increasingly digital world full of ubiquitous devices, the impact of technology on kids' leep is of particular concern.

More children are using devices, and at an earlier age. This raises many questions about the costs and benefits of technology for healthy development. On one hand, parents and carers want children

to learn as much as they can, be up-to-date and competent with technology, and be connected in new and meaningful ways with their families and On the other hand, increased screen time seems

to be linked with decreased physical activity. poorer overall health, an increase in mental health and wellbeing concerns and poorer sleep.

Poor sleep has many costs. In the short term, tiredness can lead to irritability, meltdowns and poor concentration, and in the long term it can lead to increased risks for a range of health, social and wellbeing challenges.

It is still not clear exactly how technology can impact kids' sleep, but researchers have some ideas to test out

What role does technology play in your home?

Technology is not a new visitor to our homes. It has been evolving over time - at least from the advent of artificial lighting to radio, television, gaming consoles and podcasts. Even more traditional activities such as reading

might have sometimes carried on into the night. Kids' sleep has been a concern of parents right across this period. Children's sleep can be perplexing because it changes so much from birth

through to the teenage years. The development from the almost 24-hour, anytime sleep of babies, through to regular naps in toddlers, then the end of daytime naps happens at

different times for different children. Children need a lot more sleep than adults do, and getting enough sleep at the right time can be

challenging when there are a lot of demands on the time of children and their families. Children and young people grow up in all sorts of different environments, places and circum-

stances. They also have their own individual personalities and preferences. At the same time, very significant global challenges - from pandemics to wars to climate

change - will have impacts on their lives. This means it can be difficult to know if technology is 'good' for a particular child, let alone every child. Instead, it might be important to first focus on

the 'ingredients of life' such as good nutrition, plenty of activity and skills building, strong social relationships and regular and sufficient sleep.

After that, the role of technology in relaxation, learning and connection might be easier to see.

Using technology to support healthy childhoods Researchers are trying to understand the role of technology in a healthy childhood. Scientists are studying the way sleep changes across the early years, and the major family and social factors that interact with sleep, so that they can explain to parents and carers what to expect.

They are examining family routines at home in great detail to understand exactly what is happening in the hours before bedtime. For example, technology could be used as part of 'family time', it could be used alone or with siblings. Parents may find it relaxes their children or alternatively wakes them up.

Researchers are also looking very carefully at the type and timing of light emitted by digital devices used by children, in the context of the rest of their day. While the light emitted by screens may be a

concern, the role of bright artificial lighting in the home and other light sources such as TVs and street lighting also needs to be considered. Parents and carers also need to think about light

during the day: in the home, early education settings or at school. It is possible that some children aren't getting enough light at the right times. The timing of light sends important signals to

our bodies. We expect relatively bright days and dark nights. It is more common now to experience relatively dim days, with little outdoor light, and artificial lighting in the home or from the street extended well after sunset. How technology can make kids' sleep worse

There are three main theories about the ways technology might make kids' sleep worse. The first is increased exposure to light in the evening. Most screens emit light and some devices are held quite close to our eyes.

Our internal body clocks, or circadian rhythms, more or less depend on bright days and dark nights to keep time. Light at night, even in small doses, can surprise this system.

Children have strong body clocks, but are also very sensitive to light.

The type of light emitted by devices, often quite blue light, seems especially powerful in its effects. This can lead to later sleep times, disruption of the body clock and increased risk of health prob-

The second theory is about displacement. Using technology at night is an additional, and

often very engaging, activity. Spending time on screens makes it harder to fit in dinner, a bath, reading time or a regular bedtime wind-down routine. This can mean that sleep is pushed later just to fit everything else in.

This is hardly a new idea - it's likely today's parents were yesterday's children reading books by torchlight under the covers

The third theory is about the conflict between the technology-based activity itself and the need to relax and drift off to sleep.

Some digital content can increase attention and focus. Some of it can be distressing, confusing or upsetting. If this is happening in the hours before bedtime, then it is another signal to delay sleep time. The challenge here is to measure and understand these emotional aspects of digital content, how it is used and how it is experienced by chil-

How to help your kids get a better night's

It's now understood that sleep is just as important as diet and exercise for children's development and wellbeing. And research has revealed some of the fundamentals of good sleep: a safe and secure bedroom environment, not too hot or cold, not too noisy, and nice and dark is a good starting point.

A regular wake-up time and a regular bedtime routine help set and reinforce our body clocks. Researchers are also thinking of ways to use technology to help rather than hinder kids' sleep.

For example, technology could include alerts about bedtime and winding down time for children. It could suggest 'pro-sleep' content that isn't going to hype them up or upset them just before they need to fall asleep.

Technology could interact with smart homes and adjust lighting levels to reinforce sleep and wake times automatically.

It could also be used to connect networks of young 'sleep champions' together or it could involve new programs for children to learn experiment and collaborate in developing better sleep habits. There's never going to be a one-size-fitsall answer to helping our kids get a better night's sleep but there are things parents can do to help that don't involve ridding their homes of all digital devices. (Courtesy: Down To Earth)

25 years, and its theory is now being Minimally invasive techniques revolutionize Colon Cancer treatment



By: Dr. Neeraj Chaudhary

olon cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, is a prevalent form of cancer affecting the large intestine. It arises when abnormal cells in the colon or rectum multiply uncontrollably, forming tumours. Awareness of risk factors, early diagnostic methods, and modern treatment options, including minimally invasive surgeries, can significantly improve outcomes for patients.

Risk Factors

Several factors can elevate the risk of developing colon cancer. Age is a significant factor, with individuals over 50 being more susceptible. A family history of colon cancer or polyps also increases the risk. Dietary habits, particularly a diet high in red and processed meats and low in fibre, are contributors. Chronic inflammatory bowel diseases like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis heighten the risk, as do genetic conditions such as Lynch syndrome and familial adenomatous polyposis. Lifestyle factors like smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, obesity, and a sedentary lifestyle further amplify the risk.

Diagnostic Modalities

Early detection of colon cancer is critical for effective treat-

ment. Several diagnostic tools and procedures are available: Colonoscopy is the most common and effective screening tool for colorectal cancer, involving the insertion of a long, flexible tube with a camera into the rectum to examine the entire colon. The Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) is a non-invasive method that detects hidden blood in stool, serving as an early indicator of cancer. Sigmoidoscopy, similar to a colonoscopy but focused

on the rectum and lower colon, provides a targeted examination. CT Colonography, or Virtual Colonoscopy, employs CT scanning to produce detailed images of the colon and rectum, aiding in the detection of abnormalities.

Role of Screening

Screening is a powerful tool in the fight against colon cancer. Regular screening can detect polyps before they become cancerous and catch cancer at an early stage when treatment is more likely to be successful. The American Cancer Society recommends that individuals at average risk begin regular screening at age 45. Those with a family history or other risk factors may need to start earlier. Options for screening include colonoscopies, stool tests, and CT colonography.

Minimally Invasive Surgery Advancements in surgical techniques have made minimally invasive surgeries like laparoscopic and robotic surgery viable options for treating colon cancer. These methods offer several benefits over traditional open surgery: Laparoscopic Surgery: This involves small incisions through

which a camera and surgical instruments are inserted. The sur-

geon views the procedure on a monitor, allowing precise move-

ments. Benefits include reduced pain, shorter hospital stays, and quicker recovery times. Robotic Surgery: Similar to laparoscopic surgery, robotic surgery uses a robotic system controlled by the surgeon. The robot's precision allows for even finer movements than laparoscopic surgery, potentially improving outcomes. Patients often experience less pain, minimal scarring, and a faster return to normal activities. Minimally invasive techniques are particularly beneficial for patients as they reduce the trauma associated with surgery,

lower the risk of complications, and promote quicker healing.

These approaches are becoming increasingly common as tech-

nology and surgical expertise advance. Colon cancer remains a significant health concern, but understanding the risk factors, utilizing early diagnostic modalities, and embracing modern surgical techniques can greatly enhance patient outcomes. Regular screening is vital for early detection and prevention, and minimally invasive surgeries offer promising advancements in treatment. With ongoing research and technological progress, the fight against colon cancer continues to evolve, offering hope and improved quality of life for those affected. (The author is the Director Robotic and Laparoscopic GI-HPB Surgery and GI-HPB Oncology, Yatharth Hospital,

World 6 THE HILLS TIMES

14 Indian nationals trapped in cybercrime scam in Cambodia rescued

Indian citizens trapped in a cybercrime scam in Cambodia have been rescued and efforts are on to repatriate them, the Indian embassy in Cambodia has said.

The Indian embassy in Cambodia in collaboration with the authorities got the 14 Indian citizens released and they are being looked after by the Cambodian side, the embassy said in a post on X on Sat-

In an official press release, the embassy in Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh said it has facilitated the rescue and repatriation of over 650 Indian citizens who had fallen victim to fraudulent job offers that lure them into cybercrime opera-

It said the embassy provided specific leads to the Cambodian police leading to their rescue. The

mer US president Donald Trump in

his first campaign rally since sur-

viving an assassination attempt has

dismissed concerns raised by crit-

ics that he is a threat to democracy,

telling a large crowd in Michigan

that he "took a bullet for democ-

In the rally in Michigan on Sat-

urday, Trump, who is the Republi-

can presidential nominee for the

November 5 elections, was joined

More than 12,000 people piled

"They keep saying he's a threat

into the Van Andel Arena in Grand

Rapids to see him and his running

to democracy. I'm saying, "What

the hell did I do to democracy?'

Last week I took a bullet for

democracy," Trump said, referenc-

ing an often-used Democrat talk-

"What did I do against democ-

racy? Crazy," Trump, 78, said

amidst applause from thousands of

Trump's comments come one

week since the former president

survived an assassination attempt

while campaigning in Pennsylva-

his supporters.

by his running mate J D Vance.



rescued individuals are currently being cared for by an NGO working in collaboration with Cambodia's Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation.

Trump says he 'took a bullet for democracy'

stage. One attendee and the shooter

died during the attack while two

about Project 2025, which his ri-

vals and the opposition Demo-

cratic Party claim is an initiative

about it. But what they do is mis-

information and disinformation,"

he said, as he distanced himself

Overseen by the conservative

Heritage Foundation, the multi-

pronged initiative includes a de-

tailed blueprint for the next

Republican president to usher in a

sweeping overhaul of the execu-

"I shouldn't be here right now,

but something very special hap-

Bibi, the wife of incarcerated for-

mer Pakistan prime minister Imran

Khan, has expressed grave con-

cerns about her husband's safety in

Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, alleging

that he was kept in inhumane con-

ditions and given contaminated

Speaking informally to journal-

ists at the prison on Saturday,

Bushra revealed fears for her own

life as well, The Express Tribune

According to Bushra, Khan's life

She added that their legal request

Describing conditions in the jail,

Bushra, 49, alleged that 71-year-old

Khan was kept in unsanitary condi-

tions and given contaminated food

in Attock Jail, Khan appeared ema-

ciated and had to pick insects from

Bushra also criticised the treat-

his hair throughout the night.

She said that during their meeting

to investigate the poisoning has not

been addressed by the court yet.

is in danger, keeping in view the

nast incidents where he was al-

legedly poisoned and shot at.

newspaper reported.

"I don't want to know anything

that threatens democracy.

The former president also spoke

others were injured.

"The Embassy continues to closely monitor the situation and remains committed to protecting the welfare of Indian citizens in

Cambodia. Indian nationals are ad-

pened," Trump, who wore a band-

Trump, who spoke for nearly

two hours, thanked the staff at But-

ler Memorial Hospital, where he

was taken minutes after the shoot-

a very special thanks to Americans

nationwide, including all of you

here today, for your extraordinary

outpouring of love and support in

the wake of the horrific last Satur-

day event," he said at the start of

Trump also alleged that the rival

Democratic Party is trying to over-

throw the results of their primaries

to dump incumbent President Joe

"Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

As you're seeing, the Democrat

Party is not the party of democ-

racy. They're really the enemies of

publican Party is now the party of

the people. We're the party of

hardworking Americans of every

race, religion, colour, and creed.

We've become a very big party,"

Michigan is one of the handful

of crucial swing states expected to

determine the outcome of Novem-

Jailed former Pak PM Imran Khan's

wife Bushra Bibi fears for his life

ment of political prisoners com-

pared to convicted criminals, alleg-

ing that other prisoners received

VIP treatment while Khan struggled

Khan, who is incarcerated in the

high-security Adiala Jail in

Rawalpindi since his arrest in a cor-

ruption case in August last year,

faces over 200 cases and has been

Responding to a journalist's

question about Bushra's claims of

toilet cleaner being added to her

food and her accusations against the

authorities, she asserted the claims

were true despite lacking physical

convicted in a few of them.

without even basic amenities.

ber's presidential election. (PTI)

"Under our leadership, the Re-

Biden from the ballot.

democracy," he said.

"Let me begin this evening with

ing at his rally in Pennsylvania.

age on his ear, said at the rally.

regarding any job offers in the country and to report any suspicious activities to the Embassy,'

In April, the Indian Embassy in Cambodia issued an advisory against fake job scams.

"It has come to attention that Indian nationals, lured by fake promises of lucrative job opportunities in Cambodia, are falling into the trap of human traffickers. These Indian nationals are coerced to undertake online financial scams and other illegal activities," it said.

The embassy advised Indian nationals intending to visit Cambodia for employment to do so only through authorised agents. It also advised the jobseekers to thoroughly check the background of the prospective employer. (PTI)

Nepal's Parliament to vote on confidence motion on PM Oli's government

KATHMANDU, July 21: Lawmakers in Nepal's Parliament will vote on Sunday on a confidence motion submitted by the newly appointed Prime Minister K P Sharma, nearly a week after he was sworn in to lead another coalition government in the Himalayan na-

Oli, the 72-year-old veteran Communist leader, was sworn in on Monday as the Himalayan nation's prime minister for the fourth time after Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) reached a seven-point deal to topple Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'-led coalition.

He was administered the oath of office and secrecy along with 21 other members of the Cabinet.

The minimum number to form a government in the 275-strong House of Representatives is 138. Oli is expected to easily win the vote as the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have a combined strength of 167.

Two other ruling parties, Janata Samajwadi Party and Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party, have seven and four seats, respectively. (PTI)

ing his wife about the limitations of

the media, which led to a brief

protest from the attending journal-

Khan attempted to stop Bushra

from speaking and said: "Censored

media won't broadcast your

words." This remark prompted the

journalists to protest, asserting that

The session ended with Bushra

emphasising her and Khan's will-

ingness to swear an oath that the

charges against them were fabri-

Despite Khan's concerns, Bushra

insisted on sharing her story with

the media. Bushra, who is also in

jail, was initially arrested in the un-

Islamic marriage case. In Islam, a

She, however, remains impris-

oned in the Toshakhana corruption

case even as a Pakistani court on

Saturday acquitted Khan and

Bushra in the un-Islamic marriage

woman can't remarry before completing four months after divorce or

the death of her husband.

all his statements were aired.

deal in effort to stop clashes at fiercely disputed shoal edly since last year between Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships and Philippine

Madre.

hope will end confrontations at the most fiercely disputed shoal in the South China Sea, two Philippine officials said Sunday. The Philippines occupies Sec-

the United States. The crucial deal was reached on Sunday, after a series of meetings between Philippine and Chinese

diplomats in Manila and exchanges of diplomatic notes that aimed to establish a mutually acceptable arrangement at the shoal without conceding either side's territorial claims. The Philippine officials, who have knowledge of the negotiations, confirmed the deal to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity ahead of a public announcement.

China has disputes with several governments over land and sea borders, many of them in the South China Sea, and the rare deal with the Philippines could spark hope that similar arrangements could be forged by Beijing with other rival countries to avoid clashes while thorny territorial issues remain unresolved. It remains to be seen, however, if the deal could be implemented successfully and how long it will last.

Chinese coast guard and other forces have used powerful water cannons and dangerous blocking maneuvers to prevent food and other supplies from reaching Filipino navy personnel at Manila's outpost at the shoal.

off at the shoal has flared repeat-

"The president continues to tolerate treatment well and will continue PAXLOVID (anti-Covid pill)

the doctor said. Biden tested positive for COVID-19 on July 17 which led to halting his campaign at a critical juncture in the presidential election when he was facing increasing pressure about his health and concerns about his viability as a candidate. He returned to his home in

placed him behind closed doors at

Bangladesh's top court scales back government jobs quota after deadly unrest killed scores

top court on Sunday scaled back a controversial quota system for government job applicants, in a partial victory for student protesters after days of nationwide unrest and deadly clashes between police and demonstrators that have killed scores of people.

Students, frustrated by shortages of good jobs, have been demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. The government previously halted it in 2018 following mass student protests, but in June, Bangladesh's High Court reinstated the quotas and set off a new round of protests. Ruling on an appeal, the Supreme Court ordered that the veterans' quota be cut to 5%, with 93% of jobs to be allocated on merit. The remaining 2% will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities and transgender and disabled people.

The protests have posed the most serious challenge to Bangladesh's government since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won a fourth consecutive term in January elections that were boycotted by the main opposition groups. Universities have been closed, the internet has been shut off and the government has ordered people to stay at home.

The protests turned deadly on Tuesday, a day after students at Dhaka University began clashing with police. Violence continued to escalate as police fired tear gas and rubber bullets and hurled smoke grenades to scatter stone-throwing protesters. Bangladeshi authorities haven't shared any official num-



the Daily Prothom Alo newspaper reported Saturday that at least 103 people have died so far.

Sporadic clashes in some parts of Dhaka, the capital, were reported on Saturday but it was not immediately clear whether there were any fatalities.

Ahead of the Supreme Court hearing, soldiers patrolled cities across the South Asian country. Home minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the stay at home order will be relaxed from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday for people to run essential errands.

Meanwhile, the government has declared Sunday and Monday as public holidays, with only emergency services allowed to operate.

Protesters argue the quota system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, saying it should be replaced with a meritbased system. Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions in the war against Pakistan, regardless of their political affiliation.

coast guard-escorted navy boats

transporting food, water and fresh

navy and marine personnel to an

outpost on a long-grounded and

rusting warship, the BRP Sierra

In the worst confrontation, Chi-

nese forces on motorboats repeat-

edly rammed and then boarded two

Philippine navy boats on June 17

to prevent Filipino personnel from

transferring food and other sup-

plies including firearms to the ship

outpost in the shallows of the

shoal, according to the Philippine

Chinese seized the Philippine navy

boats and damaged them with ma-

chetes and improvised spears.

They also seized seven M4 rifles,

which were packed in cases, and

other supplies. The violent faceoff

wounded several Filipino navy

personnel, including one who lost

his thumb, in a chaotic skirmish

that was captured in video and

photos that were later made public

China and the Philippines

blamed each other for the con-

frontation and each asserted their

own sovereign rights over the

shoal, which Filipinos call Ayun-

gin and the Chinese call Ren'ai

The United States and its key

Asian and Western allies, including

Japan and Australia, condemned

the Chinese acts at the shoal and

called for the rule of law and free-

dom of navigation to be upheld in

the South China Sea, a key global

trade route with rich fishing areas

and undersea gas deposits. (AP)

by Philippine officials.

After repeated ramming, the

met late Friday in an attempt to reach a resolution and law minister Anisul Huq said the government was open to discussing their demands. Their demands included the reform of the current quota system, the reopening of student dormitories shut by the police following the clashes and for some university officials to step down after failing to protect campuses from the violence.

main Bangladesh Nationalist Party has backed the protests, vowing to organize its own demonstrations as many of its supporters have joined the student-led protests. However, BNP said in a statement its followers were not responsible for the violence and denied the ruling party's accusations of using the protests for political gains.

The Awami League and the BNP have often accused each other of fueling political chaos and violence, most recently ahead of the country's national election, which was marred by a crackdown on several opposition figures. Hasina's government had accused the opposition party of attempting to disrupt the vote. (AP)

Lebanon's Hezbollah fires dozens of rockets at Israeli kibbutz after drone strike wounds civilians

BEIRUT, July 21: Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group said that its fighters fired dozens of rockets into northern Israel on Saturday, targeting a kibbutz for the first time in nine months in retaliation for an Israeli drone strike earlier in the day that wounded several people including children.

Also Saturday, the militant Palestinian group Hamas said it fired rockets from Lebanon toward an Israeli army post in the northern Israeli village of Shomera in retaliation for the "Zionists massacres" in the Gaza Strip. Hamas has carried out such attacks form Lebanon over the past several months, but they have been rare.

On Saturday night, an Israel airstrike on the southern coastal village of Adloun hit an arms depot and it was followed by a series of explosions that hit nearby villages with shrapnel, said staterun National News Agency, or NNA. The agency said that three people were slightly wounded in the nearby village of Kharayeb and hospitalised.

The agency didn't give further details about the arms depot, but it was believed to belong to Hezbollah, which has a wide presence in the area. The explosions lasted more than an hour after the airstrike, NNA said.

Hezbollah's attack earlier in the day with dozens of Katyusha rockets on the northern Israeli kibbutz of Dafna came few hours after an Israeli drone strike hit a car in the southern Lebanese village of Burj al-Muluk, and shrapnel from the missile wounded several people who were standing nearby. NNA said that the wounded civilians are Syrian citizens and they included

China and the Philippines reach

MANILA, July 21: China and the Philippines reached a deal they

ond Thomas Shoal but China also claims it, and increasingly hostile clashes at sea have sparked fears of larger conflicts that could involve

The yearslong territorial stand-

'His pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and temperature remain absolutely normal

US Prez Biden tolerating treatment well, continuing his presidential duties: White House doc

WASHINGTON, July 21: US President Joe Biden, who tested positive for COVID-19 last week, has been "tolerating" treatment well and continuing his presidential duties, according to the White House physician.

In a memorandum to White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre on Saturday, Dr Kevin C. O'Connor, the physician to the president, said genomic sequencing has determined that Biden has been afflicted by the KP .2.3 variant that accounts for around 33.3 per cent of new infections in the

United States. "President Biden completed his sixth dose of PAXLOVID this morning. He is still experiencing a loose, non-productive cough and hoarseness, but his symptoms con-



tinue to improve steadily," Dr O'-Connor said.

His pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and temperature remain

absolutely normal, his oxygen saturation continues to be excellent on room air and his lungs remain

as planned. He continues to perform all of his presidential duties,"

Delaware and isolated himself. It's unclear where and when the president contracted COVID-19. But the sudden diagnosis has a time when Democratic lawmakers have been clamouring to see him out front. (PTI)

UAE orders probe of arrested Bangladeshi protesters

DUBAI, July 21: Authorities in the United Arab Emirates ordered an investigation and an expedited trial of Bangladeshi nationals arrested after protesting against their home government across the Gulf country, state media reported.

The protests came as nationwide demonstrations spread across the South Asian country weeks ago to protest a quota system that reserves

up to 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971.

The country's top court scaled back Sunday on the controversial system, in a partial victory for student protesters.

The UAE's attorney general's office indicted Saturday the Bangladeshi protesters on several charges, including "gathering in a public place and protesting against their home government with the intent to incite unrest," obstructing law enforcement, causing harm to others and damaging property, according to the stateowned Emirates News Agency, WAM.

"Based on the preliminary investigation results, the Public Prosecution has ordered their pretrial detention pending further investigations," WAM

Political parties and labour unions are banned in the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms. Broad laws severely restrict freedom of speech and almost all major local media are either state-owned or state-affiliated out-



shelling attacks KYIV, July 21: Russian strikes ISLAMABAD, July 21: Bushra Ukraine on Sunday, local officials said, as the two countries exchanged drone, missile and shelling

Along the front line in the east, Russia said it had taken control of two villages, one in the Kharkiv re-

gion and one in the Luhansk region.

Three people were wounded by Russian drone strikes in southern Ukraine's partly occupied Kherson region, local officials said Sunday morning. In the country's northeast, officials in the Kharkiv region said two people were wounded when a village was hit by Russian shells.

Overnight into Sunday, Ukraine's air defences intercepted 35 of the 39 drones launched by Russia, according to air force commander Mykola Oleschuk. In addition, Russia launched three ballistic missiles and two guided air missiles, which did not reach their targets, he said.

Russia's Ministry of Defence said Sunday that its troops had taken control of two villages: Pishchane Nizhne in the Kharkiv region and Andriivka, sometimes referred to as Rozivka, in the Luhansk region. Kyiv did not immediately comment.

Officials in the northern Sumy region said Sunday that Russia launched a missile strike on "critical infrastructure facilities" in the city of Shostka. City mayor Mykola Noha specified that "two heating facilities" had been destroyed and called on residents to use electricity sparingly and stock up on water. With few changes reported along

the 1,000-kilometre front line, where a recent push by the Kremlin's forces in eastern and northeastern Ukraine has made only incremental gains, both sides in the war have taken aim at infrastructure targets — seeking to curb each other's ability to fight in a war that is now in its third year.

Russian air defence systems overnight destroyed eight drones over the country's Belgorod region and over the Black Sea, the Russian Ministry of Defense said.

Russian air defence also shot down two long-range ballistic AT-ACMS missiles in the sky over the Kherson region heading for Russiaannexed Crimea, Russia-installed Kherson governor Vladimir Saldo said. (AP)

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knocking on our door: Mamata on B'desh situation



KOLKATA, July 21: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said that in the wake of the escalating violence in Bangladesh, she would keep the doors of her state open for people in distress from the neighbouring country and offer them shel-

Banerjee referred to the United Nations Resolution on refugees as justification for her stand over the possible humanitarian crisis that may emerge on account of the severe law and order breakdown that has gripped Bangladesh over the past few days.

"I should not be speaking on the affairs of Bangladesh since that is a sovereign nation and whatever needs to be said on the issue is a subject matter of the Centre. But I can tell you this, if helpless people come knocking on the doors of Bengal, we will surely pro-

Govt clears consideration of private member's bill on free internet

NEW DELHI, July 21: The government has cleared the consideration of a private member's bill that seeks to grant every citizen the right to free internet access while ensuring equal access to people from backward and remote regions of the

"No citizen shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from accessing internet facilities," the bill has proposed.

While the bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by CPI(M) member V Sivadasan in December 2023, according to a bulletin issued by the Upper House of Parliament, Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has communicated to the Rajya Sabha secretary-general that the president has recommended the consideration of the bill to the House.

Private members' bills involving expenditure from the exchequer require the president's permission through the ministry concerned on whether such bills can be considered

through "intimidation and threats"

KOLKATA, July 21: West Bengal Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee on Sunday asserted that the BJP-

led government at the Centre would not "last long

and would collapse soon", claiming it was formed

TMC, Banerjee, without naming anyone, also criti-

cised the BJP's allies in the National Democratic Al-

liance (NDA) government at the Centre for

"sacrificing" ministerial positions allegedly for finan-

cial gain. The TMC leader praised Samajwadi Party

chief Akhilesh Yadav, who was present at the event,

for his party's performance in the Lok Sabha elections

is not a stable government and will collapse soon," she

said. Describing the NDA allies as "cowards and

greedy individuals who yielded to financial induce-

ments," Banerjee questioned, "Has anyone ever heard

of money being offered instead of ministries? They

are cowards, shameless, and greedy. They sacri-

"The government at the Centre won't last long. This

Addressing the mega 'Martyrs' Day' rally of the

vide them shelter," Banerjee said at the 'Martyrs Day' rally of the TMC in Kolkata.

"That's because there is a United Nations Resolution to accommodate refugees in regions adjacent to those under turmoil," the Bengal CM added while drawing an example from Assamese people who were allowed to live in Alipurduars area of north Bengal for a considerable period during the Bodo strife in the northeastern state.

Assuring all cooperation to Bengal residents whose relatives may have remained stuck on account of the escalating violence on the eastern side of the international border, she also extended assistance to Bangladeshis who came to Bengal but were facing difficulty in returning home.

Banerjee also appealed to the people of West Bengal to not get provoked over matters concerning the current situation in Bangladesh.

"We should exercise restraint and not walk into any provocation or excitement on the issue," she stated.

The Trinamool Congress supremo also expressed her solidarity with the people who have remained at the receiving end of the ongoing violence in the neighbouring country.

"We are sad to see blood getting spilt and my heart goes out to those students who were killed," she said.

President of the BJP's Bengal unit and junior union minister Sukanta Majumdar, however, opined that such matters, involving the country's foreign policies, should first be consulted with the Centre before any public statement is made.

"It's true that we are all concerned about the current situation in Bangladesh over which Delhi is keeping a close watch. Our chief minister should not be voicing her opinions on matters involving our country's foreign policies without first consulting the Centre," he said.

Violence escalated in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka and elsewhere over student protests demanding reforms of the quota system for government jobs.

The protesters are demanding an end to a quota system that reserves up to 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971 against Pakistan. (PTI)

Private Members' Bills barring former judges from joining politics, deepfake ban listed in RS

Deepfake involves morphing someone's face or other features of their body digitally to make it appear like someone else

NEW DELHI, July 21: Private Members' Bills listed in Rajya Sabha for the upcoming Monsoon Session include one that seeks prohibition on holders of constitutional posts, like judges, joining a political party post retirement, a few bills on artificial intelligence and deepfake, as well as one on amending the citizenship law.

In all, 23 Private Members' Bills have been listed for introduction in the upcoming session in the Upper

The Constitution (amendment) Bill, 2024 (amendment of articles 124, 148, 319 and 324 and insertion of new articles 220A and 309A), listed by Rashtriya Janata Dal MP AD Singh, seeks to bar those retiring from Constitutional posts, like judges and former election commissioners from joining political parties post retirement, a source said.

The Bill comes against the backdrop of recent controversies such as one involving Calcutta High Court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay, who resigned from his judicial position on March 5, and within two days, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party

In July, former Madhya Pradesh



joined the BJP, three months after his retirement

Another Bill listed by Singh seeks amendment in the The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita to include marital rape as a crime.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) MP V Sivadasan has listed two Bills -- one seeking universal basic income and another enactment of Right to Old Age Care. Trinamool Congress MP Mausam Noor has also listed two bills, one on protecting rights of employees from Artificial Intellinalisation of 'deepfake'.

Deepfake involves morphing someone's face or other features of their body digitally to make it appear like someone else, typically for malicious purposes.

During the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, concerns were expressed over the use of deepfake videos to spread misinformation. Union Home Minister Amit Shah was one of its victims.

P Sandosh Kumar of Communist Party of India has listed a bill to create an Artificial Intelligence Technology Regulatory Authority.

Kumar has also listed The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2024 to amend the law to provide citizenship to "persecuted minorities" from neighbouring countries, and not to provide citizenship on the basis of religion, as prescribed in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act,

The law which led to protests in several parts of the country, including Delhi, provides for accelerated eligibility for Indian citizenship to persecuted minorities who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, and who entered India on or before December 31, 2014. The Act does not mention Muslims.

A private member's bill is a bill introduced by a legislator who is not a part of government. Only 14 such bills have been passed by both Houses since 1952.

According to a booklet published by Rajya Sabha secretariat, the importance of Private Members' Bills lies in the fact that they enable legislators to draw attention to issues which might not be represented in Government Bills or to highlight the issues and gaps in the existing legal framework requiring

Spike in terror attacks won't be justification to delay assembly polls in J&K: Omar Abdullah

SAMBA/JAMMU, July 21: National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Sunday said the spike in terrorist attacks in the recent past would be no justification to delay assembly elections, which were held even in 1996 when militancy was at its peak in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Some people are saying the situation has deteriorated and hence, there should be no elections. What happened to you? Are we so weak or the situation worsened so much that there are no chances of holding elections? We held elections in 1996 and you have to agree that there is a difference of heaven and earth between the situation at that time and today," he said.

"Those who do not want to hold elections (in J&K) should tell that we are bowing before the gun-toting forces and are accepting defeat, besides ignoring the sacrifices of our forces. You tell our enemies that we will lay down without fighting," he

"If you want to bow before such forces then don't go for the (assembly) cause this election is taking place on the orders of the Supreme Court which has set a deadline of September 30.

"You say in the Supreme Court the situation is not conducive for holding assembly polls and we are bowing before the forces who over the past (three) years martyred our 55 bravehearts. If you want to ignore and waste their sacrifices, we will bear the decision silently as there is nothing else we can do," Abdullah told reporters on the sidelines of a public rally at Gurha Slathia in the Samba district.

He said there are such forces across the neighbouring country which do not want friendly ties between the two

"We know they won't desist from their activities but somehow we were also found off-guard," he said, criticising Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for delaying the joint high-level meeting held in Jammu on Saturday to chalk out a strategy to tackle growing terror incidents.

Omar said the meeting should have been called a long time after the first terror incident. "Why he waited for so

ficed their own identities." While commending

Akhilesh Yadav, Banerjee remarked, "The 'Khel'

(game) you played in UP should have forced the BJP

government (in UP) to resign, but the shameless gov-

ernment continues in power by misusing agencies and

other means. You cannot intimidate us by misusing

agencies..." The TMC supremo claimed that only

Bengal can preserve the existence of India and there

can be no India without Bengal. Echoing Yadav's

claim that the BJP-led NDA government would not

endure, Banerjee predicted it would soon "collapse".

She asserted, "The BJP no longer holds a majority.

Given how the current Central government came to

power—by misusing central investigation agencies

and the Election Commission of India—it won't be

Banerjee accused the BJP, Congress, and CPI(M)

of having a "tacit understanding" in West Bengal, al-

leging that their sole aim is to obstruct development

efforts in the state. "I am prepared to offer 10 lakh

state government jobs. However, whenever I attempt

able to sustain itself for long.

long? It was only after we started raising the concern, the meeting was convened," he said

Earlier, addressing a gathering, Omar said, "We have to face these forces bravely but this is not expected under their rule.

"When they took over from us in January 2015, the situation was altogether different as we had cleared all areas of Jammu region of the scourge of terrorism. Despite their claims post (August) 2019 (when J&K's special status was revoked and the erstwhile state was bifurcated into two Union Territories), there is no place which is not facing the looming threat of terror attacks," he said.

"Not only they failed to ensure the development of J&K, but our security has also been compromised, which is evident from the attacks, resulting in loss of precious lives of our brave personnel. They are least bothered about all these," he said.

Omar said from Kathua to Reasi and Rajouri to Doda, there hardly passes any day when there is no news Mamata slams NDA allies for sacrificing ministerial berths, claims Central govt won't last long

to announce such initiatives, these parties file Public

Interest Litigations (PILs) against them in court.

Sometimes they try to block job creation, while at other times they attempt to hinder reservation benefits

Court and will continue to do so. We will not let their

disruptions succeed under any circumstances," the

Chief Minister stated. In an apparent reference to re-

said. "Don't inflict or tolerate injustice against people.

We won't spare even TMC members if they are found

want to tell municipality and panchayat representa-

tives, MLAs, and MPs that they must ensure that no

complaints are received against them. If we get any

complaint, we will take appropriate action. The police

will take action. Everyone knows that if there is any

injustice, we do not even spare TMC members," she

"I want TMC workers to be the people's friends. I

"We are challenging them legally in the Supreme

for backward classes.3

India's air pollution crisis result of policy failure: Cong slams govt



NEW DELHI, July 21: Accusing the Modi government of "poor policy-making" in dealing with air pollution, the Congress on Sunday demanded that the forthcoming Union Budget must provide a path forward to resourcing and equipping India's local bodies, state governments, and the Centre in tackling this "grave public health

Congress general secretary incharge communications Jairam Ramesh said earlier this month, a study revealed that 7.2 per cent of all deaths in India are associated with air pollution -- about 34,000 deaths each year in just 10 cities.

A new study by the Centre for Science and Environment in Delhi has evaluated the National Clean Air Program (NCAP) and brought to light the policy chaos that has resulted in this public health crisis, he said in a statement.

cent incidents of mob violence in the state, Banerjee "The current budget of the NCAP, including the 15th Finance Commission's grants, is about Rs 10,500 crore -- spread across 131 cities! The programme is therefore desperately underfunded -- and yet, and of this meagre amount, only 64% of the funds were used.' Ramesh said.

He alleged that "poor policy-

NCAP's perable resources. formance assessment -- and therefore interventions -- are heavily focused on PM 10 (particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less) rather than on PM 2.5 (diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less), which is far more hazardous,

Ramesh pointed out that 64% of the funds utilized were spent on road dust mitigation much more than on controlling combustionlinked emissions from industries (0.61% of funds), vehicles (12.63% of funds), and biomass burning (14-51% of funds), he said, adding these emissions are far more dangerous for human health.

Out of 131 cities under NCAP. most do not even have data to track their air pollution, he said.

Of 46 cities which have data, only eight cities have met the NCAP's low target, while 22 cities actually saw air pollution get worse, he claimed.

"There are clear steps the government must take moving forward: The Air Pollution (Control and Prevention) Act came into being in 1981, and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) was put into effect in November 2009. However, in the last decade, the public health con-

sequences of air pollution - in both morbidity and mortality - have become all too evident," he said. It is now time for a revisit and a

total revamp of both the Air Pollution (Control and Prevention) Act and the NAAQS, Ramesh said. "Our cities need at least 10-20

times more funding -- NCAP must be made a Rs 25,000 crore programme NCAP must adopt measurement of PM 2.5 levels as the yardstick for performance NCAP must reorient its focus to key sources of emissions - burning of solid fuels, vehicular emissions, and industrial emissions," he said.

NCAP must adopt a regional/airshed approach for air quality control - municipal and state authorities must have the governance architecture and resources required to collaborate across jurisdictions, Ramesh said.

"The NCAP must be given legal backing, an enforcement mechanism, and serious data monitoring capacity for every Indian city, bevond the current focus only on 'non- attainment' cities, he argued.

"Air pollution norms for coal power plants must be enforced im mediately. All power plants must install a Fluoride Gas Desulfurizer (FGD) by the end of 2024," he

Ramesh demanded that the National Green Tribunal's independence must be restored, and the 'anti-people environmental law amendments" made in the last 10 years must be rolled back.

"The forthcoming Union Budget must provide a path forward to resourcing and equipping India's local bodies, state governments, and Union government in tackling this grave public health crisis," he

Tagging his statement, Ramesh said on X, "India's air pollution crisis

All-party meet: Cong demands discussion on NEET, UP eateries row

NEW DELHI, July 21: The Congress on Sunday asserted at an allparty meeting that issues such as the NEET 'scam', Uttar Pradesh government's order to eateries and internal security situation in Jammu and Manipur, be taken up for discussion during the Budget session of Parliament.

Congress general secretary, incharge communications, Jairam Ramesh said that in the all-party meeting of floor leaders chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Congress' deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi presented a host of issues on behalf of the party that should be taken up in the Parliament session beginning Monday.

Gogoi called for discussion on governance issues relating to "NEET/NET scams, UPSC controversies, worsening railway safety and Agniveer", Ramesh said. He said the party also flagged that

the internal security situation in

Jammu and Manipur should be taken up for discussion during the session. According to Ramesh, Gogoi also asserted at the meeting that challenges on the borders with China and environmental concerns arising out of floods and natural disasters, deforestation and pollution, be dis-

cussed during the session. The Congress also raised the is-



sues relating to Centre-state relations and the economy, which it stated must be debated upon

In an apparent reference to the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments' controversial directive to eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route to display the owners' names, the party also flagged the issue of "deliberate attempts at polarisation in states like UP by passing unconstitutional orders", Ramesh, who was also present

at the meeting, said in a post on X. Earlier, as the meeting got underway, Ramesh posted on X that in the all-party meeting, the JD(U) leader demanded special category status for

"The YSRCP leader demanded special category status for Andhra Pradesh. Strangely, the TDP leader kept quiet on the matter," Ramesh

In another post, he said, "How the political climate has changed! In the all-party meeting of floor leaders the BJD leader reminded the Defence Minister and BJP President JP Nadda that the BJP's manifesto for the 2014 assembly elections in Odisha had promised special category status to the state.'

Ramesh also posted on X that there was a universal demand that the Central Hall should once again be opened up for MPs to mingle with each other and improve communications across the parties.

'The historic Central Hall has sadly fallen into disuse after the opening of the new building of Parliament," Ramesh said.

"In the all-party meeting of floor leaders chaired by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the universal demand was for the constitution of the 24 Department-Related Standing Committees and giving them their due importance. There was also an universal demand for reviving the Consultative Committees where MPs can interact with the Ministers concerned," Ramesh said in another post on X.

Later, Congress leader K Suresh told reporters that his party was joined by other INDIA bloc members in seeking the Lok Sabha deputy speaker's position for the opposition according to conven-

Noida spent only 6 pc of NCAP funds for air pollution control: Govt data

Noida in Uttar Pradesh has utilised only ₹1.43 crore of the ₹21.95 crore allocated to it for to combatting air pollution

NEW DELHI, July 21: Noida, one of India's most polluted cities, has used only around 6 per cent of the ₹21.95 crore it received under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) since 2019, according to government data.

Data released by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) showed that 19 out of the 131 cities covered under the NCAP have utilised less than 50 per cent of the funds allocated, and four have used below 25 per cent of the funds received as of May 3.

Launched in 2019, the NCAP is India's first national effort to set clean air targets, aiming for a 20-30 per cent reduction in PM10 pollution by 2024, with 2017 as the base year. The revised target aims for a 40 per cent reduction by 2026, using 2019-20 as the base

A total of 46 cities and urban agglomerations spent less than 75 percent of the money received under the programme, either directly from the environment ministry or through the 15th Finance Commission.



utilised only ₹ 1.43 crore of the ₹ 21.95 crore allocated to it for to combatting air pollution.

Bengaluru spent only ₹ 68.37 crore of the ₹ 535.1 crore received, Nagpur used ₹ 17.71 crore of ₹ 132.6 crore, and Visakhapatnam spent ₹ 26.17 crore of the ₹ 129.25 crore it got.

Other cities with low fund utilisation include Pune (26.44 per

cent), Gulbarga (27.2 per cent), Vasai-Virar (28.01 per cent), Nashik (28.21 per cent), Kolhapur (28.37 per cent), Vijayawada (29.16 per cent), Angul (29.95 per cent), Jamshedpur (35.78 per cent), Delhi (37.33 per cent), Anantapur (38.39 per cent), Faridabad (38.89 per cent), Durg Bhilainagar (42.31 per cent), Varanasi (46.25 per cent), Ranchi (48.73 per cent), and Jalandhar (48.81 per

A report released by the independent think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on Friday said only ₹ 6,806 crore (64 per cent) of the total ₹ 10,566 crore allocated to the 131 cities since the programme's inception has been utilised as of May 3.

Nearly two-thirds of the funds allocated to 131 cities under the NCAP have been used for dust management, while only 0.61 per cent of the total funds have been used to tackle industrial pollution, 12.63 per cent for vehicular pollution, and 14.51 per cent for biomass burning.

Among the cities covered by the programme, 82 receive direct funding from the MoEFCC, while 42 cities and seven urban agglomerations with population over a million receive funding from the 15th Finance Commission.

The 82 cities utilised ₹ 831.42 crore of the total ₹ 1,616.47 crore allocated, while the 49 cities receiving funding under the 15th Finance Commission spent ₹ 5,974.73 crore of the total ₹ 8,951 crore allocated. (PTI)

SPORTS

Leander Paes, Vijay Amritraj inducted into Tennis Hall of Fame

NEWPORT (USA), July 21: the men's singles quarterfinals Legendary Indian tennis players, Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj, the heroes of many a historic triumph transcending generations, on Sunday became the first two exponents of the sport from Asia to be inducted into the International Hall of Fame. Paes, 51, whose list of achievements include the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games men's singles bronze, eight men's doubles and 10 mixed doubles grand slam crowns besides several famed Davis Cup victories, was given the rare honour in the 'Player Category'.

Vijay Amritraj, 70, reached

at the Wimbledon and US Open twice each besides guiding India to the Davis Cup finals twice -- in 1974 and 1987. At his peak, he was ranked No.18 in the world in singles and No. 23 in doubles.

He along with Richard Evans was inducted into the Hall of fame in the 'Contributor Category'. "Paes was inducted in the Player Category, while Amritraj and Evans were recognised as a part of the Contributor Category: honoring visionary leaders, pioneers, or individuals who have made a consummate impact on the sport. The three

inductees brings the total to 267 legends from 28 nations represented in the Hall of Fame," said the International Tennis Hall of Fame statement.

Paes spent 37 weeks at No. 1 in the world rankings in doubles, and won 54 doubles titles on tour.

He is one of only three men in tennis history to capture a career Grand Slam in both disciplines. Paes, who hails from Kolkata, competed in seven straight Olympic Games between Barcelona, 1992 to Rio, 2016, the most in tennis history. Reflecting on his journey,

blessed to be born into legacy. Today, sitting here at the International Tennis Hall of Fame, I wouldn't have ever dreamt it. playing street cricket and street football barefoot back in Cal-

"I am so excited to share this with all of you, representing every young boy and girl around the planet who has a dream in their mind, passion in their hearts and fire in their belly," said Paes, who partnered Mahesh Bhupathi in men's doubles and took Indian tennis to great heights before their acrimonious split.

In mixed doubles he part-

women players -- Martina Navratilova and Martina Hingis.

In her tribute to the Indian champion, Navratilova said, herself a Hall of Famer in 2000, said, "I think Leander played tennis how most of us would like to play and the fun really starts when he comes to the net. He has reflexes like a leopard and runs every ball down if he can and if he can't he dives for it. The passion the man has for the sport is indescribable."

"It is my greatest honour to not only be on this stage with these legends of the game, but

nered two of the greatest people who have inspired me every single day of my life," said Paes. "It's not because you've all won Grand Slams, not because you've shaped the world of our sport, but every single one of these people shaped the world that we live in. Î would like to thank you all so much for giving this Indian

> boy hope. Amritraj, who came on the ATP Tour in 1970, was a key player on India's Davis Cup squad over the years. In fact, Amritraj was a key member of two Indian squads that qualified for in the Davis Cup final - in 1974 when country didn't play

against South Africa due to its apartheid policy and in 1987, when it lost final to Sweden.

After his retirement, he has become the face of tennis broadcasting, helping in the expansion of professional tennis.

"To my fellow Indians in India and around the world I can't thank you enough. You welcomed me to your homes to the big cities to the small towns and your growth was my growth alongside India's growth. You shared my joy and sorrows with me.'

Amritraj praised his parents for the impact they had made on

Paes said, "A few of us are very

Harmanpreet, Richa Ghosh guide India to 78-run win over UAE

trasting fifties from skipper Har-manpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh were complemented nicely by the bowlers as India notched up a massive 78-run win over UAE in their second match of the ongoing women's Asia Cup T20 tournament here on Sunday.

Invited to bat, Kaur played the anchor's role to perfection with a 47-ball 66, while Ghosh produced late charge with an unbeaten 29ball-64 to power defending champions India to 201 for five, their first-ever 200-plus score in T20Is.

The bowlers, led by Deepti Sharma (2/23), then produced a clinical show to limit UAE to 123 for 7 as India put one foot in the semifinals.

With two wins in as many games, India occupy the top spot in group A with four points and

have a Net Run Rate of +3.298. India will play their third and final group game against Nepal on Tuesday

Chasing the daunting total, opener Esha Rohit Oza scored a 36-ball 38 (5x4, 1x6) but UAE never were in the chase as they kept losing wickets at regular in-

dismissed Theertha Satish (4) and Rinitha Rajith (7) as UAE slipped to 24 for 2 in 5.2 overs.

Deepti then struck in her third ball, removing Samaira Dharnidharka (5) but Oza and Kavisha Egodage (40 not out) played some entertaining shots to score 20 runs in next three overs.

However, Tanuja Kanwar (1/14), who had replaced an injured Shreyanka Patil in the playing XI, had Oza stumped, while Radha Yadav (1/29) got rid of Khushi Sharma (10) as UAE fell to 95 for five in the 16th over.

Heena Hotchandani then became Deepti's second victim and Rithika was run out in the last ball as UAE finished far away from India's total.

Earlier, while the 35-year-old Harmanpreet blasted seven fours and a six during her innings, Ghosh slammed as many as 12 boundaries and a maximum, including five consecutive hits to the fence in the final over of the innings bowled by Hotchandani.

Kaur stitched two crucial partnerships, adding 54 off 39 balls with Jemimah Rodrigues and 75 off 45 balls with Ghosh to put Pace duo of Renuka Singh India in a commanding position.



Opener Smriti Mandhana (13) blasted a six and a four to give India a good start but an overambitious shot saw her being holed out at mid-off off spinner

Shafali Verma then produced some sensational shots, carting the bowlers for five fours and a six en route an 18-ball 37. But she committed the mistake of edging

Hotchandani then cleaned up Dayalan Hemalatha (2) in the first

delivery of the next over as India slipped to 52 for 3 inside the powerplay. Harmanpreet and Rodrigues (14) then joined hands and kept the scoreboard ticking with the

former doing the heavy lifting in the 39-ball 54-run stand, which put India across the 100-mark in the 11th over.

Once Rodrigues was dismissed by Egodage in the 12th over, Ghosh displayed her boundaryhitting prowess, using her cover drive to perfection to rack up 18 runs off Oza's over with four boundaries.

Harmanpreet reached her fifty in the 18th over and then clobbered two fours and a six off Samaira as India crossed the 180run mark.

While Harmanpreet was run out in the first ball of the 19th over, Ghosh slammed five fours in the remaining five balls to reach her fifty, her first in the shortest format.

Ghosh reached her fifty in just 26 balls, and in the last over alone

It's worth push for opportunities outside Formula 1: Jehan Daruvala



LONDON, July 21: It is not all doom and gloom when a racing driver doesn't realise his dream of reaching Formula 1. Now competing in Formula E, Jehan Daruvala has made peace with fate as opportunities outside the pinnacle of motor racing are also worth" chasing for.

The 25-year-old spent as many as four seasons in Formula 2, the feeder series to Formula 1, but was not able to take the final step on that ladder. His decision to spend that much time and money in a junior series was questioned, especially after he and Red Bull parted ways following three seasons but the racer from Mumbai

has no regrets. Over four seasons, he picked up four wins and 18 podiums but by his own admission it was not enough in the cut-throat environment he was part of. He saw his former teammates Lando Norris and Yuki Tsunoda rise up the "Honestly, for now I don't know. I would like to stay in For-

Representing Maserati, Daruvala has not had the best of starts to his Formula E career and is languishing at the bottom of the standings. However, he wants to remain in the all-electric championship for next season and beyond. "Honestly, Formula E is probably the most competitive championship I've been on in terms of teams and even drivers. The level on Formula E is prob-

ably as good as Formula 1. "I'm happy where I am. I'm driving against the best guys in the world so I have no complaints," Daruvala told PTI on the sidelines of season-ending London E-Prix.

"Times are changing. There are also more opportunities outside of F1. Sometimes it's worth pushing on. I spent enough years in Formula 2 trying to go to F1, but then when I realised that it wasn't possible, I looked somewhere else.'

The realisation of not making Formula 1 dawned upon him

when Red Bull released him from their junior driver program. He continued to chase his dream on his own but eventually settled for Formula E.

"In the end, it just depends on each person. I think the biggest story is that there are more options in professional racing apart from F1. And they are all equally fun and enjoyable as well.

"I mean, I'm not really looking back at those years anymore. I didn't win Formula 2 (title), so yeah, I don't have any regrets about it.

"I feel I'm good enough to be in F1 but I didn't win in F2 so I have no regrets," said Daruvala, who found it tough to move on from his childhood target but eventually turned the corner.

After a difficult debut in Formula E, does he expect to get a seat for next year?

ranks and he can only be happy mula E but if not there's always other options. It's still only July so there's a long time. If I am not in Formula E, I would like to explore Indycar in the US.'

> How does he look back on the season when he had to unlearn a few things from his time in Formula 2?

"I've had fun this year but it's been difficult especially managing the energy in the races. I feel like my one lap pace has been pretty good especially the last three rounds. I've been close to my teammate. So I feel like I'm getting more used to it but, just not managing to score enough points.

"Racing is what takes time to understand. I've had a few top 8's, top 10's so I feel like over one lap I got used to the car pretty quickly. Just understanding the races better has been quite difficult," Daruvala added.

His more experienced teammate at Maserati, Maximilian Gunther, is set to finish in the top-10 of the drivers' standings.

District Level Summer School Football Tourney concludes in Diphu



HT Bureau
DIPHU, July 21: The District Level Summer School Football Tournament concluded here at Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) stadium on Saturday. The tournament is organised by the District Sports Office. There were six teams in both Under -15 and Under – 17 categories participat-

ing in the tournament from various

schools in the Karbi Anglong. In the final match for Under -15 category Sonapur BM High School, Langhin defeated New Hope school to lift the champion's trophy. Bekrai Basumatary opened the scoring in the first half, while Umesh Basumatary scored the winning goal in the second half. While in the Under - 17 final match Langhin Pamgaon HS school defeated Rajapathar HS school by a solitary goal to lift the champion's trophy. Prakash Basumatary's late goal in the second half helped Pamgaon HS School

to win the match. Prize distribution ceremony was organised to give away the trophies to the runners up and winning teams. Executive Member (EM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) incharge Education, Richard Tokbi said after winning here will participate in inter district at state level and after winning in the state level can play in the Subrota Cup at the national level. The final match is very much entertaining and I wish all the very best for the two winning teams Under-15 and Under -17 to represent Karbi Anglong.

The EM also said, "We need to appreciate the initiative taken up by Chief Executive Member (CEM), KAAC and president, KASA, Tuliram Ronghang for promoting sports culture in the district. Here in KASA stadium itself also is seen with state of the art football stadium, Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Multi Purpose Sports Complex and swimming pool have come up." The EM also informed that the Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) Cup will be conducted in the coming winter season and the CEM Gold

team by Melina Terang and KASA swimming secretary, Eva Singpho.

Anand Terang of New Hope High School collected the best player of the tournament in Under -15 category, while Prakash Basumatary also collected the best player of the tournament in Under

17 category. jointly by Khorsing Terang, Ever-

Cup to be hosted next December, The EM also gave away the champion's trophy for Under 15 champion's team Langhin Pamgaon HS School. The runners-up trophy was given to the runners-up

The champion's trophy for the winning team for Under 15 was given away by KASA general secretary, Dr. Pankaj Teron and the runners-up trophy was given away ester and assistant general secretary, KASA, Prodip Ronghang. The prize distribution ceremony was attended by District Sports Officer, Rilip Ronghang and other officials of KASA.

India's HPD Sanjeeva Singh predicts 3 medals in archery

the controversy of the Indian archery team's Korean coach Baek Woong Ki being denied accreditation for the Paris Games, former Olympian and SAI's high performance director for the sport Sanjeeva Singh is confident the six-member squad will return with three medals from the Olympics and end its decades-long quest for success in the quadrennial showpiece.

Indian archers will start in all five categories -- men's individual recurve, women's individual recurve, men's and women's team and mixed team.

Six Indians -- Dhiraj Bom-

madevara, Pravin Jadhav, Tarundeep Rai, Deepika Kumari, Bhajan Kaur and Ankita Bhakat -- have qualified for Paris 2024 and following a training-cumacclimatisation stint at Compiegne in France, they were among the first batch of athletes from the country to enter the Games Village.

"Compared to 2021 Tokyo, the preparation has been better

scientific training, mental conditioning and more importantly, tweaking the nature of domestic tournaments in line with the Olympic format," Singh, the HPD of SAI's National Centre of Excellence for archery in Sonepat, said in a statement.

"If we go by current form and the way the archers are performing, we can realistically look at three medals -- men's individual, men's team and mixed team. Out of these three, one will definitely happen. A medal from the women's competition will be a bonus but the team has to click together," said Singh, a regular with both the junior and senior national squad in international competitions, but who is not with the team in Paris.

Singh's comments come just a day after India's foreign coach Baek Woong was denied accreditation for the Games. The Korean, who had reached the French capital with the Indian team after overseeing its preparation in Marseille, said on Sat-

from the Olympic coaching role at a critical time" and will now be flying back to India with his return ticket already booked. Lashing out at the Indian

Olympic Association, Baek Woong, a renowned coach, said, "I am a Korean coach who signed a contract to prepare (the Indian archers) for the Paris Olympics. But at a critical time, was removed from the Olympic coaching role and my flight schedule told me to return

Baek Woong had guided archery heavyweights South Korea to two gold medals at the 2012 London Olympics, added that "I have a contract until August 30 and I signed it for the purpose of the Olympics. I plan to arrive at Sonipat and calmly prepare for the formalities of entering Korea," he said, making it clear that he will not renew his contract.

The archery competition in Paris begins on July 25 and will continue till August 4. (PTI)

With AI, jets and police squadrons, Paris is securing the Olympics and worrying critics

PARIS, July 21: A year ago, the head of the Paris Olympics boldly declared that France's capital would be "the safest place in the world" when the Games open this Friday. Tony Estanguet's confident forecast looks less farfetched now with squadrons of police patrolling Paris' streets, fighter jets and soldiers primed to scramble, and imposing metalfence security barriers erected like an iron curtain on both sides of the River Seine that will star in the opening show.

France's vast police and military operation is in large part because the July 26-Aug. 11 Games face unprecedented security challenges. The city has repeatedly suffered deadly extremist attacks

high because of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Rather than build an Olympic park with venues grouped together outside of the city center, like Rio de Janeiro in 2016 or London in 2012, Paris has chosen to host many of the events in the heart of the bustling capital of 2 million inhabitants, with others dotted around suburbs that house millions more. Putting temporary sports arenas in public spaces and the unprecedented choice to stage a river-borne opening ceremony stretching for kilometers (miles) along the Seine, makes safeguard-

ing them more complex. Olympic organizers also have cyberattack concerns, while

and international tensions are rights campaigners and Games critics are worried about Paris' use of AI-equipped surveillance technology and the broad scope and scale of Olympic security.

Paris, in short, has a lot riding on keeping 10,500 athletes and millions of visitors safe.

The security operation, by the numbers: Games-time force of up to 45,000 police and gendarmes is also backed up by a 10,000-strong contingent of soldiers that has set up the largest military camp in Paris since World War II, from which soldiers should be able to reach any of the city's Olympic venues within 30 minutes.

Armed military patrols aboard vehicles and on foot have become common in crowded places in

bombers acting in the names of al-Oaida and the Islamic State repeatedly struck Paris in 2015. They don't have police powers of arrest but can tackle attackers and restrain them until police arrive.

France since gunmen and suicide

"At the beginning, it was very strange for them to see us and they were always avoiding our presence, making a detour," said Gen. Éric Chasboeuf, deputy commander of the counter-terror

military force, called Sentinelle. "Now, it's in the landscape," he

Rafale fighter jets, airspacemonitoring AWACS surveillance Reaper surveillance flights, drones, helicopters that can carry sharpshooters, and equipment to against Donald Trump. (AP)

disable drones will police Paris skies, which will be closed during the opening ceremony by a no-fly zone extending for 150 kilometers (93 miles) around the capital.

Cameras twinned with artificial intelligence software - authorized by a law that expands the state's surveillance powers for the Games — will flag potential security risks, such as abandoned packages or crowd surges,

France is also getting help from more than 40 countries that, together, have sent at least 1,900 police reinforcements.

Attacks by lone individuals are major concern, a risk driven home most recently to French officials by the assassination attempt

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